

Be Your Valentine

Michelle May, M.D.

What are you doing for the love of your life—yourself—on Valentine's Day?

Pause... notice whether that question made you uncomfortable. If so, why?

- Do you feel undeserving?
- Do you feel unimportant?
- Do you tend to put yourself last?
- Did somebody tell you it was wrong to love yourself?
- Are you waiting until you achieve some arbitrary goal first?
- Are you afraid if you accept yourself as you are, you won't be motivated to make changes?

These are lies that undermine the most important relationship you'll ever have—your relationship with yourself.

When self-love is missing, self-care is usually missing too. That leaves a bottomless pit that can't be filled with food—or anything or anybody else.

Be Your Valentine!

Is it time for a relationship makeover? Here are eight gifts to give yourself to let the love of your life know exactly how you feel!

Love – You take care of the people and things you love so your first gift to yourself is unconditional



love. This means you love and accept yourself as you are right now—no caveats, no "exceptions" or "whens" or "buts."



remember you are lovable.

Nurture – Do something wonderful for yourself! Treat yourself to a long bath, a massage, a movie - whatever will show you how much you care.



Nourish – Treat yourself to a nourishing, delicious meal. Choose an interesting recipe and purchase fresh, beautiful ingredients that you'll lovingly combine for your special guest - you! (Or if you prefer, take yourself out instead.) Enjoy your lovely meal mindfully, without distractions--and be good company for yourself!



Move – Take yourself out for a long walk, turn up the music and dance, play soccer with your kids, try that yoga class you've been thinking about, play fetch with your dog - whatever feels like fun! Express gratitude for your amazing body. Love it by moving it and it will love you back!



Trust – Buy yourself two or three pieces of the best chocolates you can afford. Trust yourself to eat them in a way that brings you joy and pleasure. And if you overdo it, trust your body to let you know.



Inspire – Inspire yourself with a great book, beautiful music, a breathtaking view, or whatever reminds you just how lucky you are to be alive to experience it.



Excite – Don't allow your relationship to stagnate. Be brave and do something that makes your heart pound a little. Stretch yourself beyond your boundaries: sign up for that class, plan that trip, make that call, take that risk. What are you waiting for?

You're not perfect. Get over it.

But you *are* lovable, deserving, important, and beautiful just the way you are!

If there's something about yourself or your life you'd like to change, do it *because* you love yourself, not so you'll love yourself.

Michelle May, M.D. is a recovered yo-yo dieter and the award-winning author of *Eat What You Love, Love What You Eat: A Mindful Eating Program to Break Your Eat-Repent-Repeat Cycle*.



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