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CONVERSATIONS WITH SELF

### Learn to love yourself

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Start praising yourself and see the change within

Photo: K.R. Deepak



**Feel good Learn to appreciate yourself**

Michael Jordan is considered the best basketball player of all time. Yet, he would shyly say that he was ordinary and it is because of God's grace that he is good.

Once, while deposing in court, he had to swear on the Bible that he would state only the truth. The judge began his questioning by asking Michael if he was the greatest basketball player ever. Michael said, "Yes." The judge was taken aback at this overt admission by the usually humble Jordan. Later, he called Jordan aside and asked how he publicly declared himself the best. Michael simply said: "You made me swear on the Bible, I had to speak the truth. I am the best."

What is rejection

This is self-appreciation. And, when you lack the ability to appreciate yourself or accept yourself unconditionally, you end up feeling rejected. The fear of rejection debilitates, destroys and reduces people.

I often ask people, “When was the last time you looked into the mirror and told yourself that you are pretty or handsome?” The reply is usually “never” or “rarely”. We always look into the mirror to see what is wrong with our face — “I look old”, “My hair is grey”... Have we ever told ourselves, “Hey, I am a good looking person”?

We used to, as children. Then, we had no problem looking into the mirror to admire ourselves. Where has that child gone?

As we grow older, we acquire hurt and pain and become pessimistic and begin to discredit ourselves. The need, therefore, is to reconstruct our self-image, to begin to appreciate ourselves. People don't reject us. We reject ourselves. We compare ourselves to a moving target we can never reach.

Rejection stems out of non-acceptance of the self too. Sometimes, at training sessions, I ask people if they have a young child at home. I then ask them if they readily hug their child if he/she comes running to them in dirty clothes. They invariably say “yes”. I then ask them if they will hug the same child when it is 20 or older and approaches them in unclean clothes. The response is often a big ‘No’.

“Why?” I ask, and they say: “ A grown-up child should know that I don't like to see him/her in dirty clothes.”

Drop the conditions

Now, tell me what the difference between a two-year-old and a 20-year-old is. You hug the two-year-old unconditionally, but the 20-year-old only when he/she is clean. You care, with conditions. You cannot accept yourself without conditions; you cannot accept others without conditions. Thus, you disown parts of you that you don't like.

How do you learn to accept yourself? Try to recognise the ‘good’ in you. Celebrate what you have, not what you don't. When you celebrate what's working in your life, what you don't like about yourself falls away.

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