

A romantic scene of a man and a woman walking away from the camera through a field of tall grass. The man is on the left, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and dark pants. The woman is on the right, wearing a light-colored, sleeveless dress. They are holding hands. The background is a bright, hazy sunset or sunrise, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The overall mood is peaceful and intimate.

Think Yourself Loved

Learn To Love Yourself So Others Can Love You More

By Debbie Johnson,
Best-Selling Author of *Think Yourself Thin*

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Chapter 1



Tapping into Divine Love

*W*hat is the one thing that every single person in this whole wide world needs *and* wants? Of course we *all* know it's love. Online dating services are benefitting from the lonely hearts and even helping some. Nightclubs are jam-packed with people hoping to meet someone special. How do I know this? From painful, personal experience.

Decades ago, after stuffing myself with cookies, I used to watch television and go to bed alone, again. Then I would often cry myself to sleep for the want of someone to hold me and make me feel loved, secure, and cared-for.

When I woke up hoping there would magically be someone there to kiss me good morning, I was sadly disappointed.

Going to nightclubs, dance clubs, and dating clubs didn't seem to bring me the right partner. I attracted men who were exciting, but certainly not thoughtful or caring. I tried meeting potential romances through the personal ads and dating services. I found more disappointment. What was I doing wrong?

Even though love would seem to be the greatest, most easily

available treasure of all, why was it so elusive? I knew I wasn't the only person in the world confused by love. Many people give and give as much as they can, expecting love in return, and are heartbroken when it doesn't come. I was no exception.

After many heartaches and heartbreaks, I knew I had to make a dramatic shift in the way I was looking at life. Instead of expecting love to come to me, I had to open up to the love that was already there! I had to wake up to a new way of looking at life, to find a way to be filled with love all by myself. In this process I realized my search for love was really my search for Divine Love – the higher, unconditional love of God within us and all around us every moment, every day, in every experience. Had I found a way to tap divine love first, I wouldn't have needed to search at all. Perhaps I can save you some wear and tear on your journey to love.

Does God Really Love Me?

We've all heard the words "God loves you," perhaps since childhood, but how many of us have believed them? Some of us have even had a spiritual education that included the concept of God as Love and ourselves as expressions of that Love. Therefore, we have an unlimited supply of love within us and around us, or so I had been told. I may have believed it mentally, but certainly not in my heart or subconscious mind. My self-esteem was so low I didn't really believe anyone loved me at all.

Finding small ways to experience love in my life, I gradually pulled myself out of the muck I was in, toward a much brighter, happier existence.

It was a slow process of experimentation for me, but I hope to make your journey easier, more fruitful, and faster. The techniques I share are the very ones I discovered through sheer necessity. They're the means I used to drive out the horrible pain in my heart when I was alone, feeling rejected and abandoned. These methods filled that same heart with unconditional, Divine Love, helping me get ex-

actly what I wanted, instant love, comfort, and security.

As much as I wanted someone to love me, I had to face an important fact – the only way for others to love me was for me to love myself. To do this, I had to accept the greatest, most unconditional love of all – the higher love of God, or whatever higher power you believe in. In other words, I had to *think myself loved*.

After a good, long while of practicing this, I finally began to believe that love is within me and surrounds me always and that I truly am loved. I found much more happiness by myself, even though I still wanted a husband.

It became less important to have *anyone* and more important to wait for *someone* special, someone right for me. He had to reflect God's love for me. I decided that I was finished dating and that *he* would have to find *me* – and guess what? He did! Just when I had given up and decided that if I had to, I could make it on my own with the love I had learned to receive daily from the Divine.

I had to simply listen to my inner guidance, my intuition and that still small voice of God within me to allow the meeting to take place. It was at a spiritual seminar, so I knew we were even on the same page spiritually. And I knew it was him immediately from a prophetic dream two years before that, when I'd asked God to send me a dream about my husband. He was perfect for me at that time, and I was perfect for him, though neither of us are perfect people, nor will we ever be.

Does a Relationship or Marriage Guarantee Love?

Even in marriage, I realized, it's up to me to *feel* loved and to fill myself with love. I'm still learning this constantly in all my friendships and relationships with others: receive the love they have to give!

Marriage can be a wonderful source of affection and solace, friendship, and companionship. Yet it's not the ultimate source of love. Single people can feel just as much love, if not more! How many

people do you know who feel *constantly* loved in a marriage? One person may be cranky or depressed, out of sorts, out of town or simply “out to lunch.” What if one person needs affection and the other just needs space?

Life is not so perfect that other people, even spouses, can give us what we want all the time, or even part of the time in some cases. You can always get what you need, however.

What if your marriage is great? There is still no guarantee you will be together forever. In fact, there’s every chance you won’t, since everything in this world is only temporary, of course. Death is a natural part of life, and divorce seems to be right on its heels as a close second for the demise of a marriage. That actually happened to me in what I thought would be my ideal marriage.

What do we do?

Grieve the loss and go on with life the best we can, knowing *we are cradled in the loving, compassionate arms of Divine Love*. Just imagining it will give you comfort. *Try that now*. Then, also, know that you cannot imagine anything that isn’t real on some level of heaven or earth. And in fact it’s true; there is an endless supply of God’s love, the love of Spirit or whatever you want to call it, just waiting for us to accept it.

Most people think that love equals romance and that the only way to get love is from another person. That type of love is wonderful and sweet, yet it can turn to something else very quickly, especially when one is too needy. That was me for sure, many years ago.

We will explore how to tap a much more satisfying and permanent source of love than emotional love. Does that sound impossible? It’s not. This higher love is very real and much more fulfilling than any love you can imagine. Once you experience it, you will be more satisfied in all of your relationships, because no matter what happens, you will be filled with Divine Love. Also, relationships improve tremendously when both people are giving and receiving a

higher kind of love.

As many of us sadly know, just having a relationship is not proof positive of having a life filled with love. The proof is in how you feel about yourself and your life, and mostly how you feel inside. When you feel full of love just by breathing in the sounds, smells and experiences of life, you will know that you have learned to ‘think yourself loved.’”

Living in a State of Divine Love

It really doesn't matter who or what we are looking for; we will always find only one thing in the end – ourselves. Other people only reflect who we are and how we treat ourselves and others. In them we see our own fears and low self-worth or our own loving attitudes. Looking in a mirror can be very scary, but since everyone we look at mirrors us, we may as well begin to look into ourselves directly. This way we can find and bring out the good and noble qualities of true Soul, the divine being we really, truly are now and will be throughout eternity.

Something You Can Do Now:

1. Look into a mirror and pretend you are someone else looking at you. Imagine you're a higher being, your guardian angel or your spiritual teacher, looking into your eyes. Imagine how this being might see you when looking at you with love. The being may look deep into your eyes and see the spark of life that you are as Soul, the brilliance of God within you.
2. Say, “I love you, (your name here).” Do this every time you look into a mirror, whether silently or out loud. Notice how you feel in the days to come.
3. To take this one step beyond, you may try imagining the

voice of God saying to you, “I love you, (your name here).” Notice how this makes you feel. Do you doubt God’s love for you? See how it makes you feel about yourself and others. Note your findings in your journal, as this will help anchor it in your subconscious.

When you are able to love yourself on a spiritual level, loving your higher Self, then you are also loving all life and loving God. Who are you but a part of life, and therefore a part of God’s creation? What greater way of serving the Greatest Love of All, than by loving the part of Creation that you are? In doing so, you will be able to relax with life, knowing that you are here because you belong here and because you are loved. I still work at this every single day, but there is hope, because as I work at it, I see the results, and I feel it more each day.

I know and feel with all my heart that the true self’s natural state is love. When I am in this natural state, somehow everything and everyone seem to be in the proper place. Life appears in divine order and I am at peace with the world.

We all know instinctively what Divine Love is. We feel it when a friend gives us complete freedom to be ourselves, loving us even as we make mistakes or say something we regret. When someone is patient with me, I feel Divinely Loved. When someone is kind to me and helps me even when they may need help themselves, I feel Divinely Loved.

What about you? How would you describe Divine Love?

Something You Can Do Now:

You may want to take a moment to write down what makes you feel Divinely Loved. If you are in a relationship of any kind, even mother and child, perhaps you can share your thoughts on this with each other.

I've noticed that when I allow fear, anxiety, anger or resentment to get in love's way, then I see the world as a hostile place, with no help in sight. Here's what I do, and you may want to try it too:

Something You Can Do Now:

1. When negative emotion tries to get in the way of love, simply turn it all over to God saying, "Bless this in the name of God" or "Bless this situation with Divine Love." Then say, "Thy will be done." That has actually been proven in clinical studies to be the most powerful prayer! Just letting go and letting God.
2. Now imagine that within four or five minutes you will be in a state of grace and peace, in Divine Love. Your Divine gift is imagination and it is a very powerful tool when used for love.
3. Do your best to let go of any fear about the situation. From a wonderful book by Guy Findley, *The Secret of Letting Go*: Just say, "I don't know what to do!" Then simply remain open to inner spiritual guidance, and anything in your outer world that sounds like God is speaking to you, or looks like a message from God or Spirit.
4. Some negative emotions stem from physical health issues. Love yourself enough to see your trusted doctor or health practitioner. If your child were sick or upset, you would certainly take care of that child. If you're an adult, you have only yourself to rely on. You are now the parent of yourself, and the child within you is desperate for your love and attention and care.

Recognizing and Appreciating God's Love

God's love may not be what you expect it to be. For years I expect-

ed it to feel like human love and to be soft and gentle. Sometimes life hands us a challenge we feel will crush us. I learned that this, too, is God's love for me, strengthening me for the day I need to keep my heart open to someone who's been through a similar struggle. It also strengthens me to handle my own life with more love, knowing God is smoothing my rough edges because He wants me back, and I need to have a pure heart for the journey home.

Sometimes Divine Love feels very freeing, light and airy. Ahh, that feels so good! That's when I feel loved for who I am right now and all feels right in my world. When I look for this great, undying, unconditional love, I find it in the most unexpected places – a bird's song, a perfect flower, a call from a friend, the rain, even a great meal!

Something You Can Do Now:

1. Think of all the people, pets, children, relatives, coworkers, friends, schoolmates, and church mates, who have ever loved you. Think of the love they have had or will have for you, no matter what amount of love it may seem to you. Gather all the love you feel from them in your heart.
2. Now give it all to God (or to whatever you call the Higher Power in your life).
3. Rest in this moment and see what you get back!

The desire for a loving relationship (aside from human need for love and affection) on a higher level is really about the desire for a loving relationship with God, or your higher Self. When you open up to Divine Love and find a way to tap it directly, the desire for a mate comes into balance.

How does one tap this Divine Love? By imagining or envisioning it! That's the elegant simplicity of "thinking yourself loved."

I learned to experience whatever I wanted in life by imagining

Think Yourself Loved

it first in my mind, and more important, my heart. I would practice feeling, hearing, seeing, tasting, and touching the experience as if it were already happening right now. Try this for yourself; be bold and unafraid if you want to really experience life! What I've experienced this way became reality in my life, sooner or later.

I applied this same principle to bringing love into my life, and it always worked. Eventually I learned to create the feeling of Divine Love, so that the love I attracted was a higher love.

Living in the state of this Divine Love got me to the point where I was no longer obsessed about looking for love. I could relax and enjoy my life, knowing that the pure, unconditional love surrounding me would attract just the right mate to me. As a matter of fact, it attracted someone who also lives in this Divine Love as much as he can, and neither of us is perfect at it, of course!

That was what I truly wanted: a mate who also understood that there's a Love far beyond what our human selves could share. We were able to understand when one of us was more centered in that Love and feeling very introspective. We then had the freedom to move forward spiritually, each in his or her own way.

Beyond Loving Yourself is Accepting Divine Love

For years I worked on loving myself in obvious ways such as giving myself gifts or taking time for myself. I thought that was all I could do. I was looking for love in my life and finding it in simple things, but I was still unhappy. I was still lonely and afraid that I would not find the love I needed. Then one day I realized I was still limiting myself. I could go beyond this level of loving myself by opening myself more to God's Love. In doing so, I found a much greater, higher level of loving myself.

In order to fully accept love from myself or from anyone else, I had to accept God's love as the primary source of love in all. This was the magic that took me beyond my limits to love. Once I began to tap

into this pure, unconditional love, I noticed it was easier and easier to take good care of myself, to treat myself well. It became second nature to live life with more joy. Living a life filled with Divine Love is my greatest gift to God, to all life. The rest of this book will show you how you can do this too.

If you contemplate the stories in this book which speak to your heart and use the exercises which jump out at you, you will find yourself well on the way to the greatest freedom you have ever known – the freedom to love and be loved, whether alone or in a crowd, whether married or single. How badly do you want this freedom? The small effort you put forth to give yourself love will pay off a thousand times over. It has for me, and I certainly know it will for you too. Read on for the varied ways to do this.



Debbie Johnson is the best-selling author of *Think Yourself Thin* and has several self-help books, as well as fiction for teens and kids. She's the award-winning filmmaker of the *Angels-in-Training* series and lives in Victoria, Minnesota, where she continues to write, edit books, and make commercial videos. Her favorite thing is helping others make their dreams come true!

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