

# • Dump your • inner critic

Four certified life coaches give us the lowdown on how to love ourselves.

BY NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR.



## Focus on the dirty word: 'me'!

**Chi-Chi Muzariri (pictured opposite), Metamorphosis Life Design**

**Accept yourself** Most of us would like to improve some aspects of ourselves. The way to do that is to accept yourself now with love. It is a much kinder place from which to think about effecting change. Begin with a simple mantra such as: 'I love, accept and approve of myself with love'.

**Make space for the new** Do you have clothes in your wardrobe that have been there for too long or that don't fit you any more? Why are you hanging on to them? Take three minutes a day to clean out your wardrobe. Then start thinking about where, in other areas of your life, you are hanging on to things that just don't serve you any more. Remember, by getting rid of the clutter you will see more clearly and make room for new experiences in your life.

**Focus on the dirty word: 'me'!** By the age of 35 you've played various roles, such as daughter, sister, aunt, girlfriend, wife and so on – and with those come the role of doormat, as we incorporate our roles as caregiver, employee, taxi driver, entertainer, caterer, PA, etc. Take time to focus on me, me, me and enjoy it! When was the last time you honoured yourself or did something for yourself without feeling pangs of guilt? Focus on yourself for five minutes, then 10, until you get up to one hour of guilt-free me-time once a day.

**Say yes to you** For too many years, women have learnt to say yes to everything and everyone. We have forgotten how to say no! By saying no we set proper boundaries with everyone and we begin to act with integrity. People trust us and we trust ourselves because others know that when we say no, we mean no, and when we say yes, we mean it with 100 percent love. Don't sell yourself short by being a people-pleaser and sacrificing your essential self.

**Write your own permission statement** As women we spend so much time seeking permission from others, but who we really need permission from is ourselves. So go ahead, give yourself permission, right here, right now. It goes like this: 'I give myself permission to...' and then watch life unfold from a position of calmness rather than one of stress.

## Listen to your body

**Judy Klipin, Stellar Life Design**

**Listen to your body** This is a Martha Beck technique. Tap into the physical sensations you feel in situations you are not enjoying, and those you are. You should feel different responses. Thinking about things that make you happy or unhappy results in your 'body compass' indicating to you if you are headed north (the right direction) or south (not what you want). The more we listen to our bodies, the easier it is for us to allow ourselves to do what makes us happy.

**Balance your life wheel** Draw a wheel to get a helicopter view of your levels of satisfaction in areas such as work, relationship, family, friends, finances, health, personal development, fun etc. Rate each area to help gain insight into how you got to that level of (dis)satisfaction. When you isolate the area of least satisfaction in your life, the next step is easier: identifying steps to improve it.

**Bag, barter or better** Write a list of up to 10 things that you 'have to' do in the next few days. Imagine yourself doing each thing and listen to how your body compass responds. Give each task a rating of -10 for a negative reaction, +10 for a positive reaction, and 0 for neutral. Washing the car may be -4, while walking the dog may be +3. Now try and increase the scores by asking: Can I bag it? – you can leave your car dirty. Can I barter it? – delegate the task. Can I better it? – turn walking the dog into a daily date with your husband.

**Get clarity through contrast** It's generally much easier to know what we don't want than what we do. Say you want a new job but you're not sure what? Draw a line down the middle of a page and on the left name the things you don't like about your job. On the right, write down what the opposite of that (the contrast) would be. Now you have a sense of what changes to work towards.

**Give yourself treats** List 20 things that make you feel good, such as watching a sunset. Now make a list of at least 10 chores that prevent you from loving your life – getting a broken tap fixed and so on. Every week, take care of at least one chore. Every day, give yourself a treat. This way, you're loving yourself and setting an example of how you'd like others to love you too. ▷





## Own your sexuality

**Katlego Kolobe,**  
Thrive Life Design

**Love your body** Women tend to be their own worst critics. Look at some old photographs of yourself looking young, happy and carefree. Then try to remember how awkward you felt about your body at that stage of your life. Usually your insecurities were not necessary! Realise that in another 15 years you will feel the same about your body as it ages and changes. Love your body, enjoy it, stop torturing it, move it and give yourself permission to be grateful for how fabulous it is – warts and all.

**Communicate your needs** Assert your needs when communicating with your partner, friends, family and colleagues. Many of us feel pressure to comply or conform in order to avoid conflict or disapproval. Sometimes we get sucked into spats instead of really talking. Be assertive by using ‘I’ statements when expressing your views. Give your partner a chance to provide input by stating that it’s your opinion or experience. Make sure that you express what you would like in future or as a next step. This way you can be sure to be mature, inclusive and powerful in all your communication.

**Own your sexuality** Very often women leave their orgasms up to someone else, as if it’s their lover’s responsibility. Spend time exploring your body and getting to know every inch of it by giving yourself a gentle daily full-body exfoliation with a natural brush. This will help increase your sense of self and connection to your body. The more in touch you are with your body, the more ownership you will take for keeping it healthy and your own enjoyment of it.

**Relax** We all have hectic days. Unfortunately, although a little stress can help performance, too much starts to have the opposite effect, which can lead to intimacy problems in the long run. Use relaxation techniques at your desk and before you reach home. My favourite technique is to take deep breaths. Try a series of odd-number breaths, starting with one deep breath in and one long breath out, followed by three, then five. Another great resource is music. Create a bedroom that is a haven, a cocoon where you and your partner can relax and be open to sharing with each other.

## Have courageous conversations

**Kate Emmerson,** life coach  
and clutter consultant

**Be honest with yourself** Listen to your inner voice. If you are trying to please other people, you’re not being honest with yourself. Start off by pausing before answering a question. If someone asks whether you want to have lunch – stop for a second and tune into whether this is something you want to do. Being honest requires self-trust and self-belief – you are off track when you have constant feelings of being used, taken advantage of, disrespected. It reflects that you’re doing this to yourself first.

**Have courageous conversations** Talking about difficult things is never easy. Have the conversations sooner rather than later. The longer you leave them, the worse they become in your mind. And, actually, they’re never as hard as you imagine.

### Practise gratitude

When you are grateful for what you have in your life, you open up the channels for flow. Don’t wait for things to be perfect before you remember to be grateful. When you are having a tough time, write a list of 10 things you are truly grateful for despite the current reality.



**Take time alone** This is one step further than the necessary daily me-time. If you are not struggling with loneliness, plan at least a day and a night somewhere on your own. Spending time with yourself and your journal, a favourite book and no distractions is the best way to tap into your heart and soul and remember what’s important to you.

**Write a journal** This is best done in a beautiful book, in handwriting. Do it first thing in the morning in a semi-sleepy state. It’s hard at first, but just let yourself ramble on about anything... You’ll slowly open up to it and will find that you can digest, process and solve many of life’s challenges when you process your life through writing. 📖

