

# The TOPS Ten

## Ways to Be Your Own Valentine

*Take time to realize how great it is to be one of a kind—you.* You are the only you that ever will be, and because of that, you are fascinating!

*Take time, right now, to go and get a pencil and some paper.* Right now. Go.

*Take time to realize and write down your many talents.* Talents can be as grand as flying airplanes, as simple as making “a great cup of tea,” and as personal as always greeting a (gracious or grumpy) store checkout person with a smile and pleasant “Hello.” Continue being aware, and add to this list.

*Take time to write down your interests.* Whether or not you are currently active with or participating in an interest, record them. Use simple words or phrases: hang gliding, bucolic scenes with cattle, learning to cut out family portrait silhouettes, collecting sports memorabilia, bonsai trees, and so on.

*Take time to write down your goals.* You may shock yourself. For some reason, the process of having to trap one’s goals within the confines of specific words on paper can change things. You may discover some new and wonderful things about your current self.

*Take time to write down your blessings.* Enter two blessings into a little notebook every night. The habit of looking for blessings during your day to record every night creates an upbeat attitude and adds such sweetness to life.

*Take time to create a list of the names of significant people in your life.* While waiting in line at the store, while mowing the lawn, or before dropping off to sleep in your hammock or bed, choose a person from the list and enjoy thoughts and memories involving him or her.

*Take time to write a list of how you can be good to yourself.* Examples: Drive to different starting points to keep my walking route interesting, chop and add onions and celery to my egg salad sandwich to make it delicious and more filling (with no extra calories), trade shoulder massages with someone, etc.

*Take time to relax, play, and enjoy life—with no guilt.* A car battery can’t work unendingly without being recharged. Neither can a horse. Do we expect them to do so? No. Impossible. So, let’s stop expecting the same from ourselves. *We need to relax, play, and enjoy life to recharge.* No guilt allowed.

An especially great way to be your own Valentine is to *take time to write out a food and activity/exercise plan* tailored especially for one-of-a-kind, fascinating you!