



Acceptance

In time, we can come to terms with all the emotions and feelings we experienced when the death or loss happened. Healing can begin once the loss becomes integrated into our set of life experiences. Throughout our lives, we may return to some of the earlier stages of grief; everyone's healing process will be different.

To accept and love unconditionally is to:

- Place no condition on yourself as to how to behave or what to be in order to receive self-acceptance and self-love or give it to others.
- Do not use if-then-clauses in establishing conditions for accepting and loving yourself.
- Take a risk to be open and vulnerable to who you are and where you are with no pre-set limits or expectations.

Set the stage for yourself to feel warmth, caring, and concern for yourself which results in your growing in self-esteem and self-worth.

What are the negative consequences of a lack of unconditional acceptance? For yourself and others?

When you do not give unconditional acceptance and love, then you:

- Feel constrained to act in ways which are inconsistent with your beliefs and feelings.
- Lack the freedom to be yourself.
- Live your life to please others rather than to please yourself.
- Can become dependent on others to make you feel good about yourself.
- Can become very rule-bound and perfectionistic in seeking to do what is right or expected in order to be accepted or loved by others.
- Are more likely to experience low self-esteem and low self-worth.
- Feel misunderstood, not approved of, and defensive.
- Have poor relationship skills and experience failed relationships.
- Work harder at meeting conditions and expectations set for you by others than working at becoming self-directed, self-sufficient, and self-reliant.
- Can become withdrawn and isolate yourself so as to avoid future rejection and non-approval.
- Can become very critical, disapproving, and punitive.
- Tend to set unrealistic, non-achievable, and overly idealistic expectations which must first be met in order to accept and love.
- Become your own worst critic who is never able to say you are good enough.