

LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

I used to believe that love happens when you least expect it--- love is outside of your control, love happens to you. Love is either an accident like falling in love or some chemical reaction.

So many people believe that they cannot possibly be happy or whole without a partner. It's a multi-million-dollar industry taking advantage of vulnerable people desperate for love and connection. They are missing the need to work on themselves and how they create love by doing certain behaviors. Love is not an accident! It is a step-by-step process that results in feeling the love feelings.

To do this, first, you must learn to love yourself. This old cliché has been around for years. Yes, it is true, but what does loving yourself look like in behavioral terms? Is loving yourself sitting under a tree and hugging yourself? For years we've been told to love ourselves without anybody ever telling us how to do that.

The first step in loving yourself is letting go of all judgments in your life. No more "I shoulds" or "I shouldn't's!"

Every "I should" you have is just another judgment, a condemnation that you are not doing what you should. What would your behavior look like if you had no shoulds in your life? Can you trust yourself that you won't hurt yourself or others? You will never get rid of your shoulds unless you trust yourself that whatever you do is okay—not right or wrong, but okay, I

neutral point. God is our judge, so allow God to do the judging; your job is to accept yourself and others.

Life is neither good nor evil but only a place for good or evil.

Marcus Aurelius 121 A.D.

This brings up the next point in knowing how to love yourself. This is where you take responsibility for your irresponsibility. This is where you can embrace that “Everything is your fault. if you’re lucky.” Hemingway. You won’t always be lucky, but if everything is your fault, you have the absolute power to change it. And that starts with changing yourself. Most people's energy goes into changing others (who do it to you). If there are disasters in your life or someone doing it to you, you are powerless. If you create your own disasters, you can learn from them and do them differently next time. As long as you blame other people, you create powerless situations. If someone can make you angry, then who has the power? If someone can make you feel loved, then who has the power? And who gets to feel insecure and jealous?

Are you willing to love yourself by 1) taking the judgments out of your life. 2) Trust yourself and that you are a good person who would not deliberately hurt you or someone else. 3) And by accepting responsibility for your irresponsibility in using these times to learn from your mistakes. This is where being honest with yourself and others is essential. If you have gone through a breakup in a relationship, here are four questions to test your ability, to be honest.

- What did you do right in your last relationship?
- What did you do wrong in your last relationship?
- What did your mate do wrong in your last relationship?
- What did your mate do right in your last relationship?

Your behavior is the test for determining whether you are honest. Does what you do and say match up?

I do not judge people for searching for love; I do, however, question what they will find. I know people are lonely and desperately want to find someone to love them, but what if we try loving ourselves first? What if you become the person you wish to be with and emit that energy? What if we let ourselves heal, work on ourselves, and do what makes us happy from the inside before trying to find happiness externally? What if you build connections with friends and like-minded people? But most of all, what if you build a connection with yourself?

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