

2008: Marrying Myself

Being able to marry a man has become more important to me than ever before. It has become a sign that humanity is not only willing to embrace religious and ethnic differences, but other ways of expressing love, as well. I yearn for everyone to reach that level of awareness, but until that day comes there's another form of union I aspire to, the feeling every day of being happily married to myself.

In childhood I hated being me, and my experiences at school only intensified that hatred. As an adult I used drugs and sex to escape myself, and eventually sought the ultimate break away from love in attempting suicide. Once I got clean and sober in my thirties, I met a special guy, and through him I actually came to like myself. But when our relationship ended after thirteen years, I realized I was either going to revert to hating myself or I'd have to seek self-love.

For the next few years I figuratively dated myself, asking myself if I were the kind of person I could spend a lifetime with. And I suddenly realized I yearned to share myself with me, for better or worse, in sickness and in health, until death we did part. Last April I finally popped the question and eloped to Israel where I married myself at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem with God as my witness. As part of my marriage vows to myself, I promised never to divorce myself from me again with substances, cynicism or suicide.

Learning to accept *me* as my soul mate was the greatest act of love I've ever been given. It made peace with my parents and my past, and brought me the feeling of a future filled with hope.

In the brief time I've been wedded to me, I've had to assure myself of my fidelity with thousands of figurative hugs and kisses. I've had to have faith in me, believe in me and put my trust in me. But as a result, my self-confidence has risen, and I respect myself in a way I never could before.

Others even seek out my company now to learn how to keep the hope of gay marriage alive by marrying from the inside out. Ironically, my marriage to me has been a new beginning in getting to know *others* better, and my relationship to my community is stronger because I carry myself like a happily married man. Giving myself a fairy tale ending every day doesn't preclude me from loving others all the more. In fact, it makes it much easier.

When the gift of gay marriage finally does arrive to include us as equals in the joys of matrimony I'll be better prepared in already having tied the knot with me. I'll be able to give another special guy all the love and devotion I've already grown accustomed to.

If everyone married him/herself before getting into commitments with others, I think romantic relationships would be strengthened and more lasting. And if the next generation of youth marries themselves earlier in life than I did, they'll surely come to see us as people who give *greater* meaning to the bonds of matrimony.