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KEEPING BODY AND SOUL TOGETHER



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BOOKS



Looking Beyond the Mirror:

**Twelve Steps to
Overcoming Self-doubt**

Tricia Brennan

New Holland Publishers

REVIEW BY ROSAMUND BURTON

Valentine's Day for many people is a time of sadness, perhaps because they are single and feel unloved, or maybe because their partner no longer feels it necessary to demonstrate their affection. This book is a reminder that the amount of love you receive from others is in direct proportion to how much you believe you are worth.

There are twelve chapters and each one is a real-life story, which reflects a different aspect of self esteem. The stories remind me of fairy tales. Set mostly in Sydney or LA the principal characters, if they are women, are beautiful, and intelligent living in large houses, and the men are immaculately turned out with the ability to triple their huge salaries in a matter of months. But even with such assets, unless the person has a positive relationship with his or herself, there is no lasting happiness.

One story is about a beautiful and successful model called Sarah, who has an eating disorder, and is constantly comparing her physical appearance to others. Another is about a man called Alec, who is a workaholic and focuses only on his material wealth and business performance at the expense of his wife and family.

The story I particularly enjoyed was about Robert Morgan, who ran a chic hair salon in Detroit, before ending up in prison due to a series of drink driving offences and a twist of fate. He traded his "Armani suit for prison clothes", and prayed and wrote his journal every day he was behind bars. It was this year of communing with his soul which was the catalyst for him changing his ways, and pursuing his lifelong dream of becoming an interior designer. This story is about the need to be a pioneer, who uses initiative and implements change.

The story that touched me most was the final one about a woman called the Goddess, who is deeply in love, and unexpectedly jilted by her fiancé. I found it particularly poignant.

At the end of each chapter is a list of questions for the reader. The combination of the stories, the ways in which the different characters take back their personal power, and the questions, make this book both inspiring and illuminating. It has certainly made me think about how I can work on my own self acceptance.