



Christine Arylo

Inspirational Catalyst

author • coach • speaker • self-love expert

**an
interview**

What does choosing ME before WE mean?

Every one of our relationships starts with two letters M-E. Unfortunately for most women, those two letters often end up at the bottom of the list, after everyone else is considered. The invitation and challenge of choosing me before we is: Know yourself. Be honest with yourself. Love yourself. First. Then consider HE and WE. Never settle for less than what your heart and soul desire.

Isn't choosing me before we narcissistic and selfish?

It's not choosing me instead of me... it's choosing me before me. Choosing me before me means giving yourself 100% permission to be who you are, to want what you desire, and to create the life that delivers it, first. The only person who can create the life you want is you, and making that your priority is anything other than selfish. By living the life your heart and soul desires, you become a better ME, making it more possible to be a better WE.

For way too long we've supported the belief that you have to give and give until nothing remains, comprising your needs and wants in order to take care of others. The result? Women who are empty, frustrated and dissatisfied. It's time for a new story: when you give to yourself you have even more to give to others. Putting yourself first is actually an act of selflessness not selfishness.

Why is the book written in three sections – ME, HE and WE.

Most women want great relationships... the problem is that most are starting with the wrong pronoun. This book turns the topic of love relationships on its head by challenging and guiding women to stop obsessing about their man and to start putting their most important relationship first, the one with M-E. ME is where everything in life starts. With a strong ME in place, the book then guides women into clarity about who they want to attract as a partner (HE) and then provides fresh perspectives on how their ME is helping or hindering the relationships they want to create (WE).

What inspired you to write this book?

It all began with an unexpected wake up call at the age of 30, when I was walloped with a 'universal 2x4' to the soul, a.k.a. my fiancé announced, on the way to our engagement party, that he didn't love me or want to marry me. Most would have crumpled into devastation right there. Not me. There was a party to go to, an image to uphold and to that party we went... pretending through the toasts that everything was AOK. Of course, pretending only worked until the party ended and then I had to face the reality that my life as I knew it was over, and I had to accept the painful fact that I had betrayed myself in order to keep a man and live up to an image – rising marketing executive, social butterfly, smart cookie and woman in control. Fast forward seven years, after a plethora of spiritual adventures, a good dose of therapy and a total rewiring of how I understood the world. Healed and loving my life, I became painfully aware of the massive amounts of women who were clinging to the same self-limiting, self-destructive beliefs and behaviors. I decided I couldn't just sit on the aha's I had found... they needed to be shared. So I quit my six-figure corporate job, dedicated my life to inspiring women to fall madly in love with themselves and started writing.



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Why is loving yourself so important? How does one “fall in love with themselves”?

How could it not be? We talk all the time about self-esteem, which of course is really important. But self-esteem without self-love is not enough. While self-esteem can give us internal confidence and external success, the real happiness most of us seek comes from a deep love of self.

Falling in love with yourself is a vow not a how. In the simplest terms, it is the unwavering commitment to and active expression of: knowing yourself, accepting yourself, living as the fullest expression of your real ME in all parts of your life, and attracting and allowing into your life only people and situations that support all of the above. It's not a linear path. There are no “four easy steps to loving yourself,” although there are actions to be taken along the journey. It occurs through the collective power of a series of small things – actions, beliefs, realizations and experiences – that lead to an increasing love of ME for the rest of our lives, if we let it.

How is it possible to not know who you are?

Most people think they know who they are, but in reality most live to fit an image based on the outside instead of living their real ME from the inside out. It's the difference between living on autopilot or living from self-awareness. On autopilot, we are driven, mostly subconsciously, by our fears and the external influences of friends, relatives, society, and the media. They become co-pilots to all of our decisions. In self-awareness, we are centered in a deep sense of knowing ourselves, of understanding why we do what we do, and of taking responsibility for the results. The only one in charge is ME.

On autopilot, we don't even realize we are disconnected from ourselves. We're so busy focused on the shoulds, woulds and must-haves, that we never stop long enough to ask questions like, “Who is the real ME? Is the life I am living really making me happy?” Instead, our co-pilots keep us preoccupied and convinced that the image we've created is the reality we want.

How does someone find or get to know their real ME?

It's part uncovering who you are and part determining who you are not. Underneath the chatter of our fears, subconscious beliefs and societal and family influences is the real ME. By transforming our limiting beliefs, patterns, fears and defenses and by kicking away the baggage we carry that belongs to other people, we are more able to see and be ourselves. It's really like freeing ourselves to be who we have always been, underneath all the limiting beliefs and influences of the outside world.

How does living on autopilot affect the relationships women create?

Until we change, nothing on the outside changes, including the men we attract. For example, dating the same type of man over and over. Different name. Different face. Same baggage. Guy 2.0 might be better looking or little less jerky, but he still amplifies the same insecurities, fears and defensive tactics inside of us. We attract the same type of men over and over because we are too unaware to create anything different. It's really as simple as the universal law “Like attracts like.” On autopilot we zoom along oblivious that we are creating our own misery. Self-aware, we know exactly how our actions and beliefs create our realities, including relationships.



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What advice do you have for a woman who wants to find Mr. Right?

Stop looking outside and start looking inside. A great HE and WE starts with a great ME. Get your perspective screwed on correctly, beginning with these three actions:

- Get real about your motivations. Ask, "Why do I want a partner in my life?" Then, separate the healthy motivations from the unhealthy ones. A good barometer for where a motivation falls is to remember that you can't get anything from a man that you can't give to yourself first (e.g., respect, love, truth, companionship). Heal unhealthy motivations inside of yourself instead of looking for Mr. Right to heal them for you.
- Clean out your ME closet. Get rid of the clutter that's keeping a great guy away. Look in the mirror at the real you and compare it to the image you show the world. Let go of what doesn't fit the real you. Throw away any victim-like stories or beliefs. Kick all the lies and misconceptions you have about men and relationships out the door. And lastly, shine the light on any spaces where you aren't loving yourself ... and start.
- Get clear about what you want in a partner. Throw away the man list and create your Core Four. Trade in the bullet pointed lists full of qualities and standards for the power of drawing to you the core four essences you want in a partner.

What is the Core Four?

It's like building a giant man magnet. The Core Four is the power of intention put to work to attract the partner you want. In it's simplest form, it works like this: Focus and express the four core essences that your heart and spirit – not your mind, ego, and fear – want in a partner, and you will attract what you desire. The two critical keys to success are clarity and the ability to emotionally express an essence rather than a trait, attribute, or characteristic. The universe responds to energy created by feelings – passion, love, curiosity, pain, joy – so we can't be in our heads thinking about him; we need to be in our hearts, feeling the answers to questions like, "Who is this man at his core? What does he stand for? What does he bring to the world just because of who he is?" We have to be able to feel his spirit and yearn to know his soul, not his resume.

The book leads women through the uncovering and creation of their own Core Four. If they are in a relationship, they'll be able to locate the gaps between what they have and what they want so they can actually do something beyond just complain. If they're single, their Core Four will crank up the power of intention to draw this person to them.

What are the biggest lies women tell themselves about relationships?

We can and will make our lives appear to be what we need them to be in order to hold onto our relationships, and ultimately prove to everyone, especially ourselves, "I am happy." It's called illusion building or living to fit the image and women are pros at it. Here are three of the most common illusions women cling to and the corrective truth they need to realize:

- LIE: I can fix him. He'll change for me. TRUTH: Only he can change for himself.
- LIE: He completes me. TRUTH: Only you can complete yourself.
- LIE: He loves me more than "her," and one day he will pick me. One day we will be together. TRUTH: He's never leaving her, and could you trust him if he did? And oh yeah, what about your self-respect?



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Why isn't love enough a reason to stay in a relationship?

One of the biggest fallacies in our society is that people fall out of love. Love changes and shifts, sure, but people fall out of intimacy, trust and respect. They don't fall out of love. Love doesn't go away. Sure, sometimes the force of anger, betrayal and unhappiness catapults us out of a relationship, believing that we don't love that person anymore, but the love always remains underneath all of the hurtful emotions. It's the trust, respect and intimacy that fall away. We can use the excuse, "I still love him" forever, keeping us in a relationship long past the time it should have ended. Newsflash... you are always going to love him but if you aren't happy and he's not the right partner for you then your only choice is to choose ME before WE and end it. No more of this "We should stay together, we love each other." Keep loving each other, just stop dating, being married or whatever isn't working for you. Love is a pre-requisite to a great WE, it's not enough on its own to create a life-affirming partnership.

You talk about an epidemic of 'half-relationships' – what is a half relationship?

Half relationships keep the business contract of the union working great – kids, house, double income, 401(k) – but leave the most real parts of who we are – things like our emotions, spirits, dreams and unique self-expressions – kicked to the curb or hidden away in the closet. In a half relationship, our partner is unable to or doesn't want to see or connect with these essential parts of ourselves, so we become desperate and lonely. Most women go hunting for people who can and will see them, who will adore and appreciate them, and who they can connect with at deeper levels in an attempt to supplement their primary partnership. Unfortunately, most fail to get what they seek, and are left with more friends and obligations but not much more satisfaction. That deeply intimate connection we seek has to come from our partner. Until women stop settling for the contract, and start insisting on the deep connection of a whole partnership, half relationships will continue to be an epidemic-sized reality.

What's this linear path of life that many women get stuck on?

So many women succumb to the societal and familial pressures to hurry up and get a career, find a guy, get married and have babies. When we have a boyfriend, the question is always, "When are you getting married?" When you get married, the question is, "When are you having babies?" It's a wonder when we retire people don't ask, "So when are you going to die?" As a culture we are so fixated on where we are going that we can't just be good with where we are. And this really unhealthy tendency has caused too many women to rush into commitments way before they knew themselves. I call it "being on the escalator to death," like robots we just keep going from life phase to life phase without stopping to ask ourselves, "Hey is this really where i want to be?" Women need to stop putting so much pressure on themselves to meet these arbitrary "next steps." Life is not linear, there are no standard timetables. Each of us has our own path and it is to that we must be true. That requires knowing and trusting M-E.

Why should women listen to what you have to say?

I am not asking women to listen to what I have to say, I am asking them to listen to themselves. The book, while it includes the stories and aha's I gained on my own personal path, was written to help women tap into their own wisdom. Each chapter is full of ME Reflections, small sections that turn the concepts discussed into questions the reader can ask herself. I'm just the guide.

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