

My
TWO CENTS
on Self-Love



Compiled by
Campgroundtbd Publishing



My Two Cents on Self-Love

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT HAYDENS RAY 501 © (3)

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Title: My Two Cents on Self-Love

Published by: Campgroundtbd Publishing

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**Description Mena, AR Campgroundtbd Publishing,
[2023]**

Paperback ISBN: 979-8-9878030-8-0

Hardback ISBN: 979-8-9878030-7-3

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This book is dedicated to my hero,
Hayden Ray, and everything he
taught the world

07/21/95-06/02/2023

Introduction from the compiler, Mistilei Wriston

In the late 90s, before I was introduced to the internet, I needed to raise money to take my highly disabled son to a specialist. I lived in a rural area outside a metroplex and had a mind for numbers. I did the calculations and realized that if everyone in that giant city would donate two cents, I would have enough without anyone going into debt.

With marker and poster board, I made a sign to this effect, taped photos of my son and the doctor, and headed off to the local grocery store with my baked goods in hand. My daughter and son were in the stroller, and we set up camp.

It started slow, people would buy a cookie, and some would leave a little extra change. As the cookies began to run low, someone came out with cookies they had purchased and donated them to our cause. Eventually, a local church that I didn't even attend donated baked goods for me to sell, and in a short time, I raised the funds.

This was a time when alternative medicine was very hush-hush and very expensive. It was also a time I was married with no idea where my husband was from day to day and desperately poor. I milked goats twice a day to provide the milk my son needed. It was a difficult time and somehow, those little donations from people allowed me to take him to the specialist and defy the medical community.

He not only lived past birth, past infancy, childhood, and puberty, but he also lived 10178 incredible days. He used each of them to teach me the value of the two cents worth in the smallest increments of joy.

As my life progressed, I spent a year traveling with a group of people called Tony Robbins Platinum Partnership for a year. It was expensive and exquisite and worth every cent. The lasting value in my life from the various people I met in the crowd at those events is a value beyond measure.

I decided to have a light summer. I wanted to do a small book on SELF-LOVE to release on the anniversary of my first solo compilation, *Here Comes the Sun*. I set the schedule carefully so my son and I could enjoy our first summer in our new, beautiful home in Western Arkansas.

He had other plans, and on June 2, 2023, on day 10178 as his mother, my son, my best friend, my confidant, and a young man I have been with 24/7 since the pandemic started, went to his next journey and shoved me through a funnel I thought I might somehow have avoided. I became a parent who lost a child.

I am so thankful my summer schedule was already light, so I can grieve and honor him at my pace. I am thankful I devoted two decades in life insurance and the past ten years to helping myself and others break cycles of pain. I know the steps. I am so grateful for the love and support of every author in this book that trusted me to deliver their incredible stories and this book to the world.

My son, Hayden Ray, built a warrior out of a broken little girl. He taught me to use my thoughts to change our world and to use writing to create my emotional reality. He taught this to everyone who crossed his path in some way or another. He taught us Hayden's Way. I will be an example of this for the duration.

Please know you are never alone, and it is my wish that you feel my love for you and this project. I have received such support since Hayden Ray passed that I can overflow into others—a gift I will cherish and respect.

With gratitude, we are all one,

Mistilei

#HAYDENSRAY #haydensway

Green Lights and Parking Spaces

By Deborah Driggs

Having written over one hundred blog posts and having a specific category called "Self-Care," I definitely have formulated my two cents in my writing. In all honesty, my favorite topic to write about is self-love. In reflecting back on my life experiences and challenges, I discovered a common theme in my life: a lack of self-love, self-esteem, and self-care. If the most powerful thing you can do in life is love yourself, and I believe it is, then I wanted to understand on a deep level just what that meant.

Self-love is a crucial aspect of our mental health and emotional well-being. It is the act of treating yourself with kindness, compassion, and respect. It is a practice. Hear me now when I say, "There is nothing to be fixed!" No magic pill, vacation, relationship, new car, fancy drink, or money will "fix" anything. Those are what I call five-minute fixes. The dopamine from those external fixes last five minutes—that's it. You are better off getting a dog: at least you'd have ongoing dopamine hits.

Self-love is acknowledging and accepting yourself for who you are, including your strengths and weaknesses. We are all unique; even identical twins are unique. We are all extraordinary and special in our own way. Comparing ourselves to others is usually where the struggle and negative self-talk starts. By the way, even jokingly saying "I am so stupid" or "I am depressed" tells the cells in our body and sends our brain a message that we are stupid and depressed.

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Even if it is a joke, it is harmful. On some deeper level, we believe that joke. Whenever I hear people laugh and say, "I am such an idiot," I think to myself, "Wow, they believe that on some level."

The way in which we speak about ourselves, even in jest, can be damaging. Our language is so important. Today I am constantly saying, "Cancel, cancel, cancel!" when I catch myself putting out something that will not serve me. Even if I think I am being funny, that is usually just a way to completely disconnect. People will laugh or smile when they are nervous or filled with fear. They will make fun of themselves and say it's just a joke, but really it is a lack of self-esteem.

Here are some phrases to remove from your speech and thoughts right away: "I'm always," "I never," "I'm trying," and anything derogatory about yourself. Even if you are joking, remove it now. This is where the practice begins. The next time you catch yourself using one of these phrases, say "Cancel"—for example, "I'm always late," "I am always tired," "I never get my way," "I'm trying to feel better." I'm sure you can think of other examples. Just removing this sort of language is a very good start.

The cells in the brain *love* gratitude! Everything and everyone loves gratitude. But we are speaking of self-love, and my two cents is that the cells in your brain and your body absorb what you say to yourself and what you say out loud. Imagine having a brand-new computer or device in front of you and not knowing how to use it. I can tell you there are hundreds of features on my computer I am not accessing. The same is true of our personal system. How we use it is everything!

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I like to reboot my computer, turn it off once in a while, treat it well with kindness and gratitude, be happy when it works properly, shut it off at night, and leave it alone for twenty-four hours if it acts wonky. I treat myself this way today. I program myself every morning. I have rituals and practices that guide my day. (In a blog post entitled "Creating Rituals," I give several examples and ideas of what my day looks like.)

I start out by simply saying, "Thank you, thank you, thank you!" I look at myself in the mirror and say, "Wow, look at your sixty-year-young, experienced body. I put my hands on my belly because I think that is the emotional home of our bodies, and I say, "Thank you. I send you so much love!" I care for this body in a profound way. It has served me well and healed quickly anytime I have been sick, so I remember that and fill my mind with so much gratitude and tell the cells in my body, "Thank you for being so strong and never taking a day off to serve me. I also thank my lungs, which breathe without my having to do anything. I'll admit, sometimes I forget to breathe, so I give myself some nice deep breaths. Our bodies are miracles!

When you love your body, and you tell it so, you shift your language and become aware of what you say and put into the universe. You practice self-care. This is a priority. This includes taking care of your physical health by getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet or what the body is craving, and exercising regularly. It involves taking care of our mental and emotional health by engaging in activities that bring us joy and relaxation, such as reading, practicing yoga, being in nature, cooking, and meditating. Self-care is not a luxury; it is a priority. When was the last time you soaked in an Epsom salt bath? Or dry brushed your body followed by a cold shower?

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Practice does not make perfect; it makes better practice. This is why I love yoga. There is no destination. It is an ongoing practice. You are where you are in the moment.

I can share from experience I never did any of this until I got into my forties. I had what I call a glimpse here and there of this way of living, but it wasn't until I hit forty that I began a journey. That journey led me to where I am today. We are never too old to start. I am going to be sixty this year, and I feel as though life finally makes sense. I am not swimming against the current anymore, and if I start to do that, I remember that working so hard will not serve me. My journey did not start off with green lights; it included a lot of red lights and fighting against everything and everyone. It was darkness and emotional sadness where I thought at times I was losing my mind. I wasn't ready for the practices I do today, but I was headed there, and it takes what it takes. For me, it took a life event that created instability and major fear—toppled by an addiction. Let's just say I did not see my green lights and parking spaces—you know, when you pull into a parking lot, and magically you get a great spot!

Self-love is a decision to not accept anything or anyone who doesn't serve your highest good or make you a better person! By the way, a lot of people wear great disguises and will make you feel as though they have your back. This I know for sure: the more work you do on yourself, the clearer this gets when you meet people or look around at the people who are in your life. Your perspective will shift, and those people you allowed in at one time will lose it when you let them go. They will begin telling you how horrible of a person you are, or they will ask, "Why are you blowing me off?" You see, when you change and go on a self-love journey, it is hard to bring along people who are self-destructing.

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This brings me to boundaries. Self-love is also setting healthy boundaries and saying no when necessary. The people you might be leaving behind will absolutely not like being told no. I have received scathing texts from those I have had to let go—those who made *my* journey about them and their feelings. As people on a self-love journey, we would never send those kinds of texts or guilt trip anyone in our lives. We just let things be. That is love—to love under any condition. When we begin a journey of healing and self-love, it is what is *best* for our mental and emotional life. The universe will show us who is about love and who is about ego. That becomes *very* clear. Make no mistake: you will find out who is about love very quickly.

I believe that disasters can become great masters. I spent a lot of time on the disaster side of things. So I send those people a lot of love, and they remain in my prayers. However, I do not need to engage in anything ever again that does not bring love and joy. It is that simple. Boundaries allow us to prioritize our own needs and communicate our limits to others effectively. This is not about proving anything. Once you give a *no*, that is the end of the conversation. I have said no and gotten back different responses, such as "I feel like you're ignoring me" and "You never call me. Did I do something wrong?"

Boundaries can be the hardest part of this practice because you will get responses that do not serve you and might make you feel bad until you realize they have zero to do with you. You find out quickly who does not like being told no!

Since I have gone within on my journey, I have lost family members and so-called friends. It happens when you begin to choose your emotional health over anything else. I

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send them *all* love and forgiveness and remember everyone is on a different journey. I stay close to those who do not make me feel bad about myself. That may sound easy, but in my life experience, it is the absolute hardest thing to do. So congratulations if you are on a self-healing, self-love, and self-compassion journey.

This whole self-love idea is not about thinking "I am great"; that is ego. Self-love is an essential aspect of our mental and emotional well-being. It involves treating ourselves with kindness, compassion, and respect, acknowledging and accepting ourselves for who we are, and prioritizing our own needs. This guarantees a life that is filled with joy.

Gratitude is always the key practice. I practice gratitude every day by finding surprises and unexpected moments and acknowledging they exist, like green lights and parking spaces. Remember, my reader, that self-love is a practice! If you have the mindset that this is an ongoing practice and there is nothing to fix, you will understand and thrive in this new way of being.

The greatest news of all with self-love—and this is just my two cents: you will never have to seek validation or approval from another human being ever again. You will attract new healthy, authentic, and fulfilling relationships. That is the gift of this work.

That's my two cents!

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Deborah Driggs is on a healing path. Known for her acting roles in *Night Rhythms*, *Total Exposure*, and *Neon Bleed*, she has also been a *Playboy* centerfold and cover girl, a member of the Screen Actors Guild, and a top-rated insurance industry professional. Deborah has overcome a number of challenges by being willing to take risks and maintain a positive attitude. Pursuing her interest in dance, Deborah won a spot on the US Football League cheerleading squad and joined a professional dance company touring Japan. When she returned to Los Angeles, she began her modeling career and auditioned for *Playboy*. After posing as a centerfold, she was invited to grace the cover of the March and April 1990 issues of *Playboy*—the leading men's magazine in the world at the time—which led to opportunities as a VJ (video jockey) for the Playboy Channel's *Hot Rocks* show and appearances in several rock videos. Dedicated to helping women break through negative self-talk and take on any challenge, Deborah knows the difference it can make to have a helping hand when one needs it the most. Her response to internal struggles is, "If there is a struggle, then there is a

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problem, and in that problem, there is a beautiful, simple solution for complicated souls!"

Her book *Son of a Basque* is out now!

Deborah's self-care blogs are available at
www.DeborahDriggs.com