

# Soulful Songs and Stories

**With a song and your stories, we co-create a soft place for hard conversations and a brave space for personal and spiritual growth.**



*Hi Soulful Song Lovers and Story Tellers,*

This is the seventh of Friday emails that we're sending out or posting on the webpage about songs, stories, storytelling, community, or personal/spiritual growth until we meet again.

VALUING OURSELVES and LOVING OURSELVES are a large part of why we share our stories. Consider this in the words and music of Keb Mo, **"You Can Love Yourself,"** and in the wisdom and sage advice of **Emma Thompson, bell hooks, Erich Fromm, Byron Katie, Rumi, Virginia Woolf, Malcolm X, and Maya Angelou,** among others.

After reading the three pages of quotes and graphics, if you still feel unworthy, we have two songs for you. Otherwise, we have links to **music that may frazzle your mind, as well as music to stir, move, and relax your soul.**

If you'd like to get these PDFs emailed to you, register with Jessica Pond, [Jpond@uucsr.org](mailto:Jpond@uucsr.org).

We sorely miss you and your stories. We miss hugs and laughter and coffee/tea with you. We know these mailings are no substitute for meeting face-to-face, but hope that they, in some small way, may fill the gap until we meet again. Take the spirit of **Soulful Songs and Stories** with you wherever you go; share it, and we hope to see you all, healthy and happy, sooner rather than later.

Namasté,

*Alice and Steve*

# YOU CAN LOVE YOURSELF

## Keb' Mo' (Kevin Moore) from *Just Like You*

Studio: <https://youtu.be/hyKpXmdpggE>

Live: <https://youtu.be/LbewyD5ndnc> <https://youtu.be/jULLI1Z7LNw?t=120>

My baby she wrote me a letter  
She didn't call me on the phone  
Five little words was all she wrote  
See ya later I'm gone

She had no explanation  
About why she had to go  
Well I can't take a joke,  
But I can take a hint  
She don't love me no more

*But if nobody loves you  
And you feel like dust  
On an empty shelf  
Just remember  
You can love yourself*

My mother says she loves me  
But you know  
She could be jivin' too  
And everybody's always criticizing  
Everything that I do

I work 9 to 5, do the best I can  
Try to please the boss  
I bought a big ol' house,  
And a brand new car  
And then he laid me off

(Chorus)

Everytime I meet a lady  
I wanna try to get to know  
Either I'm too small  
Or she's too tall  
She's rich and I'm po'

So I called my old friend Hazel Mae  
Asked her out for a little date  
She said: "I'm married now  
And I got three little kids,  
Boy ya just a little too late"

(Chorus 2x)

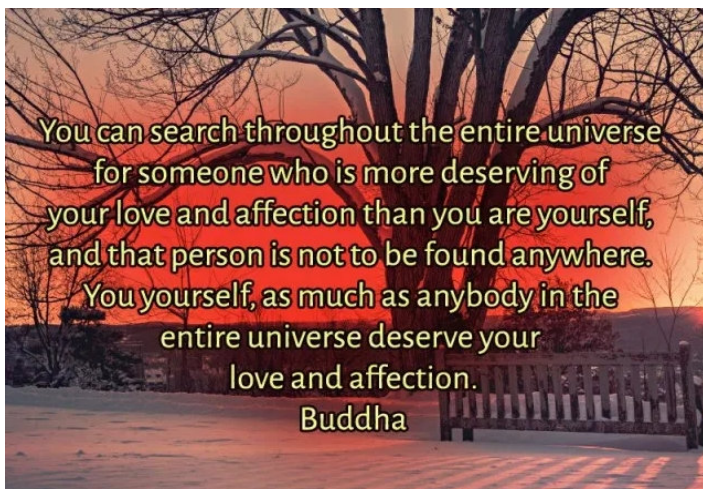
# You Can Love Yourself

Love is the best tool that you have, but you better make sure that you direct it toward yourself first. —Emma Thompson

Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life; define yourself.  
—Harvey Fierstein

Never let someone's opinion become your reality. Never sacrifice who you are because someone else has a problem with it. Love who you are inside and out. —Les Brown

If your compassion does not include yourself it is incomplete.  
—Jack Kornfield, *Buddha's Little Instruction Book*



He loves, and in loving, he becomes.

—Manohla Dargis, last sentence in her review of *Call Me by Your Name*, NYT, Nov 22, 2017

Do not expect to receive the love from someone else you do not give yourself.

—bell hooks

The only people who change, who are transformed, are people who feel safe, who feel their dignity, and who feel loved. That's what we do for one another as loving people—offer safe relationships in which we can change.

—Richard Rohr: *Essential Teachings on Love*

There is a strange little melody inside me that sometimes cries out for words. But through inhibition, lack of self-confidence, laziness, and goodness knows what else, that tune remains stifled, haunting me from within. Sometimes it wears me out completely. And then again it fills me with gentle, melancholy music.

—Etty Hillesum, *An Interrupted Life*

Compassion for others begins with kindness to ourselves.

—Pema Chödrön, *Start from Where You Are*

I just felt like ... me. And whatever "me" meant, that was perfectly fine and absolutely enough. Everyone should feel that kind of peace and self-acceptance far more often than I think most of us do.

—David Clawson, *My Fairy Godmother Is a Drag Queen*

Low self-esteem is like driving through life with your hand-brake on. —Maxwell Maltz

Idealism is fine, but as it approaches reality the cost becomes prohibitive.

—William F. Buckley, Jr.

"Selflessness" (or other-directed, self-sacrificial, self-destructive, guilt-driven, or messianic behavior) that is our primary focus is theologically indefensible because it is self-defeating and contradictory.

It is self-defeating because denying ourselves the opportunity to be our best possible selves also means we'll be less able to serve others. If we "give of ourselves" until we are broken, burned-out, sick (or dead) we will be of less (or no) use to others—or to ourselves.

It is *contradictory* because if our own well-being (our health, our job, our family) doesn't matter, why should anyone else's matter at all? Or even more? If we insist that others accept what we refuse for ourselves, we give lie to—and set a bad example for—the premise of everyone's inherent worth and need for fulfillment. —Steve Marston, 1998

Most women recoil from the thought of personal descriptions that include the word self, which is too bad because this self-defeating modesty eliminates a lot of flattering adjectives: self-poised, self-assured, self-confident. So why do you self-consciously shrink from self-admiration?

Probably because ever since your hand was slapped as you reached for the last cookie on the plate all those years ago, you've viewed satisfying your healthy wants and lusty needs as shameful and selfish. But now that you're grown up and ready to rediscover how glorious you really are, it's time to realize that the cheeks that once burned with embarrassment now radiate with the vibrant glow of a self-possessed woman.

—Sarah Ban Breathnach, "Return To Self"

How you love yourself is how you teach others to love you. —Rupi Kaur



I notice that as I get rid of the protective covering of the middle years, I am more openly amused and incautious and less carefully socially, and that all this makes for increasingly pleasant contacts with the world.

—M.F.K. Fisher

We have not valued ourselves, we have hurt those around us, and we have ignored those beyond our own tables. Instead of celebrating the divine image within us, we have put ourselves down with low self image and shame. Instead of celebrating the divine image beyond us, we have lived in fear of or distaste for those from whom we are different. Instead of affirming the world communion for which you have created us, we have found ways to separate ourselves by race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, nation, or ideology.

—Broadway UMC (Chicago), Oct. 2, 2005, (Prayer of Confession, World Communion Sunday)

There is nothing of which we are more ashamed than of not being ourselves, and there is nothing that gives us greater pride and happiness than to think, to feel, and to say what is ours. —Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*

The hardest challenge is to be yourself in a world where everyone is trying to make you be somebody else. —e. e. cummings

## Self Love

It doesn't mean that everyone will treat you the way you deserve to be treated. It means that you won't let them change the way you see yourself; nor will you stick around for them to destroy you.

Tony A. Gaskins Jr.



What we hunger for, perhaps more than anything else, is to be known in our full humanness and yet that is often just what we also fear more than anything else.

It is important to tell, at least from time to time, the secret of who we truly and fully are because otherwise we run the risk of losing track, and little by little come to accept instead the highly edited version which we put forth in hope that the world will find it more acceptable than the real thing.

—Frederick Buechner

Above everything else, genuinely love yourself first. Self-love is powerful and it's the best love that you will ever have. When you love who YOU are, your relationships will be healthier and your life will be happier. Self-love sets the standard in how we allow others to treat us and how we treat ourselves. Your happiness and well-being is important. Protect it by always valuing who you are!

—Stephanie Lahart

She lives on the reflections of herself in the eyes of others. She does not dare to be herself.

—Anais Nin

Your problem is you're too busy holding onto your unworthiness.

—Ram Dass

It's not your job to like me... it's mine!  
—Byron Katie

Your task is not to seek love, but merely to seek  
and find all the barriers within yourself that  
you have built against it. —Rumi

I will go on adventuring, changing, opening  
my mind and my eyes, refusing to be stamped  
and stereotyped. The thing is to free one's self:  
to let it find its dimensions, not be impeded.  
—Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary*

I have learned so much from god that I can no  
longer call myself a Christian, a Hindu, a Mus-  
lim, a Buddhist, a Jew. The truth has shared so  
much of itself with me that I can no longer  
call myself a man, a woman, an angel, or  
even a pure Soul. Love has befriended Hafiz so  
completely it has turned to ash and freed me  
of every concept and image my mind has ever  
known. —Hafiz, *The Gift*

We cannot think of being acceptable to others  
until we have first proven acceptable to our-  
selves. —Malcolm X

IF YOU ARE  
ALWAYS TRYING  
TO BE NORMAL,  
YOU WILL NEVER  
KNOW HOW  
*Amazing*  
YOU CAN BE.  
maya angelou

*Loving yourself does not mean being self-  
absorbed or narcissistic, or disregarding oth-  
ers. Rather it means welcoming yourself as the  
most honored guest in your own heart, a guest  
worthy of respect, a lovable companion.*  
—Margo Anand

# Music

## If you still feel unworthy

- **“Unworthy”** by Cheryl Wheeler  
<https://youtu.be/OWOx95nje4Y>
- **“Dysfunctionally Yours”** by Wally Pleasant  
<https://youtu.be/Fwrdq9akdBw>

## Frazzle your mind

**“Koyaanisqatsi”** part 6/9. A 1982 American  
experimental film directed by Godfrey Reggio  
with music by Philip Glass. You may be  
amazed/apalled at the hectic/frenetic pace of  
life. Or you may be bored out of your skull.  
<https://youtu.be/jOIvJTUcrlE>

## Stir your soul

**“Down in the River”**

The University of Texas Tuba/Euphonium Stu-  
dio <https://youtu.be/IMl0kxzf4YU> (>1.1m views)  
Virtual Choir (pre-COVID-19; >2.1m views)  
<https://youtu.be/BumCkswUUDA>

## Move your soul

**“How Long Blues,”** Jimmy Yancey

<https://youtu.be/BAwM70e18s4>

**“Cradle Me,”** Deborah Dougherty-Harris,  
sung by Amasong (lyrics below)

<https://youtu.be/nvmwJeTc-38>

## Soothe your soul

**“Amazing Grace,”** Marcus Miller, saxophone  
<https://youtu.be/fmqXcVAZFII>

**“Clair de Lune,”** Paul Barton, Piano for ele-  
phants, <https://youtu.be/i1qQOGCyRbY>

# Cradle Me

by Deborah Dougherty-Harris, as sung by Amasong, "Champaign-Urbana's Premier Lesbian-Feminist Chorus" on their CD "Amai."

*Cradle me, cradle me. Oh, dear Mother, cradle me  
Earth and breath and sky and sea all rise up and cradle me.*

In the morning when I rise  
wipe the nighttime from my eyes,  
plant my feet down on the floor,  
move myself through daily chores,  
giving thanks while breaking bread  
and for kind words that are said,  
Spirit move me through my deeds,  
cradling me with all my needs.



*Cradle me, cradle me. Oh, dear Mother, cradle me  
Earth and breath and sky and sea all rise up and cradle me.*

When death knocks on my front door,  
taking a loved one to her shore,  
and I bend to grief's old ways,  
I am cradled in my haze.  
And those fears are oft relieved  
by giving back what I received,  
stretching out with arms and heart,  
cradling them that death did part.

*Cradle me, cradle me. Oh, dear Mother, cradle me  
Earth and breath and sky and sea all rise up and cradle me.*

Circling through this walk on earth,  
tears for death and tears for birth,  
blessings quilted with the pain,  
all are woven in the grain.  
Plant my feet down on the floor  
move myself through daily chores,  
giving back what I received.  
Simple acts are sacred deeds.



*Cradle me, cradle me. Oh, dear Mother, cradle me  
Earth and breath and sky and sea all rise up and cradle me.*

*Cradle me, cradle me. Oh, dear Mother, cradle me  
Earth and breath and sky and sea all rise up and cradle me.*