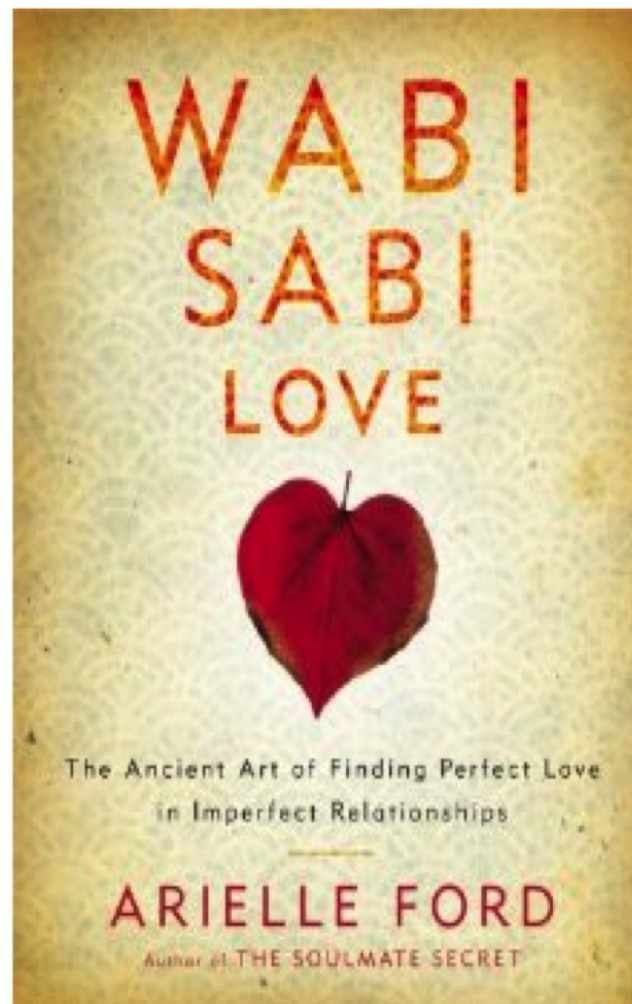


Arielle Ford Shares Relationship Wisdom in Her New Book 'Wabi Sabi Love'



By Amanda Martin

From Disney movies to romantic comedies to romance novels, most of us have grown up with the belief that a “happily-ever-after” ending is commonplace in reality. Not only are these endings not guaranteed, but anyone who finds true love will admit that sustaining a serious relationship is no easy feat. Arielle Ford, author of *Wabi Sabi Love: The Ancient Art of Finding Perfect Love in Imperfect Relationships*, talked to us about her new book and how to master being in a relationship without trying to attain perfection. Wabi Sabi is an ancient Japanese art form that honors the beauty in imperfections, and according to Mrs. Ford, it’s the key to the expected happily ever after.

We had a chance to speak to the author herself, and here’s what she had to say:

Do you believe it’s possible to sustain love without Wabi Sabi?

No, I don’t, because if you’re constantly striving for perfection, you’re constantly going to be disappointed in yourself and everybody else; it’s just not reality. If you go to wabisabilove.com/video, there’s a short YouTube video, *Imperfect Husbands*, which really demonstrates the essence of a long relationship. At the end of the day, it’s the quirky, weird, strange things that we come to love and remember about each other. It’s not the “he was so perfectly groomed and mannered 24/7” that we remember. Who wants to be with somebody like that? We want to be challenged, have interesting conversations, and, sometimes, even fight and complain. That’s just love.

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What did you practice in your own relationships before you knew about Wabi Sabi and how does it compare?

I was fortunate enough to learn about Wabi Sabi more than 20 years ago and before that I wasn't in any serious relationships. But before I learned about it, in the early 80s, I went on this crazy fitness kick where I was determined to become perfect. I was running, lifting weights everyday, and even measuring every ounce of food that went into my body. I had this idea that when I reached a certain weight and certain measurements, I would reach perfection. When I did meet that perfect day, I couldn't tell anyone. I spent a whole year hyper-focused on attaining perfection only to discover that the day I reached it was like any other day; I wasn't any happier; life didn't change. Wabi Sabi really freed me up from the compulsion I was under. It totally set me off on another path to really discover how one becomes happy, and it's really about loving yourself, accepting life and choosing that path.

So, it seems like you use Wabi Sabi in many aspects of life, not just in your relationships...

I use Wabi Sabi everywhere. I'm a very messy eater; when I eat my food goes on me and it goes on you, but now it's just these kind of things that I accept. For me, it means that I have a strong appetite for life and I have this love of food and energy; if it gets a little sloppy then so be it.

In the introduction you talk about not accepting harmful or unhealthy behavior, but where does one draw the line?

I think the line is different for everybody, depending on what your comfort level is and what you can tolerate. Sometimes your partner will do something that genuinely requires confrontation, and there's no way to gloss over bad behavior.

For example, you can't Wabi Sabi your way out of addiction. For the less serious issues, you have to find your own level and not be afraid to talk about it. You can say "I love you to death, but what you're doing right now just grosses me out." If they say "I'm sorry, but I'm never gonna change,"

then you'll have to try to find a way to reframe it, or lobby with him by saying "tell me something I do that you don't like and let's negotiate here."

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How can somebody convince their partner to practice Wabi Sabi with them?

I don't think your partner has to do anything. I think it's all an individual, internal change. We spend a lot of time hoping and wishing that somebody else is going to change. It's about putting on rose colored glasses for yourself and your significant other. People will rise up to your expectations of them, so if your expectation becomes 'I'm enough just the way I am and so are you (so are they)' and your expectation is that they are a good, loving person, and you hold them that way, energetically they begin to feel that and they morph into that. The expectation you hold for somebody helps them to rise up to meet it.

What advice do you have for couples who can't seem to love what their partner loves, or get used to their annoying habits? Does that mean it's the end?

You have to think of what you love most about this person and where in the relationship you are most fulfilled. Then think about what you can do to make it work for you if they're not willing to change. There are solutions, but they may require some creativity.

Do you think Wabi Sabi can be applied to an existing long term relationship or marriage?

Absolutely, I don't think it's ever too late. That's what keeps things fresh, new and interesting. If I were married for 30 years and read the book, the number one thing I'd want to know is what are the things I do that drive my partner crazy.

*For more information about Arielle Ford, visit ArielleFord.com or follow her on twitter [@arielleford](https://twitter.com/arielleford). To purchase a copy of Arielle Ford's book, *Wabi Sabi Love: The Ancient Art of Finding Perfect Love in Imperfect Relationships*, go to Amazon.com*