

Discovering the Treasure Within

by Wendy Treynor, PhD

Failing to appreciate who you are is like failing to appreciate the cactus flower in bloom – a flower that is in bloom for only one night. At the end of your life, you may realize that you threw away the most precious gift you were ever given – your life. Here, I share my story with you, so you won't make the same mistake I almost made.

On what I thought was my deathbed, I had one main regret: not having loved, accepted, and appreciated myself just



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as I am. At that moment, I thought to myself, "Oh, I get it! I was supposed to love and appreciate *myself* in the way I had always wanted others to love and appreciate me. I was supposed to love *myself* in the way I needed to be loved. I was supposed to give *myself* permission to follow my heart."

I had been waiting all my life for other people to love me in the way I needed to be loved, to give me permission to follow my heart, to appreciate me as I am, to tell me I had done enough and was good enough. And no one did.

It was then that I realized my error: I had been waiting all my life for *other* people to give me what I was supposed to give myself – genuine love and acceptance.

Think of a neglected, old, wooden table. There might be cobwebs on it. It might be stored in someone's basement. It might be ugly to look at. But if someone took the time to polish that table, he might discover a gem, a hidden treasure that only needed a little polishing. To think that all these years,

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this treasure was undervalued, unappreciated, neglected, and overlooked. What a waste!

We are like this table. Many of us undervalue ourselves – failing to see the treasure that we are. All of us are treasures. We just need a little polishing, a little dusting off, is all.

To recognize our true treasure selves, we first must treat ourselves as treasures – even if we don't believe we are worthy of such care. In time, we will come to discover our true treasure nature, as will others.

Research has shown that a sidewalk with trash on it accumulates more trash, whereas a sidewalk without trash on it stays clean. We are like that sidewalk. If we fail to take

care of ourselves and let trash accumulate, other people will throw their trash on us, too. But if we take care of ourselves, and treat ourselves with respect, then others will take care of us and treat us with respect as well.

In treating ourselves as the treasures we are, we will come to know, cherish, and celebrate our true treasure selves. And it won't be long before others follow our lead.

Editor's Note: Dr. Wendy Treynor is a lymphoma survivor; scientist of human emotion, thought, and behavior; inspirational speaker; personal consultant; author; and founder of Healing Consulting. Her books include *Towards a General Theory of Social Psychology: Understanding Human Cruelty, Human Misery, and, Perhaps, a Remedy* and the upcoming *The Gift of Cancer*, from which this article is excerpted and adapted (to join the community, visit GiftofCancer.org). You can see more of Wendy's inspirational lectures, quotes, and essays online at HealingConsulting.com. To contact Wendy, call (310)-YES-LOVE, or e-mail gift@healingconsulting.com. ■