

Love and Your Relationships – The One Simple Rule

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It's a known fact that men and women are different. No one has put it more eloquently as John Gray, author of *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*. He has taught us so much about how each sex ticks emotionally and we have really benefited from his insights.

What we haven't yet embraced is our similarities, like our feelings as loving, giving and sometimes fearful, scared and lonely human beings. Behind the Venus and Mars metaphor, how really different are we when it comes to love? On the surface we face the same love-dilemmas, we just process them differently. So if that is the case, what can we do as women to improve the relationships we have now and create loving and lasting relationships in the future?

Here's the thing, we know we are emotional creatures. Our emotions are so powerful that they can develop or destroy relationships at the drop of a tear. But, and it's a big but...we can change this so that our emotions no longer hold us to relationship ransom. How? Well funnily enough it's all about love. Love is the answer, remember?!

Love and your relationships should adhere to one simple rule and that is, if you want to have great and lasting relationships with anyone (and this includes family and friends), you have to love yourself first.

Go back and read that paragraph again.

It is the truth and we all secretly know this but we still look outside ourselves for real love. Now don't get me wrong, I am not saying romantic relationships cannot be filled with earth-shattering love. I am saying that without self-love these relationships cannot and will not last.

This is how men and women are very alike. We both require a reasonable amount of self-love in order to fully enjoy any type of worthy relationship (please note the use of the word 'worthy'). As women from a different planet, we lack the necessary antibodies for that well-known disease 'low self-esteem.' OK, plenty of men suffer from it too, heck who doesn't? But because we are more emotional we tend to look to our relationships to make us feel better. They soon become bad-tasting dishes made from our low self-esteem mixed with the subsequent unworthy relationships. It can go on and on like this forever if we don't stop the cycle with the one simple rule...love yourself first.

If loving ourselves first is the answer to all our relationship issues, how do we achieve that? It is not as difficult as you may think. In fact I have broken it down for you into the two following exercises:

1. The 'I Forgive Me' Exercise

2. The 'If Only' Exercise

The 'I Forgive Me' Exercise

Forgiving yourself for whatever you may have said, done or thought in the past is the first step towards loving yourself. Freeing yourself from past mistakes, or what I call 'learning opportunities,' allows you to make a fresh start with a clear conscious. Take time to go through this exercise thoroughly. Go back into your past and dig out all the things you have never forgiven yourself for. Fill in the blanks:

I forgive myself for thinking that.....

I forgive myself for believing that.....

I forgive myself for saying that.....

I forgive myself for doing.....

I forgive myself for being.....

I forgive myself for having.....

I forgive myself for not thinking that.....

I forgive myself for not believing that.....

I forgive myself for not saying.....

I forgive myself for not doing.....

I forgive myself for not being.....

I forgive myself for not having.....

Always forgive yourself. It leaves you open for developing into a more loving person. You can only truly love yourself when you have no bad feelings about yourself. Forgiveness clears the way for you to be happy. Forgiveness, like most things in life, is a choice. Choose to forgive and see how different your outlook on life becomes. Actively forgive all the time. Do not pre-condition forgiveness, just forgive because you can. It is self-healing and an act of self-love.

If you have complete the 'I Forgive Me' exercise you have given yourself a gift of freedom. Sounds overly dramatic but in reality by forgiving yourself you open up new opportunities and free yourself from past mistakes or unhappy times. I urge you to go back to this exercise from time to time to see if there are any other issues you



want to forgive yourself for. Practice forgiveness, master forgiveness...it is one of the most powerful things you can do and enables you to love yourself more readily.

I want you to get the most out of this article and so I have another important exercise for you. Read the following introduction and then complete the exercise as honestly and as completely as you can.

Unconditional love is the greatest gift there is. To some it may seem unreachable and so I want to help you understand two things: 1. That it IS obtainable. 2. That I can show you how to overcome the obstacles to it.

The irony is that we put obstacles to unconditional love in our way. We actually stop ourselves from loving ourselves unconditionally! It's no one else's fault but ours. So here's the thing, if you could clear away all those barriers to love, would you? Some barriers are bigger than others, but most of them boil down to one thing, self-loathing. This is a very strange emotion because it too can come in different sizes. Let me explain; as women we often put conditions to loving ourselves, these are sometimes expressed as our 'if only' phrase. For example, look at the following list and be honest, do any of these resonate with you?

If only I were....

taller, smarter, prettier, shorter, funnier, more confident, thinner, bigger-breasted, less like me, stronger, quieter, louder, more like her...

...then I would accept and love myself more!

There should be no barriers at all to loving yourself. Women need to understand that they are perfect as they are. Enjoy being yourself, stop worrying about your looks, age, being single, being divorced or being right. We are all perfect despite our flaws! Embrace it and relax!

Master self-acceptance and self-love, make it a big part of your journey in life. Forget struggling – look for support and guidance whenever you feel you need it, but always be moving towards love.

Alexandra Watson has helped countless women create happy and fulfilling lives through her happiness system. She has developed a fool-proof, easy-to-follow seven step system to happiness that any woman can use and see results fast. John Gray, author of Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus calls Alexandra's book The Happiness System for Women 'a vibrant and exciting journey to the centre of your soul'. Alexandra has featured internationally on TV, radio and in many publications. She can be contacted by email on: HappinessAuthor@aol.com or visit her website at <http://www.AlexandraWatson.com>