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Anita Moorjani

on Why Loving Ourselves Is Not Selfish

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Listening in With ...

Anita Moorjani

In 2006, in a coma and dying of cancer, **Anita Moorjani** found herself in a place she could only describe as heaven. With startling clarity, she looked at her life and saw what had previously been clouded by fear and doubt. When she chose to return, understanding that heaven is more a state than a place, she shocked everyone by leaving the hospital fully recovered in a matter of weeks. She now shares what she learned on the other side in her lectures and books, including *What If This Is Heaven?* published this month by Hay House. Here, she explains to *Unity Magazine* editor **Katy Koontz** just how powerful we really are when we truly love ourselves.



Love Yourself!

Katy Koontz: Your new book emphasizes that loving yourself is not selfish and is in fact necessary before you can truly love anyone else. Can you elaborate?

Anita Moorjani: When people ask me at what point loving yourself becomes selfish, I always say that question misses the point. At *no point* does loving yourself become selfish. We have been engrained with the belief that self-love equals selfishness, and we're so afraid of being judged for loving ourselves. We seem to think that people who love themselves are narcissistic divas who are obsessed with their image. But it's the people who *don't* love themselves who are constantly overcompensating by being narcissistic and vain and drawing attention to themselves. The less you love yourself, the more you need other people to prove that you're lovable. That becomes your agenda.

When we *do* love ourselves, we know we're lovable. We don't need to prove it. We're actually very happy sitting in the background because we know we have something to offer the

world. We don't need to keep shouting it from the rooftops. We're quite content to allow other people to shine as *they* discover the knowledge of who *they* are too. Our cup overflows, and so we want to share it with everyone else.

KK: I wish we grew up understanding this.

AM: We really need to teach it to our children. People think today's kids are spoiled because their parents tell them they're wonderful, no matter what, and that they've become selfish because they have too much self-love. But these kids are a product of parents who don't love themselves, and so *this* is the energy they're picking up on. Plus they don't go out and play with other kids. They're glued to their devices, and when that happens, it's easy to misinterpret things.

Kids *are* obsessed with their image and how they come across. But all of that is due to lack of self-love. It's not from loving themselves too much. Self-love gets conditioned out of them. We need to reverse that.

KK: So the combination of parents not setting a good example plus kids diving into all the electronic media is a bit of a toxic combination?

AM: Yes. Parents ask me, "How can I focus on myself when I have kids? That's selfish. I have to focus on my kids." If you're constantly sacrificing yourself and putting yourself last, that is what you're teaching your kids to do. They learn from what you do, not from what you tell them. You're just perpetuating the cycle.

KK: I love how you take ideas people have taken for granted all their lives and give them a different twist that makes so much more sense. That's often all it takes to open up to a whole new level of truth.

AM: When I was in that near-death state, the feeling I had was, *Oh my God, how could we have got it so wrong? How come we're doing everything back to front?*

KK: I'm intrigued with your idea of watching for synchronicities as an indicator of how in the flow you are.

AM: Here's a great example: My husband Danny and I had been living in an apartment right on the ocean. I started to feel I needed to be a little more grounded, and I wondered if I was supposed to live a little more inland. But I *love* the ocean, so I didn't act on the feeling. Then my landlady said she wanted our apartment back. Normally, there's *always* a sign outside our building advertising "two-bedroom apartments available." I figured we could just push our stuff

KK: So the Universe was conspiring in your favor!

AM: Exactly, and that's why I tell people to just allow, trust. You can't get it wrong.

KK: In making decisions, both big and small, you pay attention to whatever *feels* right. How can you be sure your feeling is truly your soul's preference instead of your ego's preference?

know what this feels like because I've experienced reaching what I *thought* was the end of my life, and I found I didn't regret things like failing. Instead, I regretted the things I didn't do because I was playing it too safe or being too fearful.

KK: You've said that if we can be comfortable with uncertainty and release our attachment to a particular outcome, it opens us up to the realm of infinite possibility.

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out of one apartment and into another. But when I looked for the sign, it wasn't there. The building was full! We waited a week, then two weeks, and finally we had to start searching for another place. We found one we really liked that was a mile inland. I kid you not, the very day the new landlady gave us the key to the new place, we headed back home to our old apartment and the sign advertising "apartments available" was back up again.

KK: I love that!

AM: The Universe was determined not to let me move into another apartment in the same building. It's as if it was saying, "You had the ocean for a year. That's enough. Now go get grounded." And you know what? In this new place, I'm functioning differently. I *do* feel more grounded.

AM: When we make a decision from our ego, we tend to base our decision on the fear of what the outcome will be if we *don't* do this. But when we choose what's in line with our soul's purpose, the decision comes from a place of love—it feels right, you feel passionate about it. It gives you a buzz, a sense of excitement. You're not saying, "I better do this because I don't want to fail," or "I don't want to look bad or embarrass myself." Those are all ego-based decisions.

KK: So even when it doesn't make logical sense, you can really trust your heart.

AM: Yes. I tell people who are facing a big decision to imagine they have reached the end of their life and then ask themselves which option they are more likely to be grateful they had taken, or which one they are more likely to regret not doing. I

But in our goal-oriented society, that seems counterintuitive. How can we learn to make that shift?

AM: I believe goals limit our potential because they come from the perspective of where we are right now. But things grow and change faster if you allow them to. We're actually capable of so much more than we believe we are. But if you tell somebody that, then they come up with lofty goals, and then if they can't reach them, they beat themselves up.

I suggest not coming up with goals altogether and seeing what the Universe delivers. Never in a million years could I have dreamed up what I am doing today, and yet nothing could be more fitting for me. I didn't figure it out, though. The Universe did. Even if I had allowed myself to dream big, I still wouldn't have come up with this.

KK: It takes a lot of trust in the Universe then, right?

AM: All you have to do is just find your joy in this moment. Even if you have other obligations, make a commitment to do at least one thing that brings you joy each day. Even doing just that will bring you closer to who you truly are. And the more you become who you truly are, the more the Universe will give you what is truly yours.

AM: It's a three-step process. First, acknowledge your feelings and accept where you are at the moment with no judgment. Just love yourself wherever you are with what is going on. Then, ask yourself, *What would I want my best friend to do for me while I'm going through this?* And then do exactly that. Support yourself the way you'd support your best friend. Finally, ask yourself what the gift is that the Universe is giving you.

When I had cancer and I was dying, the possibility of me being dead and staying in the other realm existed as well as the possibility of me coming back and living the life I have now. Once I knew that I was meant to live and decided to come back, I also knew that I was already healed, and so my body reflected that very quickly. I didn't feel that I had to spend the next three years healing. I knew I was already healed because I saw that possibility in my future.

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KK: You make no bones about the fact that you're not a fan of positive thinking. Why not?

AM: I used to believe that our thoughts create our reality, and so whenever I experienced anything negative, I believed I must be having negative thoughts that created it. When you believe that, you start fearing your thoughts. Then it's hard to have an authentic experience. Yet the negative feeling will pass. The more we deny it, the more we're denying our truth. The more we resist it and push it away, the more it pushes back.

KK: That reminds me of a suggestion in your book: When something negative happens, ask yourself, *If this were actually a gift from the Universe, what would it be here to teach me?* That's a great reminder about shifting focus.

KK: So you need to prime yourself before you ask that last question, right?

AM: Exactly—it's hard to just dive right into that.

KK: You've touched on some really interesting ideas about time not being linear on the other side, with every moment in time existing simultaneously. What does that mean for us in this physical reality?

AM: If I'm starting something at Step 1 and I want to attain Step 10, I believe I have to go through Steps 2 to 9 to get there. But actually, if I can internally become the person that I would be at Step 10, I would bring Step 10 to me without going through Steps 2 to 9 because Step 10 already exists. Different possibilities of who I am two years, three years, and four years from now already exist.

So there are a *lot* of potentials out there waiting. What happens depends on what you bring into your present moment. It's sort of like looking at a huge picture on the wall, and as you get up really close, you see all the pixels, all the dots that make up that picture. Imagine one of those dots is you in your physical life now. You then have a choice of jumping to any one of the other dots next to that one—to the right, to the left, above, below, or diagonally—each one bringing a different experience. And then from that dot, you again have the choice of which dot to jump to. All those possibilities exist all at once. So when we take a step back and look at our past, we can see we've created a linear timeline in going from one dot to the next, to the next, to the next. But when we look at our future, it's not linear. That whole sea of dots lies before us, and it just depends on which dot

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we choose to bring into our present moment.

KK: So given this plasticity, how much of what happens in our lives is destiny and how much is driven by free will?

AM: I think we come into our lives with an intention of reaching our highest potential, our destiny. But it is our free will as to whether we choose to attain that or not. So go back to the dots. Each dot is one point in time, and we're always choosing the next point from the dots around us.

If you're choosing from a place of fear, then the next dot you choose will be the one that reflects that fear. But if you're choosing from a place of joy or love or passion, the next dot that you choose will reflect that. What you create in linear time depends on whether you're feeling fear or whether you're feeling joy, love, and passion in each present moment.

If we make our choices from a place of love instead of fear, if we choose to pursue our joy instead of pursuing what's safe, then we will attract a very different path—and that is our choice. If we always choose from joy, from passion, from love, then we will actually attain our highest potential, our destiny.

KK: So we make our own luck—there's really no such thing as a lucky person?

AM: Right.

KK: On a similar note, you didn't see your cancer as a punishment or bad karma so much as a consequence of fear and of not loving yourself. There's a fine line between recognizing cause and assigning blame, isn't there?

AM: Some people accuse me of saying that when someone has cancer, it's their fault, but I'm absolutely *not*

saying that. When I had cancer and people would tell me that my negative thoughts must have created the cancer, I felt angry and really frustrated because how do you change your thoughts? That makes you afraid of your thoughts. So I'm *not* assigning blame, but I *am* assigning the responsibility to move forward.

Here's another way to look at it. If you were abused as a child, in absolutely no way is that your fault. As an adult, though, you have a choice of either blaming your childhood for everything that is going wrong for you or taking responsibility for your life and making it better.

KK: You can pick a different dot.

AM: Exactly. What happened in your past is not your fault, but you don't have to carry it into your future. 