

I AND THOU

Marriage is a picture of the I-Thou relationship—both person to person, and each of us an “I” to the “Thou” who is God.

The two before the altar. . .are the symbols of the marriage for which (we) all yearn. . .—the I-Thou meeting, the marriage of Heaven and Earth.

Helen Luke, *The Way of Women*, p. 63

*The yearning is for the cosmic connection, with its true Thou.
The development of the soul . . .is inextricably bound up with that of the
longing for the Thou.
God is the wholly Other.*

Martin Buber, p. 25, 28, 79

*God makes us men and women both. . .the principal way we participate in the
image of God. (It) designates a way we can experience the image of God.*

To open and let oneself be given over into an other—that is the great risk.

The mystery of self and the divine other goes still deeper.

Ann Ulanov, *Two Sexes*, p. 19, 26, 31

At the same time that we experience the I-Thou relationship in marriage, we also experience the solitude and singleness in our togetherness.

If we can trust that truth has a home, an objective place in the all-perceiving mercy of God, then our hidden life is ‘hidden with Christ in God.’ What’s more, if I see my reality thus, I can see yours and everyone’s in the same way. I shall see your elusiveness, your mystery, your terrible singleness and solitude. And because your solitude, like mine, belongs to God, I shall stand before you as I stand before God. You are holy, as God is holy, and you are unknowable and unpredictable, as God is. I must therefore give up and put away all hopes of trapping you in my words, my categories, and my ideas, my plans and my solutions. I shall offer whatever I have to offer, but I shall not commit the blasphemy (I don’t use the word lightly) of ordering your life and writing your script. I shall see your boundary and recognize that love and fellowship are realities I do not constantly have to preserve by my efforts, but struggling to say and know everything. We meet in God, in whom your solitude and mind, your truth and mine, are at last at home.

Author unknown, *Being Alone*.

A TABLE DUET

In the midst of his waterfall of genius, Mozart composed a very unique piece of music called *The Table Duet*. He wrote one set of notes on a single page which could be read and played from the top down as one tune, and if turned upside down, could be read and played as another tune. With the single sheet of music placed flat between two facing pianos, one player would read the page as right side up, while the other would be reading the same music upside down. Yet the same notes read from opposite vantage points would create a duet when played together.

Isn't this the paradox of true experience in relationship? Isn't this the duet that earnest lovers ultimately play? Aren't we - in the dynamic of our intimacy - facing instruments butting up against each other, and isn't life an endless flow of moments which move between us like notes on the same page? Don't we experience the same things differently? Don't I always in my innocence and in my adherence to my own perceptions playback what happens to you upside down? Don't you in all sincerity play my joys and pains in a way that seems to reverse my intentions and reactions? Yet don't we play the same events, thoughts, feelings together? Don't we, despite our struggles to be understood or understanding, don't we play *The Table Duet*? Don't we, through love, add the missing piece to each other's story?

Mark Nepo, in *Pilgrimage*, circa 1980