

30 Days to a Better You—One Small Step at a Time

Weekly Focus: Accept Yourself

Helpful Mantras:

- I am who I am, and it's OK.
- I am a work in progress. I am not perfect, but I am doing the best I can.
- I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and I am a valuable child of God

Day 1: Set your intention to accept yourself. Accepting who we are right now—even the parts we don't like—is not easy. You must believe that you *can* achieve self-acceptance, that it is *worth* achieving, and that you *want* to do it.

Today's step: Say the following out loud: Self-acceptance is healthier than self-rejection. Self-acceptance is a skill that I can learn and nurture. I choose to accept that I am who I am, and I believe that I am a valuable child of God right now, faults and all.

Day 2: Acknowledge your strengths. Self-acceptance means acknowledging both positive and negative aspects of your reality. You may be too aware of your faults to see your strengths.

Today's step: Make a list of as many positive attributes as you can. Think about what you are good at, what you have overcome, what you have achieved, how you have made a difference to others.

Day 3: Forgive yourself for being imperfect. You are an imperfect human doing your best in an imperfect world. Self-acceptance includes forgiving yourself for all the ways you fail to live up to the ideal version of yourself.

Today's step: Practice self-compassion. Admit you are not perfect. Whenever you are aware of something you reject about yourself, stop and speak forgiveness to yourself for being imperfect.

Day 4: Honor your personality. You and I are happier when we accept our personality instead of trying to be someone we are not. Are you intentional about living *within your personality*—owning both the strengths and weaknesses—instead of wishing you were different?

Today's step: Make a list of words or phrases that describe your personality. Do it quickly. Don't over-think. Write anything that is even close to describing you. Ignore spelling, grammar, and the critic in your head. When you are finished, circle 5-10 descriptors that you like about yourself. Honor those truths as you go about your day.

Day 5: Recognize the false beliefs your inner critic tries to sell you. We all have an inner critic. Our inner critic has collected the negative input from all the people that have been part of our lives. Much of that harsh criticism is false and unhelpful.

Today's step: Question what the inner critic says instead of agreeing with it. When you notice thoughts that are harsh, demeaning, or unhelpful, tell those thoughts you don't believe them and instead remind yourself of a positive truth.

Day 6: Embrace your uniqueness. What makes you unique? What passions and fears burn deep in your heart and motivate you to do what you do? What makes you—*you*?

Today's step: Think of something that is part of your personality's unique "fingerprint" — an attribute, skill, or activity you love about yourself. Be proud of that unique and special piece of YOU today.

Day 7: Admit what you cannot change. Don't waste energy trying to fix things you cannot change, and give yourself grace for doing as well as you are despite those limitations.

Today's step: Pick something you wish you could change about yourself but you have no power to change. Choose to believe that you are worthy to be loved and accepted despite that piece you dislike.

Weekly Focus: Be Kind to Yourself

Helpful Mantras:

- I deserve as much care and compassion as anyone else.
- I serve others best when I am whole.
- I will respect the limits of my body, mind, and emotions.
- I matter. I am allowed to say, "No" to others and "Yes" to myself.

Day 8: Show yourself respect. You are as worthy of respect as any other human. Choose not to be harder on yourself than on anyone else.

Today's step: Notice when you do something well/right/kind/creative. Give yourself a compliment and then take a moment to soak in the feelings of satisfaction, pride, and joy for doing a good job.

Day 9: Make one healthy choice. You know where you struggle. Give yourself one victory today in the never-ending fight to take good care of your body.

Today's step: Act on one healthy choice. Even if you've already messed up, skip the guilt, move past it, and succeed in one small, healthy way today.

Day 10: Pay attention to simple pleasures. Happiness is not some elusive state to strive for. Happiness comes from paying attention to Now and choosing to find joy in simple, everyday things.

Today's step: Pay attention to what you are doing and what you see around you. Savor the good feelings that come from enjoying simple things today.

Day 11: Start the day right. Take a few minutes to settle into a positive mindset before you rush into your day. Begin with gratitude. Next, remind yourself of some key truths that will help you face the day with confidence.

Today's step: Find five things to be grateful about today. The more specific, the better. Next, choose a few key truths to remind you of your worth and guard against the inner critic's lies. Speak those truths as often as needed today.

Day 12: Accept your limits. Part of nurturing yourself is accepting the realities of your limitations. Fighting realities we cannot change only leads to frustration, guilt, and low self-esteem.

Today's step: Instead of beating yourself up for being lazy, slow, or stupid, admit your limits, forgive yourself for your weakness, and find ways to adapt and cope.

Day 13: Stand up for your preference. Do you seek to make others happy but ignore your own needs or wishes? Kindness and generosity towards others is good, but so is standing up for yourself.

Today's step: Make one choice that is good and enjoyable **for You**. Even if it won't please others. Even if others disagree with your choice.

Day 14: Schedule me-time. In order to function at your best you must give your body, soul, and spirit time to rest, restore and regroup. How do you de-stress and fill your inner energy tank?

Today's step: Schedule time today to do something that will soothe and energize you. AND THEN ACTUALLY DO IT. No excuses. No guilt. Embrace me-time with gratitude and joy.

Day 15: Do something kind for your body. What can you do today that will benefit your body or make yourself feel good?

Today's step: Do something today that is good and enjoyable for your body. It could be as small as wearing your favorite scented lotion or taking your lunch break outside in the fresh air and sunshine.

Weekly Focus: Nurture and Develop Yourself

Helpful Mantras:

- I can grow in all areas of my life.
- My interests are worth pursuing.
- Mistakes are not failure. Mistakes are normal. Mistakes help me learn.
- The best version of myself is the most authentic version of myself.

Day 16: Say "Yes" to something new. The next time you are tempted to say "no" to an invitation, idea, or option, stop and reconsider. What would happen if you said "Yes" instead? Step out of your comfort zone and try something new instead of playing it safe.

Today's step: Notice when your default choice is "No Thanks" and challenge yourself to say "Yes" to a instead.

Day 17: Invest in yourself. When was the last time you spent actual money on something that will help you pursue your interests? Even something as simple as a new pen can lift your spirits and motivate you to move forward.

Today's step: Invest in something that will help you grow: a tool, a class, supplies, whatever. Pick something affordable and purchase it today.

Day 18: Make something. You and I were created to be creative. We all benefit from using our actual hands to make actual things. Physically creating things enhances our creativity and problem-solving abilities.

Today's step: Make something today, even something as simple as a doodle. It doesn't matter what. It doesn't matter if the result is any good. Just create something.

Day 19: Take a small risk. Taking risks is part of growing and challenging yourself. Some personalities naturally embrace risk-taking, but the rest of us need to work at it. So step out of your comfort zone and try something that isn't a sure bet today.

Today's step: Prove to yourself that risks won't kill you by taking one small, intentional risk. It doesn't matter how insignificant, so long as it feels like a risk.

Day 20: Let go of an expired hobby. Are there things you used to love that no longer float your boat? It's OK to feel that way. You are not being a quitter. You are being intentional about opening room in your life for something more important.

Today's step: Give yourself permission to quit doing a "fun" thing that's no longer fun. If it isn't feeding your soul, let it go. (Even if you haven't used up all the supplies!)

Day 21: Get around to it. Take time today for a hobby or activity you love that you haven't done in a while. Not a chore or a duty. Reconnect with something that brings a smile to your face and joy to your soul.

Today's step: Do that thing you love that you've been putting off. No more excuses. Do it and feed your soul today.

Day 22: Practice with intention. Practice isn't always fun, even when you're doing something you love. However, practice is the only way to improve your skill. Those who excel at any activity know how to practice with intention.

Today's step: Select a skill or hobby you are already proficient at and do a challenging exercise that will hone those skills even more.

Weekly Focus: Pursue Your Purpose and Your Dreams

Helpful Mantras:

- My dreams are worth pursuing.
- I have a worthwhile purpose that I am uniquely qualified to fulfill.
- I am God's workmanship, created to do good works as he enables me.
- I am not stuck where I am today. I can grow, learn, and change in all areas of my life.

Day 23: Succeed at a habit. Many times, you fail to implement better habits because you try to do too much too soon. You are more likely to succeed if you start small so you can achieve your goal many days in a row.

Today's step: Pick a habit you want to improve. Create one very easy daily goal for that habit. Now meet your easy goal for today. Hooray. Promise yourself to do it again tomorrow.

Day 24: Celebrate a success. When was the last time you patted yourself on the back for a job well done? We humans tend to focus on the end goal and forget to notice all the difficult and worthwhile steps we achieve along the way. Don't make that mistake.

Today's step: Give yourself a Gold Star for doing something well today. If you're having a rotten day, consider it a success when you overcome the crap and accomplish anything.

Day 25: Find like-minded people. We need others to help us succeed. We need teachers, mentors, and encouragers to spur us on in our careers, our hobbies, and our dreams.

Today's step: Pick a dream or interest you want to pursue. Figure out where to find others who can help you grow in that area.

Day 26: Notice what brings joy. Do you know what your life passions are? What interests and beliefs stir the fire in your soul or bring you into a state of flow?

Today's step: Make a list of your passions. Now circle the ones that are most important to your soul. Find ways to bring more of that into your life.

Day 27: Notice what frustrates. What really bugs you about the world around you? What issues or injustices are impossible for you to ignore? Those frustrations point you to your passions—to the areas in life you are called to care about.

Today's step: Make a list of the problems and injustices around you that are impossible to ignore. Look over the list. Choose one of them and explore a realistic way to get involved in the solution.

Day 28: Take the next step. Dreams can seem impossibly far away and hard to reach. Instead of focusing on the gap between now and reaching a dream, consider how you can get one step closer.

Today's step: Take that step. It may only have gotten you one millimeter closer to your goal, but it was still progress.

Day 29: Embrace trial and error. Don't wait for the perfect, 100%-success-guaranteed next step to fall into your lap. The secret to success is to pick your best idea and give it a try. If it works, great. If not, adapt or rethink and try again.

Today's step: Find a task you have been putting off because you didn't know the best way to do it. Give yourself permission to be less than perfect, choose a reasonable option, and give it a try.

Day 30: Look back on all you have accomplished. This past month you have taken many steps. Look back at all you have learned and accomplished through this journey. You are not the same person you were a month ago. Yippee for you!

Today's step: Congratulate yourself on the progress you have made. Then choose a step or two to continue working on and keep moving forward.