



## LEARN TO LOVE AGAIN THIS VALENTINE'S DAY

**The most romantic day of the year isn't just for the young, the beautiful and the lucky. It's a chance for each of us to embrace the healing power of love.**

Valentine's Day is all about love – falling in love, being loved and showing love. However, in this fast-paced world of ours, we forget to love the most important person – ourselves. Why not use this Valentine's Day as an opportunity to love yourself, experience joy and learn to actively generate loving relationships?

### REALISE YOU ARE LOVED



After a loss or break-up, it's easy to feel angry, bitter, empty and even unlovable or incapable of love. The first step to recovery is to realise that one person leaving your life does not mean you will never experience love again. There are people in your life who still love you. Just because this isn't romantic love, doesn't mean it isn't valuable. Take a minute and think about what these people might love about you. Spending time with those who love you will give you perspective on yourself and what you have to offer.

### LET GO OF BITTERNESS

Smarting from a failed relationship? Feeling abandoned by a friend? There is a famous saying that holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. Before you can move on, you need to forgive the other person and, more importantly, yourself. Everyone is human and makes mistakes – you are no different. The REACH method is the best way to forgive.

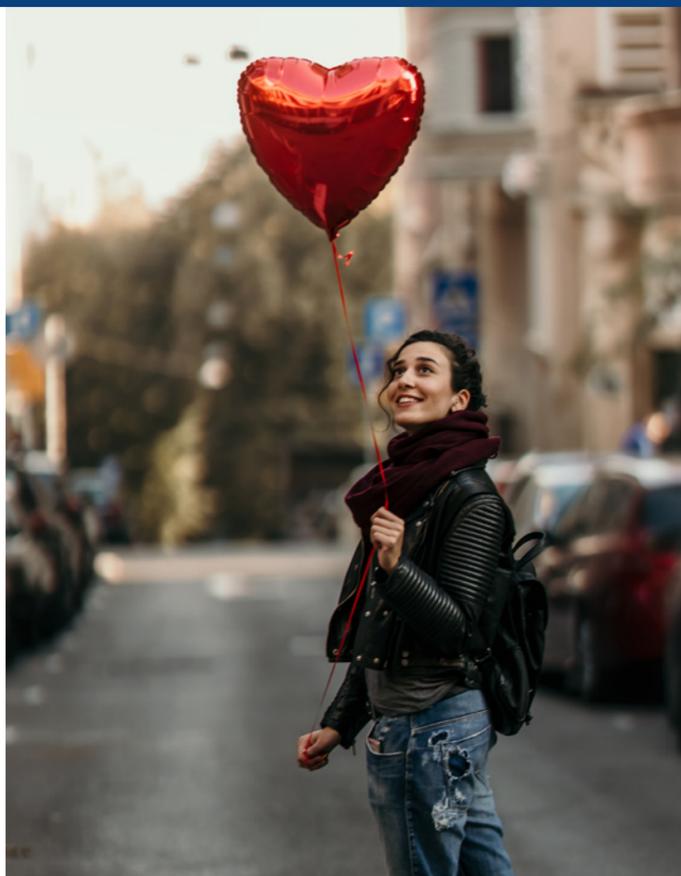
**Recall:** Look carefully at the situation upsetting you and try to understand why. Allow yourself the opportunity to feel the emotions that come with that.

**Empathise:** Try to understand the other person's point of view, but without minimising the way you feel.

**Altruistic gift:** Remember a time when you wronged someone, and they forgave you. How did that feel?

**Commit to forgiveness:** Write down that you forgive them or tell a friend that you have. This will help to finalise it in your mind.

**Hold:** Hold tight to your forgiveness. Fight bad emotions by reminding yourself why you forgave.



### LOVE IS A CHOICE



When you're on your own or feeling alone, it might seem easier to simply continue that way and not to reach out again, but did you know being in love comes with a variety of benefits? People who are in love have lower blood pressure, heal quicker, live longer, have stronger immune systems and even feel less physical pain. With all these benefits, you owe it to yourself to at least be open to love and be loved.

### LOVE YOURSELF

Confidence is attractive: when you speak well of yourself internally and understand your own value, other people will recognise it too. Whenever you start thinking negatively, stop yourself and purposefully say something kind or motivational. If you struggle to do this, talk to yourself as if giving advice to a friend. The trick now is to get yourself in front of people with whom you may have something in common. Joining local clubs, going to gatherings organised by friends or even simple online dating have all been responsible for successful relationships. Try them all!



### GIVE LOVE TIME



The final step is to give love time. Making a meaningful connection is not something that's likely to happen overnight, but if you keep putting yourself out there with an open and positive heart brimming with confidence, you will soon find yourself uplifted by the love of family, friends and community.

**The relationship you have with yourself is the most important adult relationship you will have. It will influence your wellbeing and success. So, this Valentine's Day, find your greatest love within yourself.**

#### References

Harvard Medical School  
The Heart and Stroke Foundation of South Africa  
The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)  
University of Utah  
WebMD

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**Let us stay mindful of caring for one another and ourselves**