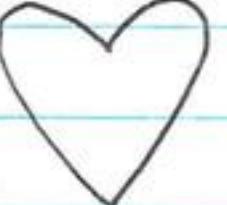


As Is!

11-5-12

Have you ever been in a discount store where merchandise is labeled "slightly irregular," or "purchase as is"? They don't tell you where the flaw is. And once you buy it you can't return it. But to everyone's surprise, we all live in a "as is" department. Stop and think about the people in your life. They're a mixed bag of strengths and weaknesses, virtues and vices, right? If you're looking for perfection, you're in the wrong store. The point is this: The only way to have a successful relationship with someone is to love and accept them "as is". Don't buy into the myth that most folks are normal except the ones in your life. Based on that idea, relationships are an endless quest to fix others, control them, or pretend they are something they're not. Love is letting those we love be perfectly themselves, and not twisting them to fit our own image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we see in them. A hallmark of spiritual maturity is acknowledging that nobody is perfect, and committing to love them in spite of it. To love someone "as is" means to focus on their areas of strength and support them in their areas of struggle. Show love to someone struggling today. It will relieve them of their pressure of tomorrow.

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