



## Manifesto

### I

I believe that you deserve a place to belong.

I believe that you deserve relationships where you can be your whole self, your real self, the self that doesn't have it all figured out, the self that makes mistakes, the self that hates itself sometimes. I believe that you deserve people who will see your whole self and accept you wholeheartedly.

I believe that within you is the spark of the divine, that your screw ups and your baggage do not have the power to define you, that no matter what you think of yourself and no matter the names that others have called you, you are overflowing with beauty and passion and potential.

I believe that it is good that you are alive, and that your life is a gift to the people who love you and to the people who have not met you yet but who will love you one day.

### II

I believe that you will find people who will help you believe these things, too.

I believe that you will find people who will know and love all of you, who will know your scars and help in your healing, who will count their relationship with you as one of their most treasured gifts.

I believe that you will find people who will see tremendous beauty in you.

I believe they will help you see it too.

### III

I believe that you will see tremendous beauty in others, and help them see it too.

I believe that you will speak the words that will encourage someone not to give up, give the smile that will break through someone's dark mood, be the shoulder for someone who desperately needs a safe place to cry.

I believe you will love people so much it hurts, and you will help the people you love discover the best of who they are.

I believe that you will seek the lonely and outcast and be a true friend to them.

### IV

I believe that everyone is worth fighting for (including you.) I believe we were made to love ourselves and each other and like warriors we must fight against everything that holds us back from that love.

I wrote *Improve Your Social Skills* because relationships don't happen automatically. Apathy, fear, awkwardness – all conspire to thwart connection. You have to be prepared to fight for your relationships.

So we prepare.

We study. We practice. We train.

Like a swordsman who has mastered his footwork, we learn to move smoothly in conversation. Like a general reads the terrain, we learn to read social cues and nonverbal signals. Like a grizzled veteran, we have made peace with our fear – and we don't let it hold us back from action.

No matter where we start, we can get better. Whether social butterfly or socially awkward, we study, we practice, we train.

Day by day, moment by moment, we learn how to build friendships and how to be a good friend to others. We know our new skills will help us – but more than that, we know that our skills will help us protect others.

When we reach out with love, we protect others from rejection, from shame, from hopelessness. The impact you make can be as small as a smile and as large as a suicide averted.

In love's army, you will be a mighty warrior.

V

I want to live in a world where nobody feels like a reject.

I want to live in a world where nobody stands alone.

I want to live in a world where love and acceptance matter more than success and power.

We don't live in that world, for the most part. But we can help create it.

You can help create it.

Start today.