

I Live in Touch with My Own Truth

A meditation by Marie Paul Curley, fsp

“Who I am depends on who I am with.”

Karen prides herself on her stylish appearance. She is forever trying to lose weight, although she doesn't need to. She wears clothes that are considered “in” instead of what she likes. Karen tries really hard to please her friends and co-workers. Even her conversations are usually about what is going on in others' lives, not about herself. Recently, however, she has started to feel that no one really knows her. “I feel like who I am is getting a bit lost,” she explains. “I think I might be adapting too much, hiding behind their expectations and needs. I'm not sure I even know how to be myself with them.”

Many people find themselves in a similar dilemma. The media pressure women to look and act in a certain way. Each situation and group of people we belong to seem to have different expectations. We “put on” and “take off” various identities throughout the day. Caught up in others' expectations, we can lose track of our deeper identity.

Perhaps the underlying fear is that if we are truly ourselves at work or with our friends, others might reject us. But if we never reveal our deeper selves to others, we run the risks of loneliness, of being misunderstood, of living superficially, or of compromising our own integrity.



From God's Heart to Yours

“God is true.” (Jn 3:33)

Hidden in the Darkness

God is absolutely, eternally, faithfully true—to himself and to us. God blesses each of us with unique identities and gifts which he wants us to share with the world. If we deny or

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leave out vital parts of ourselves in our close relationships, we cannot be the blessing God intends us to be. God calls us to be ourselves in the world.

We frequently must adapt to various relationships and circumstances. While adapting may require giving up something we want or even need, it never means that we leave behind who we are. But when our identity is fragile or our self-esteem is low, we can sometimes blur the boundaries. We can adapt too much in order to accommodate the person we're with. Imprisoned by the fear of what others will think of us, we are afraid to express our own needs, concerns or opinions. Lack of communication leads to misunderstandings, resentment, conflict, lack of closeness, dominance of one person's needs or opinions over the other's, etc. We cannot make a gift of ourselves if we have forgotten or left behind who we are.

The strength of any relationship is founded on the respect that each person has for the other. In healthy relationships, people learn how to respond to the other's needs, while at the same time maintaining their own identity and taking care of their concerns.

Healthy boundaries help us to respect each person's God-given individuality and freedom and enable us to avoid being enmeshed in another's feelings or responsibilities. Healthy boundaries provide space and respect so that our individual identities are strengthened. Each person is free to speak and act from the core of who they are, rather than from a false sense of guilt, obligation, or entanglement.

We are called to make a gift of ourselves to others—a gift that only we can give. The freer we are, the more fully we can be in authentic relationships with others.

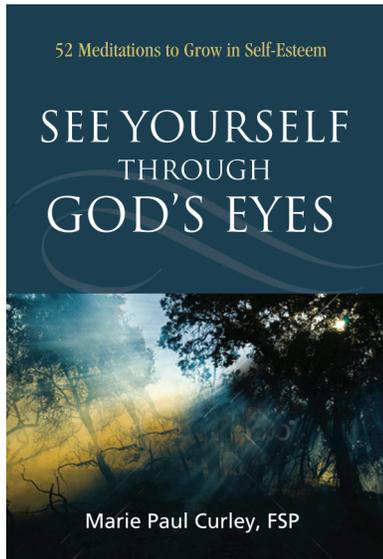


Through the Day

Lord, help me to be the gift to others that you created me to be!

This sample meditation is an excerpt from Part 3 of the book, *See Yourself Through God's Eyes: 52 Meditations to Grow in Self-Esteem* by Sr. Marie Paul Curley, fsp.

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Using meditations, Scripture passages, stories, and prayers, *Sr. Marie Paul Curley* offers a way to develop a personal relationship with God and to discover God's unconditional love for us. Sr. Marie Paul writes from her own experience, creating a guide to fostering healthy self-esteem and a sense of personal affirmation for even the busiest reader.

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