



A Field Guide in Radical Self Acceptance

A WORKBOOK TO HELP
YOU FIND YOUR WAY
BACK TO YOU

Dear you,

I created this for you, for us...

Here's part of my story:

My first husband was sweet and kind, but completely unavailable because of his marijuana addiction.

I played fifth-fiddle in my second major relationship with a workaholic.

My next marriage to a volatile prescription painkiller addict ended with me leaving him, scared for my life, with my two dogs and just the stuff I could fit into my car as I boot-scooted out of town while he was at work.

I finally saw the pattern. And as uncomfortable, depressing, and 'uh-oh' as it was to admit it —I was the common denominator.

Or, rather, my false-but-deeply-held belief that I was inherently unworthy and unlovable. I acted out my unlovability by unconsciously choosing men who were unavailable to love me. So clear now.

Years of therapy told me I needed to “learn to love myself” before I could let anyone else truly love me. Great advice, but there was no practical plan offered for doing so... just an abstract "Learn to love yourself."

Hmm... okay. Got it.

But, er, how?

It wasn't until I learned to make the leap from the rather abstract idea of loving myself to the felt-body experience of doing so that the whole pattern dissolved in a magical, friendly way.

I'll skip to the next chapter here and tell you I am now happily married to a sweet, kind, generous, incredibly devoted, emotionally available, spiritually mature man without an addictive bone in his body. (Well, except for maybe when the Broncos are playing.) We've been together for 6 years now and our relationship just keeps getting better.

I attribute this magical occurrence—and numerous concurrent major shifts in my health and vitality, net worth, work satisfaction, friendships, creative output, joy quotient, and more—to the steady, pleasurable practice of the tools and skills in this workbook. I invite you to try a few—or all—of them yourself.

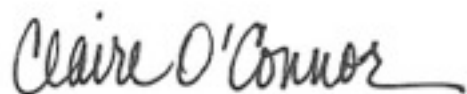
See what happens.

I'd love it if you'd let me know how this workbook helped you, and if I can supplement it in any way to further support you in loving you.

Email me [HERE](#) anytime.

Here's to finding your way back to you.

With great love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire O'Connor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

What's in store for you in this workbook?

Can you imagine how your life might shift if you learned to bring all the under-loved or seemingly unlovable parts of you up onto the porch swing of the wide unconditional love you so easily lather on others. That is the intention of the exercises in this workbook. And it's for you if you resonate with the following questions.

Are you crimping the inflow of love into your experience?

- Do you bring yourself down with food or other "flatteners"?
- Do you deflect compliments?
- Do you find yourself worrying or feeling guilty while in the midst of doing something you love?
- Do you find yourself subtly vigilant?
- Do you hear criticism from those close to you even when they don't intend it?
- Do you get sick the day of an opportunity for moving forward?
- Do you hang back instead of reaching out to people?

With the simple yet profound exercises in this workbook, you can tap into your innate kindness and sweetness and learn how to turn it back on yourself... more than that, learn how to truly receive your own love.

Benefits of working through the exercises in this workbook:

- Transform your life by expanding your capacity to receive love
- Free up tremendous creative energy that may currently be siphoned off by love-deflecting behaviors
- Identify and actually befriend the very parts of you that keep your own love for you at bay—your Inner Critic, your I'm-Not-Good-Enough, your Comparer, your I'm-a-Burden
- Release with gentle ease whatever shame body you may still be carrying from old wounds
- Expand the vital skillset for becoming more compassionate toward the unforgivable parts of you
- Learn a delightful menu ways to receive your own self-appreciation that bypass your natural resistance

The impact of embodying the skill of truly loving yourself—rather than the mere intellectual idea of loving yourself—can have far-reaching impact in all areas of your life: money, health, career, friendships, attitude, future relationships, and more. I'm here to testify, my dear.

Sounds pretty good, eh?

Great! Let's jump right in, shall we?

Exercise 1

Your Signature 'Felt-Body-Sensation' of Love

Definition of "Signature 'Felt-Body-Sensation' of Love"

- It's what pure love feels like streaming through your body
- It's unique to you... like your fingerprint
- It's a constellation of sensations in your **body**, rather than in your intellect or your imagination

Purpose of this Exploration

To explore, re-discover and familiarize yourself with your own unique 'Felt-Body-Sensation' of Love, and to map it in such a way that you can source it reliably.

Try this!

1. Sit or lie down comfortably, in a place and time with no distractions; you may like a blanket nearby
2. Take 3 easy, connected breaths; full cycles of in-breath/out-breath, allow the in-breath to roll over into the out-breath with no gap or pause; allow the out-breath to melt into the in-breath with no gap or pause
3. Bring into your awareness someone you know you love for sure
4. Tune into your body, scanning softly from head to toe with gentle curiosity
5. Notice if your awareness is drawn to any focalized sensation(s) in your body; note the location
6. Next, placing your full attention on that sensation, pretend the sensation is made up of 'bits', and the bits are DOING something. What are the bits doing?
7. Allow yourself to enjoy widening out and savoring the sensation itself for 1 to 3 cycles of breath more

Deepening Your Exploration

As you move through your days this week, use an alarm clock (or the alert function on your smartphone or computer) to remind yourself to periodically ask:

- Where is love located in my body right now?
- If the sensation of love in my body were made up of “bits” and the bits were DOING something, what would they be doing?

Exercise 2

Naming Your Unlovable or Under-Loved Parts

Name 3 aspects of you that you find unlovable, or parts of you that you know have been under-loved. (For your eyes only.)

Examples:

- My lumpy thighs; my saggy boobs
- My propensity for criticizing and correcting
- My addiction to sugar
- My reacting-without-thinking-first
- The part of me that feels sad that my mother didn't want children, but had me anyway
- The part of me that feels like an impostor and a fraud
- The part of me that second-guesses myself
- The part of me that's desperate for approval
- My holier-than-thou/know-it-all persona

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Exercise 3

What Would You Loving You Do for You?

Describe how 3 aspects of your life would look transformed, with the practice of you reliably loving you. What would be different? (For your eyes only.)

Examples:

- I attract friendships with women where I felt seen, cherished and celebrated.
- I have a new appetite and a higher tolerance for the above. I let it in easefully.
- I feel comfortable putting myself out there professionally and having a higher visibility and impact.
- I let other peoples' appreciation in.
- I reach out to people with whom I want to connect in a way that feels good and nourishing to me.
- I attract plenty of money, and manage it wisely.
- I choose healthy foods and look forward to moving my body and exercising.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Exercise 4

The Anatomy of Neuroplasticity

Watch this 5-minute video. It's a clip of Joe Dispenza being interviewed in the film, "What the Bleep Do We Know". It contains a fascinating and useful piece of animation demonstrating how love gets wired with (fill-in-the-blank) throughout life. More importantly, it shows how, because of the neuroplasticity of our nervous systems, we can re-wire our habitual associations over time.

Follow [THIS LINK](#) to view the video.

For more information, google "neuroplasticity", or check out this article published by the Institute of Noetic Sciences, [Self-Directed Neuroplasticity](#).



Exercise 5

Feeling Your Feelings

Definition of “Feelings”

For the purposes of our explorations in this course, we’re going to define ‘feelings’ more elementally than usual.

Feelings = a constellation of sensations in your body

Sensations are felt in your **body**, rather than via your intellect or your imagination. Sensations are not stories or explanations. Sensations are not in the past or future, they are in the present moment. By getting fully present with them, we come into the present moment. The present moment is where all the magic happens.

Purpose of this Exploration

To make the important leap between ‘thinking–our–feelings’ to ‘feeling–our–feelings’.

Why This is an Important Skill

Since love is a feeling, and loving ourselves is the goal, we’ll start with simply feeling -- a completely new skill for many of us. It’s a core skill that opens us to building on it. Next week, we’ll add to this.

Most of us have learned to bury (or not feel) our feelings. This burying is assisted by our ego, our socialization and our intellect. We learned to not feel our feelings at a young age, as an adaptive strategy to fit in or to protect ourselves. That made sense at the time. Now, as adults, we can choose to feel our feelings in safe settings that are of our own making. In doing so, avail ourselves of the potentially tremendous freed–up energy to do something more interesting and fun.

There are **5 Primary Feelings**:

- Love/Joy
- Sexual Feelings
- Fear
- Anger
- Sadness

All other feelings are made up of some combination of these 5 Primaries. (Similar to the way that all colors arise out of the 5 Primary Colors, red, yellow, blue, white and black.)

Each of these 5 Primary Feelings is a constellation of body sensations that typically occur in an associated area of the body roughly according to this body map:

- Love/Joy = all over
- Sexual Feelings = groin, upper thighs
- Fear = belly
- Anger = upper back, shoulders, neck, jaw
- Sadness = throat, heart

ALL feelings come out of the same faucet. If we're crimping the flow of our feelings of sadness or anger, we're also going to be limiting how much love and other good stuff we have access to. Hence the importance of getting skilled at feeling ALL of our feelings.

Once felt, and by this I mean 'presenced with', frozen feelings melt, and the energy held frozen frees up.

Here are some ways to 'presence' your feelings:

- Name them
- Breathe with them
- Move your body as it wants to move
- Draw or paint a picture of them
- Ask them what they want
- Dance them
- Sculpt them in the air
- Exaggerate them: throw a tantrum; curl up into a fetal position; or literally run away from a fear. Turn it into theatre.

Here's the Exploration

This exploration will focus on a very powerful and deceptively simple Presencing Technique:

Describe a current sensation and name the feeling associated with it

Simply describe it neutrally, without the layer of story, or going into explanation. Practice saying this with the same neutrality you would say, "It's Wednesday."

Example: "I feel a tight, hot sensation in my throat."
"As I sit with that sensation, I notice I feel sad."

Fill yours in here: _____

Try this:

1. Take 3 Easy Connected Breaths; full cycles of in-breath/out-breath, allow the in-breath to roll over into the out-breath with no gap or pause; allow the out-breath to melt into the in-breath with no gap or pause
2. Place your curious and open attention **inside you** for 1 to 3 cycles of breath
3. Tune into your body, scanning softly from head to toe with gentle curiosity -- nothing to fix, judge, analyze, make-wrong, etc.
4. Notice if your awareness is drawn to any focalized sensation(s) in your body; note and name the location
5. Next, placing your full attention on that sensation, pretend the sensation is made up of 'bits', and the bits are DOING something. What are the bits doing? Simply describe your experience.
6. Continuing your Easy Connected Breathing, see if you notice a feeling associated with the sensation. Name it.
7. Continue your Easy Connected Breathing. Move your body as you feel the urge to do so. Notice what happens to the sensation. Describe that.

Bonus Question

What would I be doing with all the freed-up energy currently consumed by not-feeling my feelings?

Embodying the Practice

As you move through this week, use an alarm clock (or the alert function on your smartphone or computer) to remind yourself to periodically check in with your feelings. Do this once a day

or once an hour. Or do it upon rising and going to bed. Or as you wait at a traffic signal, or when you're on hold.

The purpose of this exercise is to build the neural connections of conscious awareness and presence with 'what is'. It is only from the starting point of resting in 'what is' that we can create something new.

- Take 3 easy, connected breaths
- Softly scan your body from head to toe
- Notice any sensation(s) that come(s) to the forefront of your awareness
- Notice the location of the sensation
- Notice what the bits are doing
- "Be with" your noticing (nothing to do or fix)
- Notice any feeling(s) connected with the sensation
- Say to yourself, aloud, "It's _____(insert day of week) and I feel _____ (sad, scared, angry, joyful, sexual)." Don't be surprised if you frequently have a combo plate of feelings.

HERE'S THE MAGIC CRUX OF THIS PRACTICE:

Your soft, neutral awareness **IS** an act of loving yourself.

Exercise 6

The Yes Breath

Watch this 3-minute video of Gay Hendricks of The Hendricks Institute demonstrating the Yes Breath, also called Lifestream Breathing and Happy Baby Breathing.

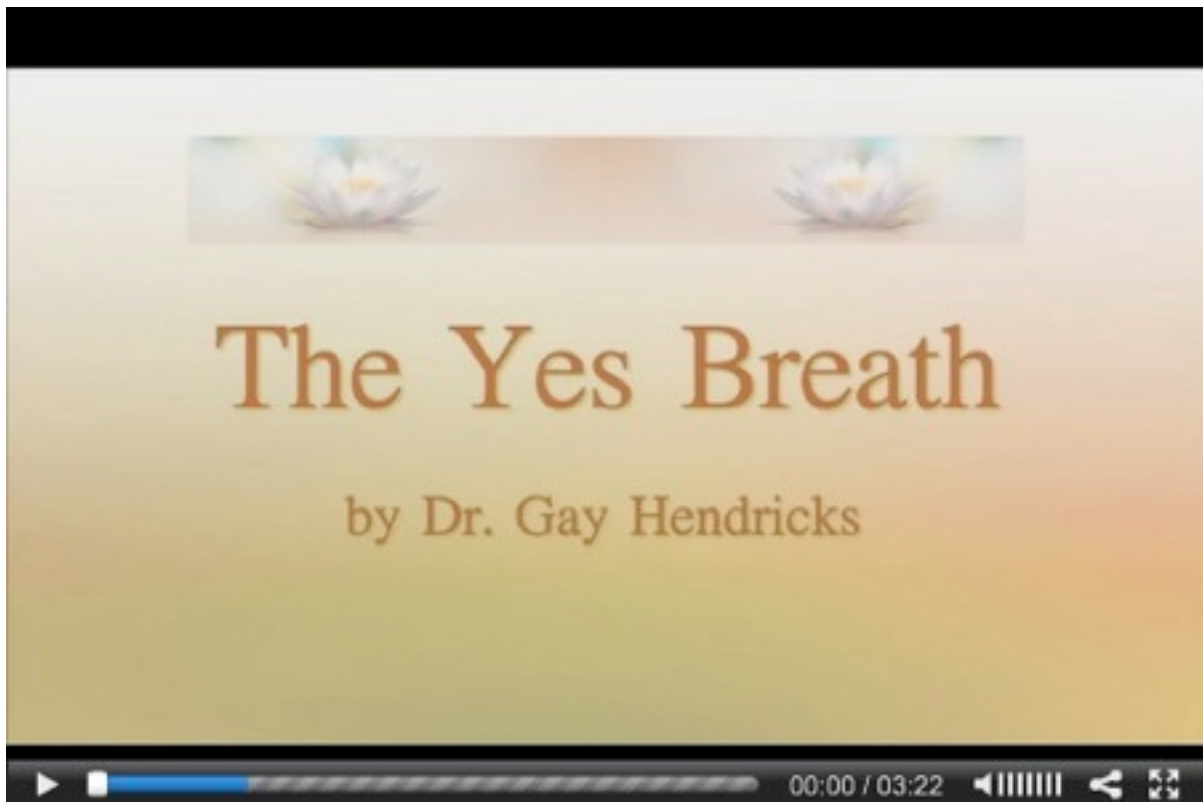
To view demonstrations of the YES BREATH videos, follow these links:

[Video 1](#)

[Video 2](#)

Commit to practicing the Yes Breath once a day (or more even!) for 2–3 minutes. It feels really great to do it on a balance ball, if you have one. Also, fabulous to do it along with your favorite song!

For more information on the art of conscious breathing, check out Gay's [Breathing Box](#).



Exercise 7

The Practice of Encompassing Opposites aka Occupying Polarities

Purpose of this Exploration

To learn how to allow seemingly-conflicting feelings to co-exist within you simultaneously, so as to honor, welcome and include all of you into the field of love.

The practice of Encompassing Opposites efficiently **re-tunes our nervous systems** to stream more love, to let more love in, in all circumstances, regardless of the source of that love.

This skill is particularly useful when we are in the middle of Big Energy, meaning a big life event, like divorce, illness, or a loved one dying.

Some examples of polarized feelings:

- Sadness <----> Joy
- Love <----> Anger
- Fear <----> Love
- Love <----> Sadness
- Sexual Feelings <----> Sadness
- Love <----> Judgment (while not technically a feeling, it generally flows from fear)

Why This is an Important Skill

As long as we're alive in human form, our egos will be part of us. By **turning toward and including** what the ego generates **ALONGSIDE** what our Essence generates, we have access to the fuel previously consumed by separation, resistance, forcing-down and willing-away.

By leaning into the reliable surety that **the field of who we are**, the field of our own innate already-always-there wholeness, is **BIG** enough to include **ALL**, we open the pipes to even more love and yum. Not to mention the ability to be fully present with ourselves -- aka, love ourselves -- through all of life's waves. Yee-ha!

Here's the Exploration

Endgoal:

**To be able to breathe and move while feeling opposing feelings,
to neutrally witness what happens when we do so,
and to enjoy the subsequent peace that it gives us access to**

Try this:

1. Think of something that you have love connected-with. Examples: Love connected with sadness, love connected with criticism, love connected with feeling crowded, love connected with abandonment, love connected with unworthiness, and so on. We'll call this your "item".
2. Imagine a circumstance where you experienced your item. It can be recent or from long-ago.
3. Now, take 3 Easy Connected Breaths (3 full cycles of in-breath/out-breath, allow the in-breath to roll over into the out-breath with no gap or pause; allow the out-breath to melt into the in-breath with no gap or pause)
4. Place your curious and open attention **inside you** for an additional 1 to 3 cycles of breath as you tune into your body, scanning softly from head to toe with gentle and open curiosity.
5. Notice if your awareness is drawn to any localized sensation(s) in your body; note the location. If exploring with a buddy, you can choose to name the location aloud if you like.
6. Next, imagine the sensation is made up of 'bits', and the bits are doing something. What are the bits doing? Simply describe your experience.
7. Continuing your Easy Connected Breathing, acknowledge what-is. Nothing to fix, judge, analyze, make-wrong, et cetera. Simply acknowledging its existence, its presence within you. Hold it in your awareness with the same neutrality you would say, "Today is Wednesday." You may even choose to say aloud, "Today is Wednesday and I feel sad at the same time I feel love." (TIP: Say "I feel sad", rather than "I am sad." Try it both ways and notice the difference.)
8. Continue your Easy Connected Breathing. Move your body as you like. Notice what happens inside. Describe that.
9. As you complete, place a drop of appreciation on yourself for all of your noticing.



Exercise 8

Wondering into Integration

Definition of Integration

Think of integration as an extension of the word **integrity**. Most of us think of integrity as 'adherence to moral and ethical principles'. Expand this common definition to include 'the state of being whole'... as in encompassing and including ALL of 'you' into 'You'. So, in integrating what you've learned in workbook, you include it in the wholeness of You... body, mind and spirit.

How to Conduct a Wonder Question

While standing, breathe and move, and say the sentences below aloud. Generate a pleasant "hmmm" sensation deep in your chest. Next, speak your Wonder Question aloud. That's all. You're just dropping your Wonder Question into the pool of your being, letting it ripple out into your conscious and subconscious mind. If you like, modify the wording as you go, as you feel into the truest, most succinct Essence of what you are wanting to create.

- Hmm... I wonder... what does my body want me to do in this moment to create integration?
- Hmm... I wonder... what movement would generate the felt-body sensation of integration, meaning the wholeness of all my parts -- the lovable and unlovable?
- Hmm... I wonder... what movement would give me access to a feeling of integrated wholeness?
- Hmm... I wonder... what movement would allow me to integrate that challenging phone call I just had?
- Hmm... I wonder... what movement would allow me to integrate having had a great time.
- Hmm... I wonder... what movement would allow me to integrate my own lovability?

**I allow my wonder and curiosity to be the magnets
that pull forth the answer from my Essence Self.**

Exercise 9

A Month's Menu of Self-Appreciations

Purpose

To do some 'muscle reps' to help build more reliable strength in the self-appreciation muscle, so it begins to feel more and more natural.

Here's the Exploration

These appreciations are best done out loud. They can also be written. You may enjoy the act of creating a self-appreciation book where you write down your appreciations. Give yourself the gift of re-reading them frequently.

Day 1

Look into the mirror and say, "I appreciate you."

Day 2

"One unique quality I have that I appreciate is

_____."

(e.g., warmth; the quality of my laugh; my commitment to learning, etc.)

Day 3

"I appreciate my skill in _____"

_____."

(e.g., handling challenging situations with ease; singing; organizing; cooking, etc.)

Day 4

"I appreciate my body and especially my

_____."

(e.g., eyes; calves; smile; belly; breasts; butt, etc.)

Day 5

"A quality of play I appreciate in myself is my _____"

_____."

(e.g., infectious sense of humor; wit; creative use of words; ability to not take myself seriously, etc.)

Day 6

"One aspect of my voice I really appreciate is my _____"

(e.g., tone; resonance; melody; warmth, etc.)

Day 7

"Something about the way I see the world that I appreciate is

_____"

(e.g., drawing out the hidden potential in people; seeing every moment as a new adventure; leading with gratitude..)

Day 8

“I appreciate the value I place on _____

_____.”
(e.g., listening to others; completions; beauty; fun; family connection, etc.)

Day 9

“I appreciate how much I have grown in _____

_____.”
(e.g., demonstrating integrity; expressing how I feel; appreciating myself; enjoying life to its fullest, etc.)

Day 10

“In my interactions with others, I really appreciate the way I _____

_____.”
(e.g., make clear requests; listen with curiosity; play with serious issues, etc.)

Day 11

Today appreciate something about your essence verbally to another person. “One thing I appreciate about myself is my

_____.”
(e.g., sensitivity; expressiveness; sense of humor, etc.)

Day 12

Spend a few minutes today appreciating yourself non-verbally, taking a leisurely bath, massaging your feet.

Day 13

“I appreciate that I take responsibility for _____

_____.”
(e.g., doing what I said I would do; consciously changing agreements that aren’t working for me, etc.)

Day 14

“Around agreements, I appreciate how I _____

_____.”
(e.g., do what I said I would do; consciously re-negotiate agreements that aren’t working for me; use agreements to build integrity, etc.)

Day 15

“One thing that I do that I appreciate, that I’ve sometimes taken for granted, is

_____”

(e.g., how I take care of myself; how I support the expression of my and others’ genius qualities; how I invite creative solutions; that I see the best in people, etc.)

Day 16

“One thing I appreciate about how I communicate is _____

_____”

(e.g., my directness; my sensitivity to time; that I communicate feelings; that I communicate to be understood...)

Day 17

“I appreciate that I listen _____

_____”

(e.g., for creative solutions; whole-heartedly in a way that generates wonder, etc.)

Day 18

“One thing I appreciate about my mind is _____

_____”

(e.g., my memory; how I pay attention to details; my ability to see the big picture, etc.)

Day 19

“I appreciate the way I create beauty in my life by _____

_____”

(e.g., my garden; decorating my home in beautiful ways; posting inspirational quotes and thoughts; recycling, etc.)

Day 20

Today, focus on something that you have had a hard time appreciating.

“I am creating space to appreciate my

_____”

(e.g., thighs; belief that I’m not good enough; self-criticism, etc.)

Day 21

“I appreciate that my creativity has generated _____

_____”

(e.g., the world’s best split pea soup; an interesting wardrobe, etc.)

Day 22

“I appreciate that I take responsibility for my own well-being by _____.”

(e.g., eating well; exercising; taking space when I need it, etc.)

Day 23

“I appreciate the way I stay in integrity by _____.”

(e.g., speaking authentically; making and keeping agreements; taking 100% responsibility; resonant listening; focusing attention on feelings until they naturally dissipate, etc.)

Day 24

“I appreciate how I solve problems by _____.”

(e.g., inviting and including others’ ideas; being open to learning; engaging my genius; playing, etc.)

Day 25

“I appreciate my taking initiative by _____.”

(e.g., offering creative solutions; stepping into leadership roles, etc.)

Day 26

“One thing I really appreciate about my sexuality is _____.”

(e.g., how readily I get aroused; how sensitive I am to touch; the way I feel when I touch myself; how clear I am about my boundaries, etc.)

Day 27

“One of my spiritual qualities I appreciate is _____.”

(e.g., my ability to be still inside, my loving kindness, my curiosity about life, my ability to see the divine in others...)

Day 28

“One thing that I am noticing to appreciate about myself is _____.”

(e.g., my ability to appreciate myself; a new sense of peacefulness; my willingness to commit to this process, etc.)

Day 29

“I appreciate all my feelings, my anger, my sadness, my fear, my sexual feelings, and my joy.”

Day 30

“I appreciate my unique genius qualities of _____.”

(e.g., outrageous fun; simplifying complex ideas; making life easy, etc.)

Day 31

Ask a friend (or more than one!) to tell you what they appreciate about you. Write it here.

Created by Marlene Neufeld. www.marleneandbob.com. Based on the work of Drs. Kathlyn & Gay Hendricks. www.hendricks.com

Conclusion

It is my fervent, heartfelt wish that you found some openings into yourself through one or more of these explorations. If you did, may they expand and blossom to bless your life with ripples of unimagined blessings.

I would love to hear which were your favorites, and the impact they had on you. I invite you to email me at tclaire.oconnor@gmail.com at any time.

If you'd like additional support in practicing and embodying the skills of self-love, self-acceptance and self-appreciation, I am available with oodles of additional resources. [Join my mailing list](#) by clicking [HERE](#) and stay up-to-date on my latest e-courses, in-person retreats, guided imagery audios, and other offerings.



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