

Radical

Issue One: Self-Care

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This e-zine required a lot of heart work. If you would like to see more e-zines, please consider making a monetary donation at PayPal.me/LOviedo

What is Radical?

Radical is living our journeys on our own terms. It is moving beyond expectations and limits to see what we are made of. It is forging our own paths and creating an accepting, compassionate community along our way.

Most of what is taught about self-care is based on our outer self. We have learned that retail therapy is healing and a new haircut is self-care. We believe that once we are successful and wealthy than we will be happy. Those are nice things, but they don't compare to hardcore inner healing. Real self-care requires deep personal work in our airbrushed, quick fix culture. We can practice self-care without spending a single penny. We can find happiness in our failures. We can be strong once we connect with our weaknesses.

I created this monthly e-zine to spread a message of radical self-care and new ideas, so we can all learn and grow into our best self. After spending 17 years hating myself, feeling like a loser and drowning in debt from retail therapy, I said STOP! Change was extremely difficult, and it didn't happen in one moment or even one year, it has taken years to heal. This has been an epic journey. I'm still learning, but I have never made a better decision. Choosing to love myself unconditionally and heal my depression is the reason I am still alive today.

Now is the time to open your "third eye" and connect with your intuition so you can live fully awake and open to new growth.



Be Rebellious in a Healthy Way

Channel your inner activist and be rebellious! Hardcore self-care means pushing yourself to forge your own path, not simply following the crowd. There are many choices, many paths. Real rebellion is when we create our own, unique paths. Here are a few ideas for you to try opening to the world:

- **Practice Listening.** Move past tolerating others and accept others. Respect that we live in a world of people with different opinions of what is right or wrong. What seems right to you, may seem wrong to another person or another culture. Instead of trying to change their mind, create an opportunity for conversation. Share ideas and beliefs. Don't insist people are wrong, even when you feel strongly that they are. When we're compassionate we open space for a flow of new ideas, for opening our hearts and for compromise. Far right or far left ideas that divide are bred in an inability to accept others.
- **Prioritize.** Think about what you need now in your life. Do you need to focus on school or work? Do you need to spend more time on relationships? Is getting out of debt important or is it more important to take an adventure? Only you know what you really need, so take time each day to set your priorities.
- **Be grateful for yourself.** Start each day thanking yourself for being a unique person. What about yourself do you love? What have you accomplished? How have you bounced back from failure or tragedy? If you can't think of something right now, then this is a great time to start changing the view you hold about yourself. You are worthy.
- **Let go of guilt.** Guilt is a tool, used to control us. It's often passive aggressive and sneaky. It's one of the most harmful ways we control others and stop ourselves from following our passions. You have a choice to feel guilty or not.
- **Live your imagination.** It's so easy to get stuck in our history and regrets. Our stories are continuously unfolding, and we are always transforming. By living in our imagination, we open opportunities and new paths. What kind of life do you want to lead? What dreams or goals do you possess that seem impossible? What would you like your eulogy to say?
- **Set Boundaries!** Have you spent most of your life saying no when you wanted to say yes, or yes when you wanted to say no? That was my experience for 17 years. During that time, most of my decisions were made from fear. I would say what I thought people wanted to hear. I didn't trust my own voice. Eventually I noticed that being selfless was harmful to myself. Now I understand to set boundaries and say what I need to say. This may be the most rebellious action you can take.

Tiny Ways to Stop Your Cycle of Body Shame.

1. Recycle all your fashion and health magazines. Stop buying these magazines because they are in the business to sell you products, not cultivate self-love! Sneaky lil brats!
2. Look yourself in the mirror -sans makeup- and repeat “I am imperfectly perfect.” until your voice is hoarse. Repeat this practice daily until you believe it. Choose a time every morning.
3. Stand in front of a mirror naked and say, “I love my body” until your voice is hoarse. Repeat this practice once a day until you believe it.
4. When someone compliments there are only two words you should ever say “Thank” and “You”. When you start saying “thank you, but my ass(nose/belly) is so big”, stop yourself!
5. If you don’t feel comfortable being in public without makeup, try wearing a little bit less once a week. Work yourself up to wearing no makeup one day a week.
6. If you constantly weigh yourself and feel bad about your weight, choose one day a week to not step on the scale. Relearn that your worth has nothing to do with how you look. You are worthy and deserving of self-love.
7. If you have eating/weight issues, be gentle with yourself. When you eat something unhealthy, binge, or don’t eat, give yourself a hug. Give yourself lots of love. Know that you are a whole person. Don’t feel bad. Get the help you need. If it’s not helping, then look for other support systems.
8. Give yourself continuous forgiveness. Let go of the should-haves and could-haves. You are a unique individual who has done and not done things that you think were wrong or selfish. That doesn’t make you a terrible person. Don’t torment yourself with punishment. Write down everything you regret and then write “I release myself from this pain” after each thing. Then, think about what you have learned from each item on your list. Write down what you learned.
9. When you look in the mirror, focus on your inner smile. What you look like isn’t as important as how you treat yourself and others. Make a conscious choice to love your whole body, even the parts you think are ugly or imperfect.
10. Remember that you only have one body. It is not and never will look like an airbrushed model, because nobody looks like that. It’s all makeup and lighting and photo editing.
11. You can also try things like not shaving your body hair or plucking your eyebrows. You can get a tattoo or piercing. If you’ve been taught makeup is unbecoming, try wearing some.
12. Stop comparing yourself to others. We all have unique bodies, unique looks. There is no reason to try and be better or “as good as” others.

Write Yourself Loving Reminder Notes!

Paste these notes up wherever you can, on your mirrors, doors, inside your notebooks, on your phone. Wherever you look! Write your own love notes. Use your own artwork, your own words. What matters is that you say loving things to yourself every day. For every unloving thought or action toward yourself, counteract it with a positive affirmation.

I am wonderful, fantastic, awesome, marvelous, amazing, talented.	<i>My weight does not define me. I am a beautiful person committed to a healthy lifestyle.</i>	I am beautiful inside & out. I define my own idea of beauty.
I love myself unconditionally !!!	I am a shining light in this world.	I am intelligent and able to solve problems.
My life has value. I am worthy.	<i>My body is my property. I make my own health decisions.</i>	I love my mind and respect my body!

Rekindle Your Unique Curiosity for Adventure

What is stopping you from living your best life? (*If you are insanely curious, you can skip this section.*)

What does adventure have to do with radical self-love? Taking adventures allows you to grow in new ways. Adventure is a chance to see what you can accomplish and pushes you to move past your limiting beliefs.

The kind of adventure you need is unique. It's not the same as mine. I highly suggest tiny steps and slowly building up to leaps of faith.

- Take a day trip with a trusted confidant and then plan one by yourself.
- Ride your bike or take the bus to a new part of your city and explore.
- Strike up a conversation with a stranger. Ask questions about their passions and beliefs.
- Learn a new language.
- Start doing research on a topic that you want to know more about.
- Make up a game on the spot and play.
- Say yes more often. Even if you automatically say no, you can change your mind.
- Step outside your circle and attend different cultural events.
- Attend music concerts with music that is different than what you like.
- Try something new as often as possible. Look for free things and discounts first.

Currently I'm having an adventure of traveling and working. It's both wonderful and testing. Despite the occasional obstacle and feeling homesick, I've never felt better. Despite the threat of not having enough, I'm committed to listening, learning and discovering more about myself and the world. Deep in the root of my spine, in the belly of my heart, I know that this is what I need.



A Deep Knowing

Deep in the root of my spine

In the belly of my heart

In the dark lonely nights

I know what I need.

Way deep in the womb of my mother

In the history of my father

In the joy of moments that catch my eye

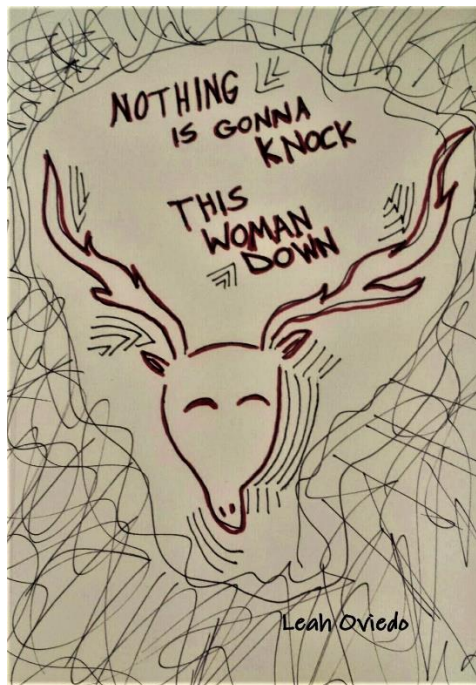
I know this path is mine to own.

Settled in my solar plexus

Flowing through my limbs

Continuously moving through the years

There lies a deep, deep knowing that I am whole.



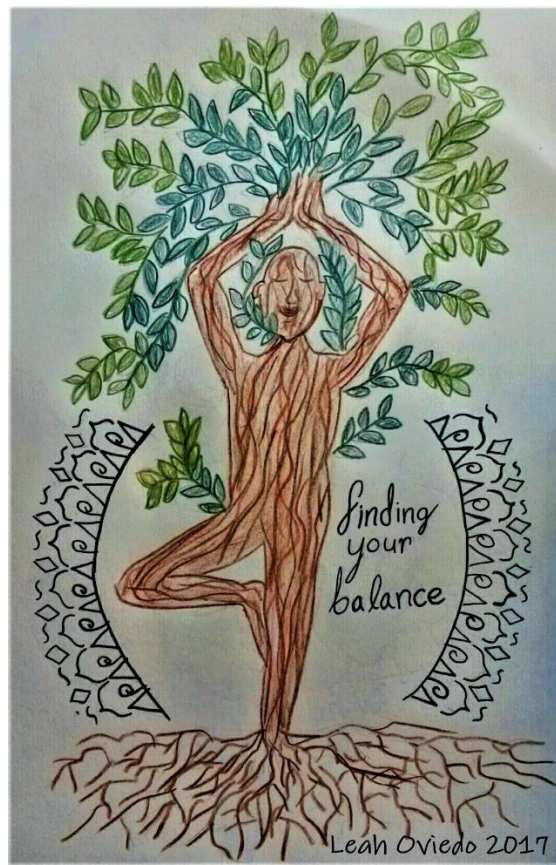
An Energizing Practice

Let's visualize!

Take a deep breath. Jump up and RUN, even if it's only in your imagination. Jump onto tall boulders, leap across rivers and climb over walls. Breathe fire and blow wind. Bring the rains down, cascading and pouring all your energy into being a force of nature. Know that nothing can stop you. You are a super hero and the world is yours!

Now get up for real and move! Dance, jog, take a walk, practice yoga, go to an exercise or movement class, practice Kung-Fu. Spin around until you are dizzy. Get moving. If you have limited abilities, then do what is comfortable. Don't hurt yourself! Don't push yourself. We're not talking about becoming a professional athlete. We're talking about using our bodies to create physical joy and pump up our endorphins.

What type of movement feels best for your unique needs?



An Exercise in Letting Go – Of Negative People

When I decided to take control of my life by healing my depression, I let go of several hard-worn habits that caused me to feel bad. Along with these habits went a few friends as well. Previously, my life was centered around instant gratification, fun and material gain without much depth. That made me feel miserable. It exasperated my depression because I was just focusing on short-term joys. As I began to focus more on hobbies and interests that gave me a sense of accomplishment and inner peace, I began to let go.

Well wouldn't you know, when I changed, my friends didn't magically change along with me. We quickly grew apart though I tried to hang on to them for longer than I needed because comfort is addicting, and change is scary. A few of those friends I keep in touch with, but we're not as close because we have such different life pursuits.

Before I left on an extended vacation (a gift of unemployment) three years ago, a wise friend gifted me the book "Steering by Starlight" by Martha Beck. This book of self-realization resonated with me immediately. So much of it is full of ideas and actions I've been working on and that have helped me along the way. Her encouragement to look at the stars and be our own "Stargazer", "Mapmaker" and "Pathfinder" is fantastic. I recommend getting a copy. Along with what I knew before opening the book I'm also learning new actions to help me stay focused on my true North. In the last chapter, "Leading Your Life" she talks about the fact that just because we change doesn't mean everyone around else will embrace the changes and in fact some may react strongly against our new self. Her advice for this stage of our growth process is "sustaining calm, fearless affection" in our relationships.

“Instead of defending ourselves by counter attacking and riling up our ego-induced anger, we should recognize that our loved ones are in fact scared of losing us and unsure how to deal with that fear. They probably aren't purposely trying to be mean. By staying centered and choosing reassuring words we can calm their fear and lead them along with us on the journey.” Read more of Martha's advice on her blog: <http://Marthabeck.com>



Instant Gratification

Stop with the instant gratification. Instead of having a drink, a processed snack, a hit, a drag, a shot.... Think about what it is that you really want and need.

Are you seeking fun, to escape, to be numb?

Do you feel awkward, unsettled, sad, angry?

Think about the last time you caved in to instant gratification.

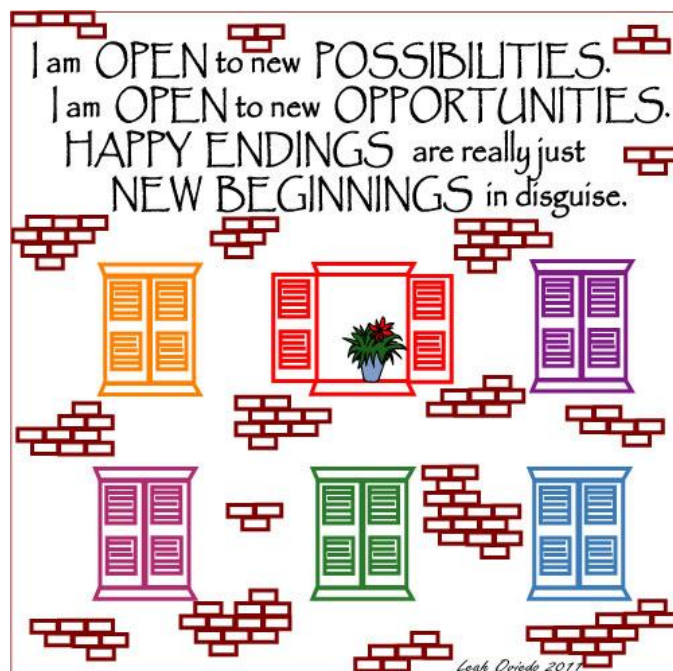
What were you doing?

How did you feel physically?

How did you feel emotionally?

Now is the time to cultivate a discipline of asking your inner compass, what you need. When we began to raise the value of ourselves, it becomes easier to stop and wait a moment before we reach for instant gratification.

In place of reaching for that comfortable thing, try journaling. Write down how you feel. Ask yourself what would happen if you waited or denied yourself that thing? I encourage you to think about the multitude of options that can open new doors in your life when you consciously practice self-care? As the saying goes, when one door slams in your face, there will be new doors you can open and explore.



“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.” – Audre Lorde

Muchisimas gracias for reading my e-zine. If you are interested in contributing to a future issue, please send an email to Leah at investinginwomen@gmail.com.

Self-care is a continuous practice. It gets easier the more you do it. Please remember that your life is valid, and you have worth.

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