



In conversation with...

Lori Deschene from Tiny Buddha

*** Self-love and the book ***

What made you write a book about self-love?

It's something I've planned to do for a while - start a series of "*Tiny Buddha's Guide to*" books, drawing from the many inspiring stories on the site.

Self-love seemed like the perfect topic to start with, since this is the core of all personal growth, and the foundation for loving others and life.

It's also the foundation of my greatest struggles. For a long time I thought my life was a mess because of my depression, or my former eating disorder, or my lack of purpose, or my lack of money, but at the heart of all those troubles was my unwavering self-loathing.

"The most important thing I do for my self-love is allow myself to mess up from time to time."

How does your self-love show on a typical day?

There are lots of little things I do to take care of my body and mind, from healthy eating to deep breathing. But the most important thing I do for my self-love is allow myself permission to mess up from time to time.

It's not about always accepting myself and never being hard on myself. It's about being able to step outside my thoughts, so even if I am struggling with self-forgiveness or getting down on myself, I can observe this, acknowledge it, give it space, and then allow myself to move through it without additional self-judgment.

What do you think is the big reason why lots of people have such a hard time loving themselves (even though everything seems to be fine on the outside)?

Most of us form limiting beliefs about ourselves when we're young, based on interactions with our parents, teachers, and peers. When someone hurts us, disrespects us, or fails to meet our needs, we assume it means we are not good enough, not worthy, or somehow flawed.

Once we've formed limiting beliefs about ourselves, we then learn to interpret everything that happens as proof to support these beliefs.

Even if everything seems fine externally, we can always find reasons to be hard on ourselves if that's what we're accustomed to doing.

Have you ever felt like you didn't love yourself? What triggered that non-self-love?

Absolutely! In fact, I spent a great deal of my life hating myself. It began when I was bullied as a kid. I was repeatedly physically and emotionally tormented, and I concluded at a young age that I somehow deserved it.

Since I then had low self-esteem. I regularly disrespected myself. I drank too much. I struggled with anorexia and bulimia. And I became codependent on guys, even after they rejected me.

"It's very easy to fall back on deeply-engrained beliefs. The only way to change them is to continually seek and create proof to support healthier beliefs."

How did you shift from that place of not liking yourself to a place of self-love?

After years of hurting others and myself, I had built up a ton of proof to support the beliefs I had formed when others first hurt me.

I was only able to grow through this by realizing how the cycle began and how I perpetuated it through my thoughts, beliefs and actions.

That wasn't easy, and it still takes effort at times. It's very easy to fall back on deeply-engrained beliefs. The only way to change them is to continually seek and create proof to support healthier beliefs.

I do that by disputing my thoughts when I'm tempted to be hard on myself, and proactively doing things that make me feel good about myself.

***** Fear of failing and being judged *****

Sometimes we don't do something, because we're afraid of failing or of being judged. What's something you wanted to do, but you didn't because the fear of failing or disapproval crept up? And what made you eventually do that thing?

I really wanted to share a specific personal story in the introduction for this book, but I wavered because of how vulnerable I felt in putting it out there. I had a few loved ones read it to give me their feedback, but even with their encouragement, I felt terrified of exposing myself in that way.

I worried that some people would judge me, or at the very least, look at me differently. I was also scared it may make certain people uncomfortable to know something so personal and potentially embarrassing about me.

Finally I decided that I needed to do it to walk my walk. I am always writing and talking about being authentic, helping others with honesty, and accepting ourselves for all we've been, all we are, and all we will be. This was another opportunity to do just that.

Also, this was one of my most shameful moments, and as Brené Brown wrote, shame cannot exist when doused with empathy. Writing this was another way to empathize with myself, and hopefully encourage others to do the same.

Have you ever felt like you were working hard to be someone you are not to make others like you?

Many times in my life! It was more obvious when I was younger, because I was different around different people depending on what they were like and what I thought they'd accept.

Sometimes I was louder, sometimes I was more intellectual, sometimes I tried harder to be funny.

A few years back I realized I had spent several years doing something similar without being consciously aware of it. I thought I'd evolved because of my personal development work, but I realized I was initially drawn to personal development because of my desire to be and look like a "good person."

If you're always improving and growing, and you spend a lot of time helping other people, it's harder for others to judge you. At least, that's what I thought subconsciously.

Realizing this has been huge for me because I now approach personal development in a far healthier way. Ironically, it's now a smaller part of my life, in terms of the time I devote to it, but it has a much larger impact.

*** Dreams and doing your thing ***

If you look back to the you of 5-10 years ago - could she ever have imagined being where she is now?

Could she have imagined? Sure. She had a vivid imagination!

Did she? Yes and no.

Ten years back, I was just entering the real-world after spending a lot of time in treatment for depression and an eating disorder, and though I was still struggling, I was beginning to appreciate the time, effort and strength it took to survive.

My self-esteem was still pretty low, though. I was obsessed with eventually doing “something big” for that very reason, but because I thought so little of myself, I couldn’t find the confidence to even do something little—which is, in fact, a prerequisite to doing something big.

It wasn’t until about six years ago that I started believing I could eventually do the things I’ve done since then. It was when I discovered the world of blogging and met some people who helped me develop a plan toward starting my own site and eventually writing books.

So I guess the shortened version is that ten years back, I fantasized but didn’t believe. By five years back, I’d begun doing both.

“Doing something little is a prerequisite to doing something big.”

Where did the you of 5-10 years ago think she would be right now? And what brought her where she actually is?

I had lots of thoughts about potential futures at various points in my life.

If you talked to me ten years ago on a bad day, I may have assumed I wouldn’t live to this point. On a good day, I may have imagined I’d be married with kids, working in social services (since that’s what I did when I first graduated from college) or doing professional theater (my dream at the time).

Five years ago, I no longer questioned whether I’d make it five more years (barring, of course, some unforeseeable diagnosis or accident). I knew I’d be writing for the web, and also imagined I’d be married with kids.

I’m not currently married and I don’t yet have kids, but I am in love and moving toward a life that involves a family. And then, of course, there’s my work with Tiny Buddha.

If I had to pinpoint the main thing that's brought me to where I am now, that would be practicing self-awareness, learning from that, as well as my mistakes, and acting on what I've learned. It's been a process of do-adjust-do, and most often, one step forward and two steps back.

What secret (or not so secret) dream do you have for the future?

I would like to perform again—something that excites me and terrifies me, since I haven't done it in years. I grew up doing community theater and studied acting in college, and I really miss the sense of belonging, as well as the cathartic emotional release I felt in acting.

I've also considered starting my own community theater someday. I love everything about putting on a play, and I would love to share with my children the happiest part of my childhood.

*"One day your life will flash before your eyes.
Make sure it's worth watching."*

When you go for a dream or do something new, what are the typical disempowering thoughts that tend to stop you in your tracks?

The thing that most often stops me when I imagine a new dream is uncertainty about my true wants. I don't think I have too many limiting beliefs at present, as I've spent a lot of time working through them.

I do, however, spend a lot of time questioning whether I really want to do something, or just think I *should*, for whatever reason (whether it's because other people or doing it, or my ego's telling me to do it, or because I worry I'll regret not doing it later).

What's your favorite tactic to get going and start taking steps towards your dream?

The tiny step. I find that if I do something, no matter how small, it motivates me to keep doing more.

What's your all-time favorite quote that encourages you to do your thing and create a life that makes your heart sing and soul soar?

I have a lot of favorites! One that relates to the theme you suggested: "One day your life will flash before your eyes. Make sure it's worth watching."

It reminds me to say yes when I want to but feel scared, say no when I'd like to but fear disapproval, and spend more time creating moments of awe and joy than worrying about uncertainty and pain.

*** Threesomes of inspiration ***

What makes you feel energized and lose track of time?

- ❖ Being in nature (hiking, biking, relaxing on a beach)
- ❖ Doing something creative (sketching, scrapbooking)
- ❖ Writing in my journal

What drains you and makes minutes feel like hours?

- ❖ Worrying about the future
- ❖ Working on anything when I am being too much of a perfectionist
- ❖ Comparing myself to other people

Who fascinates you? And what is it about them that fascinates you?

- ❖ Prince William and other royals set to inherit a throne—because they're born into notoriety with an immediately predetermined destiny, and I wonder what it's like to never have known a world where the world didn't know and expect things from you
- ❖ Jaycee Dugard—because of what she's endured and survived, and how she's healing
- ❖ Barbara Walters—because she's been profiling fascinating people for years, which has likely given her immense perspective into human nature

If you could host a cozy dinner party and invite anyone you want, who would you invite? And what would you love to talk about with them.

- ❖ A random person who lived in the first year humans roamed the earth (assuming this person could be endowed with the ability to communicate and an understanding of the English language). I would want to know all about the beginning.
- ❖ Someone who was instrumental in the invention of religion, as I'd be fascinated to understand the thought processes that led to the first religious beliefs.
- ❖ My fiancé's brother, Justin, who died in a car accident this past December. This way, my fiancé and I would both get to see him again, and we could ask him what happened that day and all the other questions we never got to ask before he passed.

What books have left an imprint in your heart, have been earmarked or read over and over.

- ❖ *Sway: The Irresistible Pull of Irrational Behavior*, by Ori and Rom Brafman
- ❖ *In Defense of Food*, by Michael Pollan
- ❖ *Wasted*, by Marya Hornbacher

*** The 10 Rapid Fire Ones ***

1. **As I'm answering these questions, I'm sitting** in a bedroom upstairs in my parents' house in Massachusetts, across the hall from my younger brother. It's the second bedroom I had when I lived here as a teen. I've been visiting with my fiance for all of August, but he just left to go back to San Francisco, so now it's just me.
2. **My favorite place in my house is** ... none! I don't currently have a house. My fiance and I left LA in February and have spent this year hopping around. We spent one month with his family in the SF Bay Area, a couple weeks with my family in Boston, three months in Europe, and this last month in Boston. In October we'll be staying on a houseboat in Sausalito, and I know where my favorite place will be: sitting on the deck where I'll watch the water.
3. **I'm most proud of** my recovery from depression and bulimia.
4. **I'm words-can't-even-begin-to-describe-grateful for** my relationships with my fiance and my family.
5. **I couldn't live without** my heart beating.
6. **But I wouldn't miss physical pain for a second.**
7. **I can't stop talking about** traveling. The day I got back from Europe, I was already talking about my next international trip.
8. **You can always wake me up in the middle of the night for** an episode of *Breaking Bad* or *Dexter*.
9. **I just love the smell of** incense in almost every scent.
10. **I could listen to** *Mad, Mad World* by Gary Jules, *Jar of Hearts* and *A Thousand Years* by Christina Perri, and *Lullaby* by Billy Joel **on repeat every day.**

You can find Lori and lots of inspiring stories and wisdom right here on [Tiny Buddha](#).
You can pre-order the Tiny Buddha book “Tiny Buddha’s Guide to Loving Yourself” and
get a \$150 in bonus items (only with pre-ordering in September)
[when you click this link](#).

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