Plato's Problem with Loving Yourself

Arguably these days, there's a lot of self-love going on. Indeed, isn't that the point of almost all marketing campaigns. Our culture is awash in the love of self.

Unfortunately, that's not necessarily a good thing even for the self.

In volume 4 of *The Dialogues,* Plato [argues](),

"The greatest evil to men, generally, is one which is innate in their souls, and which a man is always excusing in himself and never correcting; I mean, what is expressed in the saying, 'that every many by nature is and ought to be his own friend.' Whereas the excessive love of self is in reality the source to each man of all offenses; for the lover is blinded about the beloved, so that he judges wrongly of the just, the good, and the honorable, and thinks that he ought always to prefer his own interest to the truth."

In other words, while one loves the self and feeds the self, one can actually be doing great harm and not realize it.

An extreme example would be something obvious such as heroin. The body craves the pleasure brought on by the drug. Yet, the body can only take so much pleasure without great harm or even death befalling it. Evils of all kind, even those such as selfishness and anger, eat away at the souls of men and can often lead to peril to their bodies.

The love of self blinds men to the harm they do not only to others, but even to themselves. Such is Plato's warning.