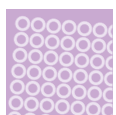




Me, Myself & I: The Greatest Love Story of Our Lives

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“Don’t be selfish! Think of others before you think of yourself!” Most of us grew up hearing these words as part of our upbringing and education. Well, they are good but I’m here to tell you to “Please be selfish and think of yourself first!”

Now, before you go raising your eyebrows in surprise, please allow me to explain; as children, most of us are all taught values and good manners. These include thinking of others before we think of ourselves, to always help out, to be there for others, never to be selfish, jealous or negative. These selfless traits sound great in a perfect world, but not when it is real life and at the expense of our own feelings, happiness and wellbeing.

Self-consideration and abandonment

As children, our parents try their best to raise us with the best of manners. To “do unto others only what we would wish them to do unto us”, but throughout the generations,



“ Please be selfish and think of yourself first! ”



self-love wasn't ever considered. It is still seen today as a selfish thing and even frowned upon. I'm here to tell you that everything needs to be felt in a balanced way: too much love for the other can also feel stifling and controlling. Too little love can leave one feeling abandoned and neglected. Too much selfishness can lead to pain and suffering and yet too little self-consideration can lead to self-abandonment and resentment.

Self-love may not be something we learn growing up, but it is certainly something we need to learn as adults. It was one of the most challenging things I had to learn, then once I started shifting the love I was giving out - back into myself, things started changing in my life. I had literally 'sold myself out, betrayed and back stabbed myself' so many times in order to gain others' approval, acceptance and love. I then kept blaming life and others for my failed relationships and misery in life.

We all long for love throughout our lives; as children we do everything in order to receive the approval, acceptance and love of our parents, siblings and extended family. Then, as teenagers we start doing everything in order to

receive the approval, acceptance and love of classmates and friends - the start of our connection to a larger society. As young adults, we do so much in order to receive the approval, acceptance and love of colleagues at work, friends and that other special one as we start carving out our love life-and so the cycle continues.

Now, if we can take a moment and look back at certain patterns in our lives, we can notice there were times when we did things we didn't really want to do, or said yes when we really wanted to say no, and vice versa, just to receive acceptance, approval and love. These patterns continue throughout our lives. Many times, those decisions and actions are not what we desire, but we choose to go against ourselves because thinking about ourselves would be seen as a selfish thing and frowned upon. The older we get, the more that builds unhappiness, stress, resentment and anger, but we really don't understand the root cause nor why we feel duty-bound and unhappy in our lives.

Acceptance

Many of our relationships are built on false grounds, such as desperately wishing to be accepted by family, friends



and society, which makes us turn a blind eye to values which do not match our own. We may get involved with partners pressured by society, religion or family. We do things because we want something back, not from a place of inner truth. Truth to ourselves and truth to others. All along the way, we are never taught to look at the person in the mirror and connect with them, ask them what they really want, what makes them happy. Our most important and real relationship of our lives is the one we have with our Selves.

Self-love is about taking the time to look within our Selves. To learn to connect to the child we all still have within us so desperate for love, attention, approval and acceptance. Once we can truly see our Self as our best friend, and to love our Self with full acceptance of who we are, forgiveness for everything we judge as wrong, then love and joy is all that is left. When we become our own number one, then everybody else's love, acceptance

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and approval is just great as an addition to our lives - not what we depend on to complete us. We approach life with our own cup full from within, so everything else is just a good addition.

It is when we learn to accept ourselves, that we can truly accept others. When we learn to forgive ourselves, that we can truly forgive others. When we love ourselves fully, that we can truly love another for who they are and not the image we have of them in our heads. ○



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