

This is an excerpt from my book, *Coming Home to Who You Are* (Shambhala, 2012). You are welcome to download and/or print it and share it with anyone you choose. It can be printed on two pages if you choose a font size that works for that for your printer. You are also welcome to include it in a blog, etc. Please do mention the source: <http://www.davericho.com/loving-kindness.htm>. Thanks.

Our Commitments to Loving-Kindness Toward Ourselves and Others

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1. I do my best to keep my word, honor commitments, and follow through on the tasks I agree to do.
2. I am making every effort to abide by standards of rigorous honesty and respect in all my dealings no matter how others act toward me.
3. I forego taking advantage of anyone because of his ignorance, misfortune, or financial straits. My question is not “What can I get away with?” but “What is the right thing to do?” If I fall down in this, I can admit it, make amends, and resolve to act differently next time. Now I more easily and willingly apologize when necessary.
4. If someone is overly generous toward me or has an exaggerated sense of obligation to me, I do not want to exploit his or her lack of boundaries. Instead, I want to express appreciation and work out an equitable way of interacting.
5. I keep examining my conscience with true candor. I am taking searching inventories not only about how I may have harmed others, but also about how I may not have activated my potentials or shared my gifts, how I may still be holding on to prejudices or the will to retaliate, how I may still not be as loving, inclusive, and open as I can be.
6. I welcome feedback that shows me where I am less caring than I can be, where I am less tolerant, where less open about my real feelings. When I am shown up as a pretender or called on being mean or inauthentic, I am not defensive but take it as information about what I have to work on. I appreciate positive feedback also.
7. I am letting go of the need to keep up appearances or to project a false or overly-impressive self-image. Now I want to appear as I am, without pretense and no matter how unflattering. I do not want to use any charms of body, word, or mind to trick or deceive others. Being loved for who I am has become more important—and more interesting—than upholding the ever-shaky status of my ego.

8. I now measure my success by how much steadfast love I have, not by how much I have in the bank, how much I achieve in business, how much status I have attained, or how much power I have over others. The central—and most exhilarating—focus of my life is to show all my love in the style uniquely mine, in every way I can, here and now, always and everywhere, no one excluded.

9. As I say Yes to the reality of who I am, with pride in my gifts and unabashed awareness of my limits, I notice I can love myself and that I become more lovable too.

10. I never give up on believing that everyone has an innate goodness and that being loved can contribute to evoking it.

11. I am learning to trust others when the record shows they can be trusted while I, nonetheless, commit myself to being trustworthy no matter what others may do. I am always open to rebuilding trust when it has been broken, if the other is willing.

12. I remain open to reconcile with others after conflict. At the same time, I am learning to release those who show themselves to be unwilling to relate to me respectfully. I accept the given of sudden unexplained silence or rejection by others and will never use that style myself.

13. I am learning to be assertive by asking for what I need without fear or inhibition. I ask without demand, expectation, manipulation, or a sense of entitlement. I can show respect for the timing and choices of others by being able to take no for an answer.

14. I am willing to participate in the harmless conventions and social rituals that make others happy.

15. I do not knowingly hurt or intend to offend others. I act kindly toward others not to impress or obligate them but because I really am kind—or working on it. If others fail to thank me or to return my kindness, that does not have to stop me from behaving lovingly nonetheless.

16. If people hurt me, I can say “Ouch!” and ask to open a dialogue. I may ask for amends but I can drop the topic if they are not forthcoming. No matter what, I do not choose to get even, hold grudges, keep a record of wrongs, or hate anyone. “What goes around comes around” has become “May what goes around come around in a way that helps him/her learn and grow.” I am thereby hoping for the transformation of others rather than retribution against them. This commitment also means that I do not gloat over the sufferings or defeats of those who have hurt me.

17. I do not let others abuse me but I want to interpret their harshness as coming from their own pain and as a sadly confused way of letting me know they need connection but don’t know how to ask for it in healthy ways. I recognize this with concern not with censure or scorn.

18. I am practicing ways to express my anger against unfairness directly and nonviolently rather than in abusive, bullying, threatening, blaming, out-of-control, or passive ways.

19. I have a sense of humor but not at the expense of others. I want to use humor to poke fun at human foibles, especially my own. I do not engage in ridicule, put-downs, taunting, teasing, sarcasm or “comebacks.” When others use hurtful humor toward me I want to feel the pain in both of us and look for ways to bring more mutual respect into our communication.

20. I do not laugh at people or at their mistakes and misfortunes but look for ways to be supportive.

21. I notice how in some groups there are people who are humiliated or excluded. Rather than be comforted that I am still safely an insider, especially by gossiping about them, I want to sense the pain in being an outsider. Then I can reach out and include everyone in my circle of love, compassion, and respect.

22. I look at other people and their choices with intelligent discernment but without censure. I still notice the shortcomings of others and of myself, but now I am beginning to see them as facts to deal with rather than flaws to be criticized or be ashamed of. Accepting others as they are has become more important than whether they are what I want them to be.

23. I avoid Criticizing, Interfering, or giving Advice that is not specifically asked for. I take care of myself by staying away from those who use this CIA approach toward me, while nonetheless holding them in my spiritual circle of loving-kindness.

24. I am less and less competitive in relationships at home and work and find happiness in cooperation and community. I shun situations in which my winning means that others lose in a humiliating way.

25. In intimate bonds, I honor equality, keep agreements, work on problems, and act in respectful and trustworthy ways. My goal is not to use a relationship to gratify my ego but to dispossess myself of ego to gratify the relationship. Also, I respect the boundaries of others’ relationships.

26. I want my sexual style to adhere to the same standards of integrity and loving-kindness that apply in all areas of my life. More and more, my sexuality expresses love, passion, and joyful playfulness. I remain committed to a responsible adult style of relating and enjoying.

27. Confronted with the suffering in the world, I do not turn my eyes away, nor do I get stuck in blaming God or humanity but simply ask: “What then shall *I* do? What is the opportunity in this for my

practice of loving-kindness?” I keep finding ways to respond even if it has to be minimal: “It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.”

28. I want my caring concern to extend to the world around me. I am committing myself to fighting injustice in nonviolent ways. I support restorative rather than retributive justice. I am distressed and feel myself called to action by violations of human rights, nuclear armaments, economic and racial injustice. I tread with care on the earth with what St. Bonaventure called, “a courtesy toward natural things.”

29. I appreciate that whatever love or wisdom I may have or show comes not from me but through me. I say thanks for these encouraging graces and yes to the stirring call to live up to them.

30. I am not hard on myself when I fail to live up to these ideals. I just keep earnestly practicing. The sincerity of my intention and my ongoing efforts feel like the equivalent of success.

31. I do not think I am above other people because I honor this list. I do not demand that others follow it.

32. I am sharing this list with those who are open to it and I keep believing that someday these commitments can become the style not only of individuals but of corporations, institutions, churches, and nations.

May I show all the love I have
 In any way I can
 Here, now, and all the time,
 To everything and everyone, including me,
 Since love is what we are—and why.
 Now nothing matters to me more
 Or gives me greater joy.

Based on: *Coming Home to Who You Are* (Shambhala, 2012)