

THE PRINCESS UGLY

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How Our Self-image is Formed Deformed and Reformed

THE PRINCESS UGLY

1st Part

Once upon time, there was a beautiful princess. Actually, she was the most beautiful girl the world had ever seen. Jealous of her beauty, her stepmother, hated her from her heart,

Right from her girlhood her stepmother kept telling her: **“You are ugly! Very ugly! Very ugly!”**

Even more, she gave orders to all the attendants in the Royal Palace to remind her how ugly she was. Day in, day out, she was bombarded with the same words: **“Ugly, ugly, very ugly!”**

At the end, though the Princess was the most beautiful lady in the realm, she kept saying to herself: **“I am ugly, ugly, and very ugly.**

No one ever will ever like me;

No one will ever love me.

No one ever will marry me!

I am ugly, ugly, very ugly!”

In her grief, she did not want to meet anyone; she refused to be seen by anyone. In despair, to hid her ugliness from one and all, she confined herself to a dark and lonely dungeon at the basement of the palace. There, night and day, she cried over her misfortune:: **“I am ugly, ugly, very ugly!”**

Thoughts for Personal Consideration

1. Formation of Our Self-image:

No one can come to know himself through himself. e.g. No one will every know the color of his eyes unless he is told by others, or he sees his image reflected in a smooth surface like a mirror.

We come only to know ourselves, our strengths and our weaknesses, our goodness or badness through the perceptions of others. People around us act like mirrors that reflect to us the images – the perceptions - they have of us. **They do not necessarily reflect to us images of what we really are, but only of how they see us.**

Slowly, on the communicated perceptions of others about us, we build our self image; for instance, if a child sees and feels himself loved and accepted by others, he will build a self-

image that he is lovable and acceptable. He will believe in his worth, he will develop ‘self esteem’.

Actually speaking, our original “self-image” was unconsciously shaped in our childhood days, without our being aware of it, by what we call ‘significant people’, namely, parents, close family members, teachers, neighbors and peer group members. They were, so to say, the first mirrors that reflected to us what they thought we were, how we were and our worth. Unfortunately, in our childhood days, we were not able to examine how accurate or how faulty their perceptions were. Uncritically, we introjected them.

2. Deformation of Our ‘ Self-image’ - Distortions:

Just a word about material mirrors. There are true mirrors and false mirrors. True mirrors give us an objective, impartial and accurate images of our physical selves. False mirrors change our images and reflect untrue distorted and inaccurate ones.

For instance, the images reflected by mirrors displayed in some stalls at fetes and fairs are distorted. Concave mirrors flatten our images, convex mirrors elongate them, still others, with rough and irregular surfaces, completely disfigure our images.

Among the people that acted as mirrors in the process of building our self-images there might have been many convex, concave and irregular mirrors, indeed! Very few of them, if any at all, gave us an accurate image of ourselves. They offered us shortened, elongated, distorted or even monstrous self- images.

The same principle can be applied to the story of the Princess Ugly. Day in, day, day out, she was looked upon by one and all as being ugly and treated as an ugly person. As time went on, she saw herself not only as ugly but uglier and ugliest! Her poor self- image was continuously spoiled and deformed.

3. Reformation and Improvement of Our Self-image.

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2nd Part

After the Queen’s death some kindhearted people in the palace spoke to the Princess Ugly and told her the true story of her life. “Your stepmother hated your beauty. That’s \why she, not only kept telling you that you were ugly, but she also commanded us to tell you the same. Do not believe what she told you. Do not believe what we told you. You are not ugly. You are beautiful, beautiful, and very beautiful. Come out of the dungeon. Show yourself to the people. They will like you. They will love you. They will admire your beauty.”

But the Princess could not believe them. She kept saying: “No, I am ugly, ugly, and very ugly” No! No! Nobody will ever like me, no one will ever love me, and no one will ever marry me!”

In the neighboring kingdom there lived a charming Prince. He made his mind to marry the most beautiful princess in the world. For a long time, he searched and searched in vain for the beauty queen of his dreams. In his search one day, Prince Charming happened to visit the Palace of the Princess Ugly. One of the Palace Guards whispered to him the story of the Princess Ugly now hiding in the Palace Dungeon.

In his crazy search, the Prince daringly stormed into the dungeon of the castle. When he saw Princess Ugly in her splendid beauty, he was enthralled. He took her in his arms and whispered to her the magic words: 'Beautiful, very beautiful, most beautiful' and whisked her off to his own Castle.

As she reached the Prince's Palace, every one there was enchanted and fascinated by her beauty.

From now on, praises and admiration were poured on her by one and all, especially by The Prince. He adored her with fascination. At the start, she refused to believe anyone, even the Prince, complimenting her beauty.

Slowly, after many days, she began taking in the wonderment and loving acceptance she received from one and all. Still, for many days she questioned whether what she was told in former days was true. She wasn't quite sure of her beauty.

Finally, one day, when she intently looked at herself in the mirror whilst the enchanted Prince was standing behind her admiring her splendid beauty, all of sudden with amazement and surprise she cried out with delight; **Yes, I am beautiful, very beautiful, most beautiful!** And burst out laughing and crying with joy.

Conclusions

1. Prince Charming and the Palace People help her to rediscover her beauty and accept it.
2. However it took s long to Princess Ugly to change her self-image
3. It's never too late for us to discover our treasures, our goodness and beauty and accept them if loving and friendly people help us to discover them and to accept them
4. We should always act like Prince Charming in helping others to find their worth.