


# Beyond Self-Love: What Marrying Yourself is Really All About

Marrying yourself isn't just a statement about yourself.

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For years, people have been asking me what I think of the trend of marrying yourself, also known as sologamy. I always thought I should write about it, but until now, I never have. I had conflicted feelings about it and just couldn't come down squarely on one side or another.

What's good about marrying yourself seems obvious. That the practice is going to be roundly ridiculed seems equally obvious.

I started out thinking I would never want to marry myself because borrowing the wedding template seems like a way of shoring up the power of [marriage](#) rather than resisting it. But eventually I realized that there is a very meaningful reason for embracing the wedding template. I've read lots of articles about self-marriage and I've never seen this particular [motivation](#) recognized anywhere else.

That's when I decided to write my own article about self-marriage, which was just [published](#) in the *Washington Post*. I can't post the entire article here. Instead, I'll share the original introductory paragraphs, most of which were cut. (My first draft went well beyond the recommended length, which I will admit is pretty typical for me.) Then you can go to the Post to read the article if you want to. (It's short.) Then, for anyone who doesn't want to read it, I'll copy the next-to-last paragraph here, which makes the point I care about most.

Here's how I originally started my article on marrying myself:

Peak wedding season has passed and once again, I did not marry. That makes 64 summers of my life with no wedding for me. I never did want to marry another person, so that's not the point. As a lifelong single person, though, I'm now getting asked a different question: Why don't I marry myself?

I've spent the last two decades of my life making the case for embracing single life, fully and unapologetically. So I'm sympathetic to the sentiments motivating

practitioners of sologamy. You don't need another person to complete you. You can [love](#) yourself. You can commit to yourself. You can articulate what's important to you, and then vow to live by those values, in the presence of the significant people in your life. You should feel just as entitled to celebrate your life as couples do to celebrate theirs.

But I don't want this for myself.

Self-marriage is a big fat target for ridicule and mockery. It has been described, for example, as self-obsessed, selfish, desperate, defensive, and pathetic – and that's just by [one person](#) in one article. I'm not easily deterred by the tut-tutting of others, so what bothers me is not so much this disparagement as the clueless one-sidedness of it. Why are single people tagged as selfish and self-centered when they marry, when couples are not? It is couples with their two incomes and two panini presses who expect single people with their one income to buy them presents from their registries; to travel to the wedding, no matter the expense or inconvenience; and to offer the gift of their joyful congratulations.

But even this hypocrisy is not the crux of my reservation about marrying myself. When I love the people who are marrying, I am happy to be there for them and share in their joy.

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The asymmetry that bothers me is this: Attendance at weddings seems almost obligatory. This event in the life of couples is respected without a second thought. But when single people want to celebrate what is most significant to them, other people don't always honor those events the way they honor weddings.

Here's what I said about that in the next-to-last paragraph of the article:

What close friends and family seem to be saying when they will go to the ends of the earth to attend the wedding of someone who is not that important to them, but beg off the single person's meaningful milestones, is that single people's lives just don't matter as much as married people's. That, for some, is perhaps the deeper meaning and motivation behind marrying themselves. Maybe single people should be borrowing the wedding template after all, because it so powerfully proclaims: "This is an event that matters; you don't get to skip it. This is a person who matters."

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