

What's the Difference Between Self-Acceptance and Self-Improvement?

From the Curvy Mat

00:07 Anna Guest-Jelley: Hey there, Anna here, founder of Curvy Yoga, and I am super excited to be here with you today for another episode of From the Curvy Mat. Today's question from a reader is, "I've been wondering, if I accept myself, does that mean I can never change? What is the difference between self-acceptance and self-improvement?" Whoa. All right, let's dive on in.

00:41 AG: So, first I'll say that this is such a common question, and, of course... Of course, it's a common question because pretty much, everything else in our culture is designed to tell us that accepting ourselves is not a good idea, because if we accepted ourselves we wouldn't be buying things like products to make our underarms look better. So, I'll say that we have quite a lot that's sort of up against us in this quest, but that does not mean that's impossible in any stretch of the imagination.

01:19 AG: I want to say right off the bat, that a desire to change is not a bad thing. I think there can kind of be a black and white in the self-acceptance community, like you either totally accept yourself in every single moment and you never change anything or you're on a dieting bandwagon and changing everything about you possible. I think the reality is somewhere in the middle because I know that I'm grateful for many positive changes that I've made in my own life; better communication, better self-awareness. So, if I never changed, if acceptance meant being static and complacent, then I wouldn't have those positive changes. So, I don't want us to mix up change equals bad because that can be confusing and just, I think, ultimately not helpful.

02:09 AG: Okay. So, now I've got that little disclaimer out of the way, I'll say that for me, self-improvement is contingent on self-acceptance. It's, sort of like a chicken-and-egg scenario except, in this case, I totally know which one comes first, and it's self-acceptance. So, for me, self-acceptance is about kindness, it's about gentleness. It's about meeting myself where I actually am, not where I was five years ago or five minutes ago, not where I'll be in two years or two minutes, but right where I am at this moment.

02:48 AG: And from that ground, at present, I feel so much more able to make decisions about changes I might like to make in my life, in ways that are really healthy and feel good for me, because I believe when we undertake self-improvement without self-acceptance first or at least some self-awareness, it really comes in from an external place. So, we're making the changes based on something we saw in a magazine, or what our mother told us, or what our work colleague is doing, and they're not necessarily in sync with our true desires. So, when we have acceptance first, we can really make changes that make sense and that are more lasting for us and that's gonna be different for each person.

03:38 AG: So now, I'd love to hear from you. What do you think the difference is between self-acceptance and self-improvement? Thanks for being here.

03:49 AG: If you enjoyed this video, if you know somebody else who you think would be interested, I would love for you to share it on Facebook or Twitter. Come hang out with me on the Curvy Yoga Facebook or Twitter page and if you'd love a little more Curvy Yoga in your life, go to my website, sign up, and you'll get two free chapters of my book "Permission to Curve." Bye.