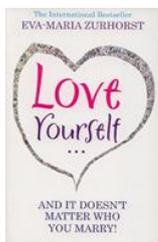


## Love Yourself – and it doesn't matter who you marry



That's the title of a best-selling book in Germany and now in the UK, written by our friend Eva Maria Zuhorst.

Just the title gives us the idea – and it's a helpful one – that the most important relationship of all is the one that we have with ourselves. Most of us spend lots of time and energy trying to get our partner to love us – and most of us can't even do that for ourselves. So we are continually asking for what we need from others, rather than for what we are prepared to give ourselves. We are bound to be disappointed and heartbroken, feeling let down by others or worse.

If we really did love ourselves in all aspects, then nothing anyone else did would press any buttons because there wouldn't be any to press, except the loving ones.

So ask yourself these questions, and answer as a percentage with the first number that pops into your mind:

*If you saw yourself walking down the street, would you want to get to know you better? ..... %*

*How hard are you on yourself, how much do you beat yourself up for getting things wrong? ..... %*

*How much do you expect from yourself? ..... %*

*How much do you approve of yourself? ..... %*

*Would you want a relationship with "you"?                      Yes/No*

Our relationship is our mirror. Whatever those answers were for you is the same as you experience from your partner. In other words, how much approval you feel you get from your partner is the same as the approval you give to yourself. What you expect of your partner is the same as you secretly expect from yourself.

This is the 'big idea' that really helped Jeff and me to change our relationship when we first discovered it. Before we had been blaming each other for everything, and the blame kept us completely stuck. Every time we tried to talk about anything we immediately started fighting about all the things the other person was doing wrong. Not surprisingly, we stopped talking.

But this principle of our relationship being our mirror was the key for us. With it, we became true partners instead of sparring partners. We each have the key for the other, and together we can mend all our broken pieces. If I see him as a bully, where am I bullying? Or where do I believe I deserve to be bullied? If he sees me as weak, where does he believe he is weak?

Today, start to take yourself more lightly. Make a promise to let yourself off the hook, to laugh at all the things that are still ahead of you to learn, to treat yourself with respect as a growing, healing being. And as we let ourselves off the hook we also let our partners off the hook and for that they will always be grateful.

The reason for us to be in relationships is to learn to give and receive and if we make relationships or marriages about anything else we will pay a high price. Our partners are not placed on this planet to make us feel good. If you believe that, your partner will surely let you down and you will feel let down.

The greatest of all secrets of relationships is that our partners change as we give to them, as we invest in them. If we learn this, then we will enjoy one of life's greatest pleasures. Happiness.

with love, Sue and Jeff

