
LOVING YOURSELF

TOP TIPS

May 2014

I have just come back from a walk to the creek. These are some of the things I noticed: two lobster pots, a man strumming a guitar in his garden, a profusion of flowers, yellow, blue, purple and pink, two ladies sharing a pot of tea and a gossip in another garden, a variety of birdsong, some people sitting outside the pub chatting, several swans gliding along the creek, the feel of the sun (yes – there was sun!), the chill of the wind when the sun went in, the feel of my shoes on the new gravel on the quay, a few young boys kicking a football in the park...I could go on. This is a walk I do frequently, and so often as I walk I think about things and mull things over, which can be very helpful. And it can also mean that I miss out on so much of what is happening 'right here, right now'. It's a really interesting exercise to do one of your usual activities, to do it with attention to **all** the detail of it, rather than zooming into some imaginary cyberspace. Try it. Tell me what you notice!

I'm always interested to notice, as I work with people, when similar themes arise. Over the past few weeks, there is a theme that has been emerging, and it is to do with loving ourselves. Many of us are experts at loving and looking after other people, and yet when it comes to loving ourselves, we find we are in the nursery class. Some people believe that it is more important to love other people than themselves, but this simply doesn't work. I remember shortly after having my first child (and motherhood was a bit of a shock to me!) when I was struggling to cope, and my wise husband said, 'All you need to do is look after the baby; everything else (dishes, washing etc) can wait.' Then a few minutes later he came back and said he had got it wrong. 'Actually the first thing you need to do is to look after yourself.' He was right. If I pour myself out for others, then there is nothing left for me, and I become far less useful to others. And in fact, there is nobody at home in my body looking after me. So our first priority is to look after and love ourselves.

How can we do this? Like most things in life, it gets easier with practice! If you have worked with me already, then you will know how to step into your wise or coach position, from where you can begin to give yourself the love and compassion you need. You can also imagine speaking to yourself as

someone who presently or in the past, loves you. I recommend that you write 4 or 5 phrases you can say to yourself in this position. And they must be things that your wise self knows is true, such as 'You've done SO well! I'm so proud of you! You are a STAR!' Think of how you would speak to a child that you wanted to encourage. At first this can feel strange. The more we do it, the easier it becomes. And for many of us, doing this is the key to shifting so much. It is like medicine, giving us what we need, so that we are not dependent upon other people telling us how amazing and gorgeous we are, because we can do it for ourselves. The more we learn to love and accept ourselves, the more we give others permission to love and accept themselves.

So....my Top Tip for May is to **LOVE YOURSELF**. Commit NOW to doing this a little more every day. And what would happen if you did this? I'll let you work out the answer to that....keep me posted!

With love,

Julia