

Make yourself into an excellent partner!

Love self - so others will love you (or - How to save your marriage from yourself)

When we don't love ourselves We fear not being loved by others. We also tend to keep our distance from others, or react to them, seeing them as separate, thereby keeping them at a distance and keeping love at a distance also, leaving ourselves feeling wounded – by others.

When we recognise that by loving self and seeing love and loving in others, we empathize with both self and others, and support our ability to role reverse. We then see both their pain, and ours. With insight comes understanding and acceptance.

By loving self, no matter what the voices around us may say, no matter what the voices from the past may try to remind us, we can be loving of others. Until we can love self, our love for others requires that they love us in return to the point where their love convinces us that we are lovable.

When we know that we are acceptable, deserving and worthy of love no matter what, only then can we be loving of others even when they are not being loving of us. When we feel worthy and deserving of love, and self accepting, we attract that which we are within. This inner light of self acceptance ensures that we will receive it in return.

When we are secure in our self acceptance, we can stay open to others. We can risk staying connected to them, even when they are critical of us. We can risk hearing them without being defensive or resistant, thereby inviting them to be loving of themselves as well as of our ability to love unconditionally. Perhaps eventually, they'll even be loving of us.

Then the fact that they love us is a confirmation that we are worthy, deserving and lovable which we knew to be the case anyway. Their love becomes the icing on the cake of self-love, self-acceptance, self-affirmation, self-support and self-appreciation.

Now we've come full circle. Loving self has made us attractive to others. (Consider just who wants to love someone who is unlovable). By loving self first, we are not seeking another to prop us up. We are solid in the knowledge and feeling that we are thoroughly OK as we are. And being so, we have something solid to offer - love,

acceptance, affirmation, support and appreciation of another, because we can be to them what we are being to ourselves - loving, and lovable.

Now our relationship takes on a different dimension. Instead of being needy, we are prepared to meet our own needs. Instead of being blaming, we are prepared to look at ourselves. Instead of asking 'Why don't you...', we ask "Why don't I ...". Instead of finding fault in self or other, we recognise that there's work to be done, Work that involves a caring approach to my own emotional distress.

Now we can take care of our own needs. Now we can ask our partner to help us meet our own needs. We also recognise that we can help our partner recognise, own and meet their own needs also.

We are now in a place of being compassionate towards self, and also compassionate towards our partner. Instead of wronging, we will want to support their wounded needy child part. Instead of being superior, we will want to help them heal old unmet needs, just as we do our own. Now we are being loving, caring, supportive and understanding of everybody in this relationship.

Well functioning partners create well functioning relationships

We each bring to our relationships our past baggage. For most, this baggage is an invisible entity standing in the centre of the relationship – a little like the elephant in the room that is never spoken about. When a relationship struggles, the past is usually a key unseen element. To improve your relationship, consider how you can improve as a person, and then bring this as an offering to your partner. (For a detailed discussion of these factors, read Jeff's book **The 12 Choices of Winnerson** a website that provides reviews and other details.

Visit

Pointers to a happy relationship

1. **Whenever you react, know that this probably says more about you than anyone else.** Start by accepting that this might be so, and examine what in your past might be coming into the present. What unhelpful self-beliefs are being triggered by your relationship? What old reactive patterns are

familiar? What behaviours of yours, certainly don't seem to work well for your partner?

2. **Notice your style of coping whenever there's conflict.** Do you harangue and follow your partner around the house? Do you withdraw and try to avoid the conflict? Do you close down emotionally, and avoid speaking? Do you erupt into an angry outburst, or even a violent one (verbally, emotionally or physically)? None of these very common patterns are supportive of a relationship, and must be explored and understood before new strategies are developed to cope with stressful encounters.
3. **Notice the familiar dynamics that arise repeatedly during conflict.** Most arguments arise because of mismatches in either needs, values or personality preferences. Any mismatch can be worked through, but only if you learn of your unmet needs, core values, and personality tendencies and preferences in other people.
4. **Recognize that relationship offers you a perfect opportunity to enjoy someone who is different.** However, if you find yourself disagreeing with the person who was once enjoyable because they were different, then basically you are trying to get them to convert to being a clone of you. Notice the absurdity of this situation, and be committed to accepting others just as they are, and working around or through the irritating differences.
5. **Notice if you have some personality tendencies that would not be helpful in a relationship.** Do you lie, manipulate, coerce, cheat, argue, criticize, withdraw, stonewall, put down, undermine, talk too much, talk too little, gossip, rarely listen, not bother to connect, act as a loner, are needy/demanding, controlling, self-absorbed, avoidant, or paranoid? **Any** of these will need to be dealt with if your relationship with another is to stand any chance of success.
6. **Train yourself to be the ideal partner.** Ideal partners are engaging, communicative, good listeners, can talk about their feelings, can express their feelings, know well their own idiosyncrasies, take responsibility for and act to address these, accept and appreciate the idiosyncrasies of others, are supportive and seek to help their partner meet needs, caring, tolerant of difference, have a sense of humour, support their partner through the tough

patches, know how to treat their partner as special, and do special things with/for them, spend time on the couple relationship, and accept conflict and know how through it.

7. Get advice, take a course, learn new relationship skills. Sign up for "**Understanding and Managing Relationship Skills**", an eight session weekly course that Jeff Saunders offers at regular intervals. This course will also soon also be available on the internet.

For help your own personal development, which in turn will greatly assist you in your relationship, get your copy of **The 12 Choices of Winners** from .