



*100 Ways Women in  
Midlife Practice*

*The Art of Self-  
Approval*™

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*Hello, my love,*

If this is your first introduction to The Art of Self-Approval™, welcome. You might be curious about what that is exactly. Let me give you the short version.

I've been walking with women through their own personal transformations for over a decade, and I've walked my own many times as well, and never without support of my own along the way. Much of what happens in midlife is a shedding of patriarchal conditioning, or at the very least, the desire to do so.

I have helped women face the stories they've been sold and come home to the truth that they were never lacking or broken.

We've all had experiences that broke us open. That doesn't mean we're broken. It means we're alive, living the human experience we came here for.

We've been sold a bald-faced lie that we all need improvement. I've certainly felt that way for much of my life, and was very much a self-improvement junkie. This story is intended to keep us chasing some unrealistic idea of perfection. The 'ideal woman', partner, friend, mother, etc. I see clearly now how those stories keep us trying to fix what was never wrong.

Yet, most of us learned to look outside ourselves for the verdict – was that good enough, was I good enough, did I do that right. We became fluent in seeking approval from everyone else and forgot that approval was ours to give ourselves all along. We never needed self-improvement. Rather, what we are truly craving is self-approval.

Self-approval doesn't come in a single moment. It's not a one-time decision – although deciding to be your own source of approval is certainly where you'll begin.

***The Art of Self-Approval***<sup>™</sup> is a practice.

Small, repeated, often invisible acts of choosing yourself in a body, a relationship, a bank account, a mirror, and a room full of people all with varying opinions.

This collection is exactly that: 100 small practices, organized across the places self-approval gets tested most. Your body, your solitude, your relationships, your work, your voice, your desires, your mistakes, your aging, your money, and the quiet ordinary moments that make up most of a life.

None of these require grand gestures. None of them ask you to become someone new. Although, I suspect you'll begin to see yourself in a better light the more you practice. They simply ask you to notice – again and again – that you were never the one who needed fixing.

You were only ever the one waiting for permission you can finally give yourself.

With love,

*Elaine*

# **The Body: *How you speak to and about yourself physically***

1. Thank your body before you critique it. Before the mirror gets the first word, let gratitude get there first.
2. Retire the phrase "I should look like." There is no should. There is only what is.
3. Wear the thing you've been saving. Your body doesn't need to earn the good clothes.
4. Move because it feels good, not because you're being punished. Exercise as celebration, not penance.
5. Let your reflection catch you off guard — and just notice, without editing. Practice looking without commentary.
6. Say "my body carried me through" instead of "my body let me down." Language shapes the relationship.
7. Stop apologizing for taking up space — literally. In a chair, in a photo, in a room.

## **The Body: *How you speak to and about yourself physically***

8. Notice one thing your body does well today, unrelated to how it looks. Digestion, healing, breath, rest.
9. Let a wrinkle, a gray hair, a soft belly simply exist without a verdict attached. Observation instead of judgment.
10. Touch your own face or hands with the same tenderness you'd offer a friend. A small, physical act of self-approval.

### **Notes:**

## ***Solitude & Rest: Permission to be alone, to do nothing, to not perform***

11. Cancel a plan without producing an excuse. "I need the day" is a complete sentence.
12. Sit in a quiet house without turning on the TV to fill it. Let the silence be enough.
13. Take a nap without earning it first. Rest doesn't require a receipt of productivity.
14. Eat a meal alone, at the table, without a screen. Give yourself the company you deserve.
15. Say no to an invitation simply because you don't want to go. No further reason required.
16. Let a weekend be unstructured, and resist the urge to "make it count." Empty time is not wasted time.
17. Turn your phone off for an hour and notice what surfaces. Solitude has something to say if you let it.
18. Go somewhere alone that you'd normally only go with company. A restaurant, a movie, a walk.

## **Solitude & Rest: *Permission to be alone, to do nothing, to not perform***

19. Let yourself be "unavailable" without guilt. You are allowed to not be reachable.
20. Notice the difference between loneliness and solitude — and let yourself enjoy the second one. They are not the same thing.

### **Notes:**

## **Relationships & Boundaries: *Where self-approval collides with other people's expectations***

21. Say "that doesn't work for me" without softening it into an apology. A boundary doesn't need a cushion of guilt.
22. Let someone be disappointed in your decision without rushing to fix their feelings. Their disappointment is theirs to hold.
23. Stop over-explaining your reasons. "No" is a complete sentence; you don't owe a defense.
24. Notice when you're agreeing to keep the peace, and pause before you answer. A beat of hesitation is information.
25. End a conversation that has turned disrespectful, even mid-sentence. You're allowed to leave the room.
26. Let a relationship be exactly as close as it actually is — not as close as you feel obligated to make it. Honesty over performance.
27. Ask for what you need directly, instead of hinting and hoping. Clarity is a form of self-respect.

## **Relationships & Boundaries: *Where self-approval collides with other people's expectations***

28. Let someone else be wrong about you without needing to correct the record. Their perception isn't your responsibility.

29. Choose the relationship that feels like ease over the one that feels like proving yourself. Notice which is which.

30. Say "I don't know" instead of performing certainty to keep someone comfortable. Honesty over reassurance.

### **Notes:**

## **Work & Ambition: *Self-worth outside of productivity or achievement***

31. Let your worth stay intact on a day you accomplish nothing. You are not your output.
32. Take credit for something out loud, without deflecting it. "Thank you, I worked hard on that" is enough.
33. Say no to an extra project without justifying it with exhaustion or illness. "I don't have capacity" is reason enough.
34. Notice when you're chasing a title or promotion to prove something, and ask what you actually want. Ambition and approval-seeking can look identical from the outside.
35. Leave work on time without a mental apology to the empty office. Your presence isn't owed beyond the hour.
36. Let a project be "good enough" and release it. Perfect is often just fear wearing a work ethic..

## **Work & Ambition: *Self-worth outside of productivity or achievement***

37. Ask for the raise, the rate, the compensation you're actually worth — without pre-negotiating against yourself. Let them say no; don't say it for them.
38. Let yourself rest on a weekday without needing a work-related reason to justify it. Rest doesn't need to be earned by output.
39. Let yourself be a beginner at something new, in public, without shrinking. Competence isn't a prerequisite for trying.
40. Notice if you're proud of the work — regardless of whether anyone else noticed it. Let your own eyes be enough.

### **Notes:**

## ***Voice & Opinion: Trusting your own perspective without needing agreement***

41. Say what you actually think in a room where everyone else has already agreed. Consensus isn't truth.
42. Let your opinion stand without a string of qualifiers. Not "I could be wrong, but—" Just say it.
43. Disagree with someone you respect, out loud, in the moment. Respect and agreement are not the same thing.
44. Notice when you're rehearsing a comment for ten minutes before saying it — and say it anyway. The rehearsal is fear, not preparation.
45. Let a strong opinion exist without needing everyone to share it. You don't need consensus to be right for you.
46. Speak in a meeting before you feel "ready." Readiness is often just permission you haven't given yourself.
47. Say "I changed my mind" without treating it as a failure. A changed mind is a working mind.

## **Voice & Opinion: *Trusting your own perspective without needing agreement***

48. Stop asking "does that make sense?" after you've already made sense. Trust that you were clear.

49. Let silence follow your statement instead of rushing to fill it with a justification. Silence isn't disagreement.

50. Write down what you actually believe about something before you check what everyone else believes. Know your own mind first.

### **Notes:**

## **Desire & Wanting: *Letting yourself want things without justifying them***

51. Say what you want out loud, before you've justified why you deserve it. Wanting doesn't require a permission slip.
52. Buy the flowers for yourself, not just for the table when guests are coming. You are occasion enough.
53. Let a want stay a want, even if it's impractical right now. Not every desire needs an immediate plan.
54. Notice when you've downgraded your want to something "more realistic" before anyone even asked you to. Catch yourself negotiating against your own wish.
55. Say "I'd love that" without immediately adding "but I don't need it." Let the want stand on its own.
56. Ask for the thing instead of hoping someone notices you want it. Mind-reading isn't a love language you should have to rely on.

## **Desire & Wanting: *Letting yourself want things without justifying them***

57. Let yourself want something just because it's beautiful, not because it's useful. Beauty is reason enough.

58. Write down a desire you've never said out loud to anyone. Naming it is the first act of taking it seriously.

59. Choose the vacation, the meal, the plan you actually want — not the one that's easiest for everyone else. Your preference counts as a vote.

60. Let excitement about something be visible, instead of downplaying it to seem low-maintenance. Enthusiasm doesn't need an apology.

### **Notes:**

## **Mistakes & Imperfection: *Self-approval when you've fallen short***

61. Say "I made a mistake" without following it with three reasons why it wasn't really your fault. Ownership doesn't require self-punishment.
62. Let yourself be bad at something in front of other people. Competence was never the price of belonging in the room.
63. Notice the voice that replays an old mistake for the hundredth time, and simply close the loop. It doesn't need another rerun.
64. Apologize once, clearly, and then let it be finished. Repeated apologizing isn't accountability — it's punishment.
65. Let a flawed first draft exist without rushing to fix it immediately. Imperfect and unfinished are allowed to sit for a moment.
66. Forgive yourself for something you'd already forgive a friend for. Apply the same mercy inward.
67. Say "that didn't go how I wanted" instead of "I failed." The story you tell about it matters as much as the event itself.

## **Mistakes & Imperfection: *Self-approval when you've fallen short***

68. Let someone see you mid-mistake, before you've cleaned it up into a lesson. You don't need the tidy ending yet to be worthy of being seen.
69. Notice when perfectionism is actually fear of judgment wearing a nicer name. Call it what it is.
70. Keep something imperfect instead of starting over. Not everything needs to be redone to be worthy.

### **Notes:**

## ***Aging & Appearance: Approving of yourself in a body and face that's changing***

71. Let a photo of yourself exist without immediately critiquing it. See the moment, not just the face.
72. Say your age out loud without a wince or a joke to soften it. It's simply a fact, not a confession.
73. Notice a new line or gray hair and let it be evidence of a life lived, not a problem to solve. Evidence, not verdict.
74. Wear something you love, regardless of whether it's "age-appropriate." That phrase was never yours to begin with.
75. Let yourself be photographed without asking to see it first, just once. Practice trusting how you look without inspecting it.
76. Notice when you're apologizing for how you look before anyone has said a word. Catch the pre-emptive apology and drop it.
77. Choose comfort over what you think you're supposed to wear at your age. Your body gets the final vote.

## ***Aging & Appearance: Approving of yourself in a body and face that's changing***

78. Look in the mirror and name one thing that has nothing to do with youth that you appreciate. Presence, expression, the eyes that have seen things.

79. Let go of comparing your current face to a photo of yourself decades ago. That woman isn't the standard; she was simply younger.

80. Say "I look like myself" and let that be enough. Not a before, not an after — just you, now.

**Notes:**

## ***Money & Worth: Separating self-worth from net worth or earning***

81. Look at your bank balance without letting it decide your value that day. A number is information, not a verdict.
82. Spend on something joyful without immediately calculating what it "should" have gone to instead. Joy is an allowed expense.
83. Say your rate or your price without shrinking it before anyone objects. Let them respond to the real number.
84. Notice when you're using busyness or earning to justify resting or existing. You don't have to buy your right to rest.
85. Let a financial mistake from the past stay in the past. You are not still that decision.
86. Ask directly for money you're owed, without cushioning it in apology. A clear ask is a form of self-respect.
87. Choose the option that fits your values, even if it costs more. Worth isn't always the lowest price.

## **Money & Worth: *Separating self-worth from net worth or earning***

88. Notice comparison creeping in around what others have, and come back to what's actually yours. Someone else's number isn't your scoreboard.

89. Let yourself enjoy money you have instead of only ever protecting or growing it. Enjoyment counts as good stewardship too.

90. Say "I'm proud of what I've built" regardless of the total. Worth was never only measured in dollars.

**Notes:**

## Everyday Small Moments: *Tiny, ordinary acts of self-approval*

91. Let yourself laugh loudly in public, without checking who's watching. Joy doesn't need permission to be loud.
92. Choose the parking spot, the seat, the mug you actually want — not just whatever's easiest. Small preferences count as self-approval too.
93. Say "that was fun" about something small, without needing it to be impressive. Delight doesn't require justification.
94. Let yourself skip a task on the list and not mention it to anyone. Not every unfinished thing needs an audience or an excuse.
95. Notice a compliment and simply say "thank you," without deflecting it. Let it land instead of bouncing it back.
96. Sing in the car with the windows down, badly, on purpose. Nobody's grading this.
97. Choose the slower, more scenic way home just because you want to. Efficiency isn't the only value worth having.

## Everyday Small Moments: *Tiny, ordinary acts of self-approval*

98. Let a small moment of pride stay private — you don't need to post it or prove it. Not everything good needs witnesses.

99. Say "I did that well" to yourself, quietly, and mean it. You're allowed to be your own audience.

100. End the day naming one thing you approved of about yourself — nothing more, nothing less. A small, closing practice of return.

### Notes:

# The Practice

You don't need to practice all one hundred of these. You don't even need to practice one perfectly.

Pick a single one that stopped you as you read it — the one that made you think, oh, I do that, or I've never once let myself do that. Start there.

Let it be small. Let it be imperfect. Let it be entirely yours.

This is the quiet work of midlife: not becoming someone new, but finally approving of the woman you've been all along — the one who carried everyone else's needs for so long that she nearly forgot to carry her own.

She's still here. She was never gone.

Every time you choose yourself in some small, ordinary way, you're not just practicing self-approval. You're proving that it's finally safe to come home to yourself.

With love and devotion,

*Elaine*



Elaine Blais is a Spiritual Life Coach, Midlife Guide for women ready to author their own becoming and author of - ***The Art of Self-Approval - midlife as a sacred return to yourself***, available here on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

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