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The Importance of Loving Yourself on the Path to Recovery

January is self-love month and what a great way to start the new year! You might make a resolution for yourself as a way to begin to take better care of yourself mentally, physically, intentionally, and authentically. By taking better care of yourself, YOU feel better, more positive, and stronger to take on anything that comes your way. The reality is that problem gamblers and their loved ones often put themselves on hold, either to continue in the addiction or to unknowingly support the addiction in someone else. **These individuals often do not even realize that they have lost themselves years ago.** It takes strength and will to change negative self-talk and negative behaviors into positive ones.

Self-love doesn't just happen. "Self-love is about developing your capacity to be more aware, authentic and intentional in every aspect of your life. By doing so, you'll build greater self-compassion and also enhance your ability to be more compassionate with others, which in turn brings peace and harmony to your own life. When you practice self-love, you are continually naming and claiming all of who you are — even the scariest parts. Self-love is vastly important for any person in any walk of life. If you want to evolve as a person, you have to start with self-love first. It is the foundation for everything beautiful in life, including meaningful healthy relationships, having a positive attitude, body image, and achieving your dreams."¹

"Choose, every day, to forgive yourself. You are human, flawed, and most of all worthy of love."
—Alison Malee

When you lose connection with your values and beliefs, whether you are a compulsive gambler or a loved one of a gambler, you begin to behave in ways that go against these principles. This in turn can cause you to lose self-esteem, self-worth, and self-love. When your behavior and beliefs match your values, it creates self-worth. When your behavior does not match your values, it creates self-shame.

Addiction takes control of the person addicted and those around them. It may seem as if a whirlpool is spinning rational thinking and behaviors away. Soon, the disordered gambler is unable to see how they have changed. Even when they do, the shame is too much, and the escape that gambling brings helps numb any feelings of self-loathing. Loved ones may lose themselves in the whirlpool of denial and loss of control over what is happening. Love yourself enough to do what is right for YOU first – only then can you be there for others.

It is important to:

- Have realistic expectations for yourself
- Find what your values and beliefs are
- Be assertive and do not undervalue yourself

You win when you love yourself and are true to yourself. Invest time in yourself exploring the physical, spiritual, and psychological parts of yourself. Take a walk and consider that you have formed an opinion of yourself over years of both success and failure, including your interactions with others. Is this opinion true? What does your self-talk say about you or to you? What would you change?

If you are struggling in the whirlpool of addiction, whether you may be a compulsive gambler or a loved one that can't say no, call or text **888-ADMIT-IT** for a wide range of free resources to help you through this tough time. It's the **ONLY 24/7, Confidential, and Multilingual Problem Gambling HelpLine for Florida!**



References: 🔍

1. MONET. *January is Self-Love Month Love: Why it is Important.* <https://monatglobal.com/january-is-self-love-month-why-its-important/>