

Obstacles That Keep You Imprisoned in Self-Hate and Struggling for Self-Love

- **Body image** — When you focus only on your limitations and what you would like to change about yourself, you are shallow. The human person is much more than a perfect body. A perfect body is useless if the seeds of self-love are not growing within it. You are being challenged to make the most of what you have and to put the energy spent in agonizing over shortcomings into accepting the good and beautiful person that you are.
- **Messages from others** — “I am not what I think I am. I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am.” The way you think others perceive you is a powerful force over you. Parents may be telling you what you are not. Teachers may be telling you what you should be. Friends may be telling you what you have not been. The Church is telling you how you should be acting. All of these factors have a strong influence over how you view yourself. You need to separate yourself from the messages you are given about yourself by others. You are not only what others say you are. If you do not have a strong sense of who you are, you are always going to be what others say you are.
- **Apathy** — Often it is convenient to not like who you are because others will feel sorry for you and give you the attention you are crying out for. It takes less energy to be what others want you to be rather than being what you genuinely are. “Why should I change when others are doing exactly what I want them to?”
- **Feeling inadequate** — Trying to be for others what they want you to be at all times can be disappointing. Feeling unsure of your capabilities keeps you from taking risks and failing. Comparing what you are not to what someone else is will bury you in a grave of self-pity.
- **Fear** — When you have spent so long trying to be for others rather than being for yourself, you fear being who you really are because you might be rejected. Self-doubt and self-hate keep you imprisoned and hesitant in revealing your genuine self. Fear of failure and acceptance can keep you from unmasking yourself.
- **Guilt** — There is not a person alive who does not make mistakes. There is not a person alive that can be perfect. Since you are going to make mistakes, you must learn from them and move on. Feeling guilty about inappropriate choices keeps you from growing as a person. If you choose to live in constant guilt, you are choosing to no longer be alive as a person.
- **Self-alienation** — It is much easier to hide from people, events, and places than it is to risk possible failure, imperfection, or success! When you do not focus on your gifts, you become prisoners of your limitations. As you grow further and further away from being genuine, you grow further away from others. Escaping and hiding is not the answer. Why live only being half-alive?