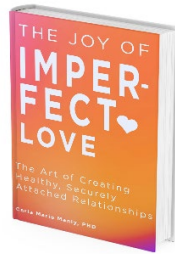


# “YOUR JOURNEY”



Adapted from *The Joy of Imperfect Love: The Art of Creating Healthy, Securely Attached Relationships*

by Dr. Carla Marie Manly

## CREATING LOVING SELF-AWARENESS

Are you tired of trying to be perfect, get (or receive) perfect love, or live in perfect ways? If so, this journey can bring you greater self-love and self-understanding. As you let go of the impossible ideals of perfection, you'll begin to discover the freedom and joy that your body, mind, and spirit crave.

Your journey into the world of imperfect love—*healthy* love—can be fostered by delving into the exercises designed to improve your self-awareness and self-love. As you gently explore your inner world with these self-reflective exercises, you'll get a taste for the empowering benefits of imperfect love. Move at your own pace, completing the exercises as they feel appropriate and helpful. There are no right or wrong answers; the overarching goal is to mindfully deepen your personal awareness and understanding.

Our pasts affect us all; when we understand where we've *been*, we can choose to create changes that help us be our best selves *today* and into the *future*. This worksheet may take you into unknown territory, so explore the aspects that feel meaningful and appropriate. As always, embrace an attitude of compassion and nonjudgment as you delve into what feels right to you. There are no “right” or “wrong” responses!

### **Exercise 1:** Love in My Childhood

Your childhood experiences—and your perception of love from those experiences—affect you today. You can better understand your relationship with love by increasing your awareness of how love was modeled for you in childhood. Respond thoughtfully to each question in the space provided. Feel free to replace words such as “father” or “mother” with the names of others who may have filled these traditional roles.

- How did my father or chief male caregiver model love?

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- How did my mother or chief female caregiver model love?

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- How did one other key person in my life model love?

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**Exercise 2:** Love in My Childhood: Awareness Shifts. This next segment simply asks that you notice any shifts in awareness that developed as a result of Exercise 1. Gently explore the areas that feel right to you.

Your childhood experiences—and your perception of love from those experiences—affect you today. You can better understand your relationship with love by increasing your awareness of how love was modeled for you in childhood. Respond thoughtfully to each question in the space provided. Feel free to replace words such as “father” or “mother” with the names of others who may have filled these traditional roles.

- How do I model love in my life?

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- In what ways would I like to love myself differently?

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- In what ways would I like to love others differently?

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- How has this exercise shifted my awareness or understanding of love?

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**Exercise 3:** My Definitions of Love in Action. This is your opportunity to explore your definition of love, how it has consciously and unconsciously impacted your life, and how you might want to shift it to work for you in positive ways. Mindfully and gently delve into the questions that feel helpful to you.

- What has been my overarching personal definition of love?

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- What are five simple, actionable behaviors I can embrace to positively adjust my current working definition of love?

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- What are three actionable and highly specific ways that I can shift my working definition of love to create more attunement between my beliefs about love and my love-related actions?

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**Exercise 4:** Looking at Your Values in a Loving Way. What new and empowering discoveries await you? This next set of self-work exercises can be as uncomplicated or as life changing as you like. If you feel the desire to make changes, use clear goals and supportive micro-goals (smaller goals that are clear, achievable, and highly specific) to support the changes you desire. When you move at a pace and work at a depth that feels right to you, inner awareness, change, and freedom will come. As always, strive to be kind, patient, and judgment-free as you respond to the questions below.

- What are my top five values in life (the guiding forces that feel most important to you)?  
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- Are there any shifts I would like to make in my current values to create greater ease, self-love, and joy in my life?  
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- Are there any people or circumstances in my life that work against the values I would like to maintain? If so, make notes about this issue in the spaces below.  
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\_\_\_\_\_
- Are there any people or circumstances in my life that support the values I would like to create or maintain? If so, make notes about this issue in the spaces below.  
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What specific shifts do I want to make in my life to create congruency between my ideal values, lifestyle, and inner being?  
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As you attend to your self-love journey with conscious, dedicated attention, you'll notice a true difference in yourself and your life. The more you understand how you love—and how you have been loved in life—the more you will be able to create the joyful, imperfect love you deserve. As you let go of any negativity from the past and mindfully create the life that you want, you will transform most beautifully. You deserve to love yourself—and be loved—in the most genuine and fullest of ways.

***CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE!***

Every step you take forward in developing greater self-esteem is a gift to yourself and your world. You'll find more compassionate guidance and healing exercises like this in Dr. Carla Marie Manly's inspiring self-help book, *The Joy of Imperfect Love: The Art of Creating Healthy, Securely Attached Relationships*.

*Free to You:* If you want to be the first to enjoy new "Your Journey" worksheets and details on upcoming books and seminars, I invite you to subscribe to my **uplifting monthly newsletter** at [www.drcarlamanly.com](http://www.drcarlamanly.com).

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