

## Reflections On Relationships

### Examine every little thing

The spiritual path is about examining every little thing you have picked up along the way, holding it up to the light of truth, and either keeping it or discarding it. In this case the 'light of truth' is whether or not a certain belief is conducive to peace...and if this relationship vasana is conducive to your peace of mind. This does not mean that there is anything wrong with relationships. But the way you view relationships needs looking into. And this involves honoring your feelings by clearly recognizing them.

### Do you have a realistic view of relationships?

Being in a relationship doesn't make you any happier than not being in one. The spiritual issue is always whether or not you have a realistic view of relationship...what it can do for you and what it can't.

### The upside and the downside of relationships

The upside always cancels the downside. There are advantages and disadvantages to both being in one and out of one. You don't get over on yourself by relationship or non-relationship.

### Do you stop wanting things from the person once you get what you want in her?

When you get what you want in a person you don't stop wanting things from that person. You keep right on. So you put the person in a heck of a position...keeping you happy. And since they think like you, they expect you to fulfill their wants... which may involve doing things that you don't like. And the person is changing too, not to mention the relationship, so there are all these uncertain factors working to either make or break the relationship... so you end up in a more or less constant state of anxiety. It's just the nature of samsara. The problem is thinking that it can be different. It can't.

### It's about the relationship and not the person

If you want a successful relationship both people have to surrender to the relationship, not to each other.

### Are you looking for a relationship to solve your problems?

I'm not saying don't have a relationship. Have one. But don't think it is going to solve any problems. It will just create new ones. This is so because you are the problem. You don't seem to be able to just let things be and enjoy them for what they are. You want it a certain way. And the sad fact is that life really doesn't care how you want it. It is going to give you what it wants to give you whether you like it or not. You consult the stars because you want to know what life is about to throw your way. So, if you want to have a nice time in this world you need to be ready to take disappointment as a gift and also see the pain behind the pleasure. There is no nirvana here. It is a mixed bag. It has always been a mixed bag, and it will always be a mixed bag.

### **From what you want, God won't save you**

The Course in Miracles says, "From what you want God won't save you!" So someone on the spiritual path should be trying to solve the problem another way. Worldly people believe that getting what one wants equals happiness but spiritual science says that the cause of unhappiness is the belief that one is a needy wanting creature...and not the whole and complete being that God made us.

### **Want itself is the problem**

The vasanas don't want anything. They are your wants. Sure, it's fine to want what you want, but can't you see that want itself is the problem? Does the wanting stop when you get what you want? It does not. So you haven't solved anything by getting what you want.

### **Are you going to be any different if you have a relationship?**

The fact is, you are not going to be any different if you have a relationship. It is not a magic bullet. Your anxieties, fears, desires, etc. will come along to the relationship. So you are going to have to deal with the same stuff. There is no way around it. The spiritual option is about taking care of your stuff first and seeing what happens. "Seek ye the kingdom of heaven and all else will be added unto you." If you had put half the energy into living a peaceful life that you have into being dissatisfied with the life you're leading, you'd have God himself asking you out.

### **If it weren't these things that bother you, it would be something else that's a problem.**

### **Analyze the views that are disturbing you and let them go**

Spirituality is about getting a clear mind. And you get a clear mind by analyzing the views that are disturbing you and letting them go. Why you can't see that this obsession about a relationship is not serving you spiritually?

### **There's nothing 'spiritual' about spirituality**

Would you want to get romantically involved with someone who had no spiritual inclinations, but was a good person? They're the best. There's nothing 'spiritual' about spirituality. A good person is a spiritual person. 'Spiritual' doesn't really solve any problems. Spiritual only means that someone admits they don't know who they are. It does not put them above the ones who don't admit it. I see so many spiritual types here every day and in many ways they are in worse shape than the ordinary hard working worldly types.

### **Only a quiet mind can grasp the fact that everything is just fine as it is**

If you want to qualify as 'spiritual' according to the Vedic system, you have to be going for a quiet mind. The reason you would go for a quiet mind is because only a quiet mind can grasp the fact that everything is just fine as it is.

### **If you were clear about what you wanted there would be no problem**

The reason you are so confused about the whole relationship business is because your goal is not clear. I think you think you can have the relationship and pursue spirituality at the same time. If you were clear about what you wanted there would be no problem. If you really wanted a guy, it wouldn't matter if he had some deficiencies. You would just love him

warts and all and that would be that. If you were going for freedom, you would be clear that a relationship is not going to get you free.

### **It is much better to do a third rate job on your own dharma than a first rate job on some else's**

Outer world does not validate you in any way. It is up to you to validate the world. If someone kisses you and says you're a great guy it is not a statement about you. If someone spits in your face it is not a statement about you. It is up to you to make something of it...or not. If you don't know what you really want in life then you will have to let life tell you what you want. But this is a very dangerous situation. The Bhagavad Gita says that it is much better to do a third rate job on your own dharma than a first rate job on some else's.

### **Do you want your lover to be different?**

If you want him to be different before you even have a relationship, how is it going to be when you have a relationship? My view is that you want him to be different because you want yourself to be different. Why not just focus on getting your own spiritual ducks in line and let him worry about his...if he wants. Love means that he has to be OK all the time. If you can't see him as OK, that is conditional love and you will suffer for it.

### **What is the mystery of love?**

There is no mystery. You found a guy? He's a lonely guy who wants love, just like you.

### **What is defining your relationship?**

There is always a sexual undercurrent between the sexes. It is natural. But is the spiritual undercurrent more powerful than that?

### **Unconsciousness chooses your relationship**

People choose each other in an unconscious way. The vasanas do the choosing. You would have fulfilling relationships if you were fulfilled. If you start out incomplete, relationship does not make you complete. If you start out full, relationship will not be a problem.

### **Is your relationship a spiritual path?**

People may believe that they are in relationships as a spiritual path, but if the goal of spirituality is freedom, how does a relationship with anyone other than a free person, help you attain that goal? Two bound, conditioned people does not equal two free people...in either the short or the long run. If you study the scriptures you will see that there are actually only two lifestyles sanctioned for people who are going for liberation, the renunciate and the householder. And the householder is a duty-oriented lifestyle that is meant to end in middle age...when the person takes up the next stage...consciously seeking God. It is not about finding a mate for life.

### **Spirituality is not a vacation from life**

You don't have time, because you are doing way too much? You are too busy and cannot let go? Do you do what you do in the right spirit? Are you always stressed? If you changed your attitude, you would enjoy what you're doing and 'time' would not be an issue. A

spiritual person uses everyday life situations to gain a quiet mind. You do not seem to have figured this out. Spirituality is not a vacation from life. It is the way you live your life.

### **What is a serious relationship?**

Does serious mean that you invest so much emotional energy into it that you are in a state of constant anxiety? I'm not arguing against relationship. I'm just trying to help you to understand what it means to you and whether or not the way you are seeing it is spiritually healthy.

### **Do you believe you are in control of your life?**

It is not up to you what you get. If you can't take what you have as it is, you are going to suffer.

### **Are you deriving some sort of satisfaction out of living the way you're living?**

There must be a part of you that is deriving some sort of satisfaction out of living the way you're living because making beneficial changes is not that difficult. You're similar to an alcoholic who continually says he or she is quitting but who still finds some perverse pleasure in the habit. When your ultimate goal in life is not clear then it is impossible to prioritize. I can't see that having a serious relationship with anybody could actually function as the primary meaning of life. If you don't get one by the time you die, does that mean that your life was a failure? If you are a spiritual person, you are going for liberation. That is the goal of spirituality. Liberation, as Buddha says, is liberation from craving.

### **What is the purpose of spiritual work?**

The purpose of sadhana is to get a quiet mind, one that is not disturbed by likes and dislikes, preferences and expectations. Meditating does not work unless you have the karma yoga attitude operating in your daily life. It will neutralize the likes and dislikes and make the mind meditation worthy. Then those soul-nourishing revelations come often.

### **Meditation does not work if you ignore what disturbs you**

The ego/personality is your fears and desires. You can't just ignore them and try to focus on something else, like meditation. You have to look at them with an objective mind so they can't disturb you. You can take the objective view toward your likes and dislikes because you understand the limitations inherent in getting what you think you want. This way you won't inflate their importance.

### **I just wonder if you don't think a relationship is a kind of magic bullet that will eliminate some subjective dissatisfaction and turn your life into a paradise?**

### **Take all experience as a blessing**

Taking it all as prasad should be your constant mantra.

### **Friends is the only way a relationship will work**

You should be friends with anyone you have a relationship with. Friends is the only way it will work.

### **Learn to get and give love at every opportunity**

I think that 'relationship' is a code word for love. Everyone has this need. But love is not always available the way we want it...so it is important to learn to get and give love at every opportunity...in everyday situations. This way one becomes satisfied and the need for a 'special relationship' becomes less important. The best way to get a special person is to be full of love. If you are empty people will stay away because they do not want to be responsible for fulfilling your needs. It is just too demanding. And to be full of love you have to feel right about the way you are living. When you are satisfied that you are taking care of yourself properly the mind relaxes and the love that you are comes out...and attracts people.

### **Contemplate whether or not the fulfillment of the vasana will produce peace.**

For people with very active minds it is always important to understand that the results of your actions is not up to you...so you can enjoy what you do without the worry for the result. If you go to a party to meet someone you need to just enjoy the party and see what happens...not to be checking out everyone and feeling elated when you meet someone or depressed when you don't. Whatever happens you take as a gift from the universe...which means that you assume that the Self is working for you and knows what you need and that what you are getting (or not) is what you need. One should cultivate an attitude of glad acceptance. There is no sense wanting things to be different because they are not going to change just because you want them to. So what has to change is one's attitude.

### **What is being "spiritual"?**

Look into your definition of "spiritual." By most accounts spirituality means developing and following a program designed to make the mind clear and balanced. I can't see that reading spiritual books or going to India qualifies unless one is actually doing one's daily life as sadhana. A spiritual concern would be 'why do I not have an abiding mind?' The purpose of a clear mind is to make an inquiry into the Self. Doing one's life as one's spiritual practice means that one's primary goal is enlightenment. I'm not sure how any program of spiritual work would be successful if enlightenment were just one of several goals. Or if it were a secondary goal; "I'll get to work on myself when I get all set up with my soul mate," for example.

### **Meditation is useless without understanding**

You can't keep thinking like a worldly person and expect meditation to help. What is undoubtedly causing the agitation are your views about life, particularly actions and their results. The results of your actions aren't up to you. When you figure that out, you relax and take what comes, good and bad, as a gift from God. The purpose of the religious attitude is to neutralize the likes and dislikes which agitate your mind, causing the headaches, keeping you from enjoying a relationship with a man, etc. If you don't examine your views and unhook those that are creating emotional conflict, how is meditation going to help?

### **What will your life be like when your vasanas are satisfied?**

Observing vasanas is very important. You can't work with them until you are aware of

them. But even better is thinking them through; seeing how life will be when they are satisfied. Will it be fundamentally different? Will you be fundamentally different? And the answer is always no. **What is making you dissatisfied now (your ego) will just dream up a new something for you to fear or desire.**

### **You already have what you expect to get**

Seeing that what you expect to get...love, peace, etc., you can discover what you already have. You can't just let them go all at once, so they are going to influence your relationships, but it is best only to be in contact with people, particularly the object of your desire, when you are not heavily under their spell. Let them burn out and then associate with the person. Let them see you at your best, not your worst. It just creates too much negative karma to be with someone and always have your mind agitated because they aren't up to the mark.

### **Sex is not the ultimate intimacy**

I think one of the big problems is when you have an inflated view of the importance of sex. If it weren't so important you wouldn't have to have such exacting standards and therefore there would be a lot less tension when you are sexual. If sex occurs in the context of a relaxed friendship it is great. But if you can't relax because you feel that sex is the ultimate intimacy and you can't be intimate with the person because they aren't what you want them to be, that is a problem. The belief that sex is the ultimate intimacy makes a lot of problems for a relationship because ninety eight percent of the relationship is not sexual. So how do you be intimate when you aren't in bed?

### **Only a change of mind will change your experience**

Your mind is your mind no matter what you are doing. If it is dissatisfied in one place it will be dissatisfied in another.

### **Love needs to be so solid that the passion can't destroy it**

It is not that passion has no place in a relationship, just that the love needs to be so solid that the passion can't destroy it. Passion feels very good but it is the most destructive energy known to humankind.

### **Just because you love someone does not mean that you have to live with them**

Love means you understand their suffering and sympathize with them as human beings. But just because you love someone does not mean that you have to live with them or support their bad habits.

### **Do you want a relationship and not want it at the same time?**

"I think I have a fear when it comes to meeting someone who I can really be with and that bothers me." The reason nothing works for you on that level is because of your conflict. You want it but you don't want it. How can the Self give you what you want when you don't know what you want?

### **You are the special person**

The problem as I see it is quite simple. You are afraid to love. Perhaps you felt you were

hurt before in love. But if you want a relationship with a special person you are just asking for more heartache. Why? Because there is no 'special person.' Or put it this way, if there is a 'special person' that person should be you. If you feel special then the need for 'specialness' from the outside will not arise and you can get into any relationship with confidence. But if you are not self confident, if you feel that you need something from the outside for your happiness, you will have a lot of fear and that will sap your confidence and nothing will work.

### **Love is a dangerous game**

There is nothing wrong with wanting love but you need to know that love is a dangerous game and that unless you are ready to be hurt and are capable of a quick rebound you should not even try.

### **Are relationships important for spiritual growth?**

I'm not sure I agree with you that relationships are important to spiritual growth. My view is that everything helps one grow, the presence or absence of relationships included...if you see life as a learning or growing process. If not, not. It is much more important how one conducts oneself in and out of relationship, than whether one has them or not. You see a lot of people who are in relationships who aren't growing at all. And probably most relationships are as much about insuring emotional security as they are about growth. As long as someone believes he or she needs someone else to feel secure, how likely is it that they will rely for security on the Self? Furthermore, you see many out of relationship who have a strong connection with the Self. And you see those who don't.

### **Commitment to Truth takes care of every relationship**

Whenever you find someone interested in a relationship you have the issue of commitment. I can't see that if there is a genuine love between two people the issue of commitment would arise, married or not, in sex/love or not, because love is superior to commitment. So to me the whole idea of commitment is bogus. If you know who you are you don't have spare commitment anyway because you are committed to Truth. Commitment to Truth takes care of every relationship. If you're in one or out of one you see the 'other' as none other than your Self and therefore there is automatic love and respect...and no need for commitment.

### **At what point do you take yourself as you are and let yourself be?**

**There is nothing you can do here or obtain here that will solve the existential riddle, except understand who you are.**

And this is something that comes independently of the physical details of one's life.

### **Dare to test the limits of your prison**

I've noticed that most people don't really get into what they're into. They never test their limits or the limits of the idea they're following, so they never really break through into the level of transcendent understanding. They bounce around all over the place, always trying to figure out what to do next, looking for a way out of their present predicament instead of seeing that it is not here on earth that they are seeking.

### **Are you daydreaming while your house is on fire?**

“As for myself, I enjoy giving my love, my sexual love, to another so much that I, in no way, want to spend my life without that opportunity at hand.” That's fine, I suppose, but isn't this a bit like fiddling while Rome burns? I mean, here you are: very unhealthy, deep in debt, just suffered a heart attack, overworked, etc. and you have a view of sex that one would expect to find in a teen-ager. What use has all this good sex or fantasy of good sex been if your life is a mess?

### **What do you want out of a relationship?**

I always thought that your near obsession with relationship masked the real need: a spiritual longing, one that can only be satisfied by understanding that you are complete as God made you and that nothing external is required to make you happy.

### **Friendship is the safer basis for a relationship**

One should not even consider an emotional involvement with someone who isn't a friend. Only friends can deal dispassionately with relationship issues. Friendship is a lot closer to real love than sexual/emotional love. Friends will still love you if you fail to satisfy their emotional needs. Friends will not burden each other with unreasonable emotional demands, like 'being there' for you all the time. Sex and emotion are a natural part of life but they need to be contextualised by love, not expected to stand on their own.

### **Your sexual/emotional stuff does not define who you are**

As I worked out my sexual/emotional stuff I realized that it really had nothing to do with who I really am. Sure, the sexual/emotional feelings are there, my pathetic two point two hormones are still capable of kicking up a bit of a ruckus, but I know how impermanent they are and refuse to give them more weight than they deserve. There are so many things in life that need to be taken care of first – health, money, meaningful work, recreation.

### **Ask “why?”**

The spiritual side of the relationship issue should be concerned with the 'why?' Why do I want somebody in my life? Why am I not content with myself as I am? Why do I think that somebody else can improve my life? Am I actually bored with myself? Am I actually lonely? Why am I lonely in a world of six billion people? Who is lonely? Who is needy? As you know this is what the sages are saying. Who is this 'I' that seems to want things? Is this 'I' really me? Will this 'I' be able to give me lasting satisfaction?

### **Do you need relationships to work out your stuff?**

The idea that relationships are valuable because they show you what you have to work out is questionable. I don't agree if it means that what you work out in relationships is more valuable than what you work out out of relationships. It seems to me that one's unconscious mind is outpicturing all the time, whether or not anyone is in front of you, and you have to deal with this stuff no matter what. Often relationships just distract you from dealing with your stuff. You often believe that if you are excited enough and loved enough the subjective stuff won't be a problem. But this isn't how it is. It is going to come up no matter what.

### **Your primary responsibility in life is dealing with unresolved unconscious issues**

It seems to me that a spiritual person is someone who understands that his or her primary responsibility in life is dealing with unresolved unconscious issues, laying them to rest once and for all. I believe that our real task here is to gain the kind of equipoise that comes from having examined one's beliefs and opinions, one's needs, etc. and discarded those that don't serve one's highest need. Yes, I know it's not easy, but the alternative, just leaving it all there so it can come up over and over and disturb oneself and others is much less appealing.

### **Is being alone your real problem?**

Could it be that the problem you have is not that you have a relationship or that you live alone, but that you don't have a way to clear up the agitation as you go along in life. If you want to be free, which is the goal of spiritual life, you need to have a sadhana that would give you a quiet mind.

### **“The path is indeed difficult for the one who has expectations.”**

There is a saying in the Vedas, “The path is indeed difficult for the one who has expectations.” The idea is that you are quite free to want what you want and to take appropriate steps to get it, but that while you are gathering information and making the appropriate actions your mind should be free of expectation. Not only are the expectations not going to produce what you want but they can definitely be counterproductive in attaining what you want because they may so agitate the mind that you don't perform the appropriate actions in an appropriate manner and therefore compromise the result.

### **How do you choose a relationship?**

How do people narrow down who they are with if there aren't some qualities one wishes someone had? The first thing has to be the core values. If they are all there, then you can start selecting on more personal criteria and hope that the person will fit into your likes and not exacerbate your dislikes.

### **Love neutralizes personal needs**

The real issue is love. I think what you're saying is that you can't love someone unless they jibe with your likes and don't jibe with your dislikes. That's OK, but to me love is a much bigger thing than that. That sounds almost like business. “If you have what I want I'll love you.” My approach is different. It is not really important what the person is on the personality level as long as they are decent, honest open-minded people. If that basic qualification is there I start loving. And invariably the love becomes what the relationship is about...giving and receiving it...not particular ego needs. In fact the personal stuff gets subsumed in love. The love neutralizes it. The positive stuff grows and the negative stuff withers. It's quite simple. And the love object grows. And so do you.

### **Relationship, not your satisfying ego needs, is the purpose of relationships**

Relationship, not your ego needs, is the purpose of the relationship. By relationship I mean love. So you don't make an issue when you don't get what you want. You don't resent having to let go of your issue. You see that it builds a good relationship to sacrifice the stuff that is getting in the way of communicating. You do not believe that you are 'right.' I think

your idea is that if your ego needs are met, then you will consider a relationship. This is what you see in the matrimonials and the personals. It is fine for what it is because you don't want to take up with somebody who is going to agitate you, but if that is all there is, then where does love fit in? A relationship with someone who 'fits' with your needs does not guarantee love.

### **Ego gratifying relationship does not lead to spiritual growth**

A relationship can be spiritually valuable but only if it is based on Spirit. I don't believe, however, that a relationship based on needs guarantees spiritual growth. Most everyone in the society is in a relationship and how spiritual is the society? There is nothing wrong with being lonely and wanting a person to be with but imagining that a relationship will function as a spiritual path when either or both persons are not committed to a spiritual way of life, is futile.

### **Relationship with yourself is your primary responsibility**

I think that healthy relationships involve more than the personal needs of two individuals...they involve two individuals who appreciate and support each other's relationship with something higher. And in relationship it should be understood that the primary relationship is the individual's relationship with themselves, not with the other. The relationship with the other should be secondary, a subset of the primary relationship. In relationship to each other they are equal but in relationship to the other's self relationship, they are subordinate.

### **Why do you want a relationship?**

Before one even considers a 'relationship' with someone I think it is important to understand why one wants a relationship in the first place. My basic interest in relationship involves direct communication between equal participants on subjects of mutual interest. But, I'm sorry to say, since there are almost no topics that interest me except 'what is enlightenment' this makes me pretty much a one issue guy. If I were lonely or needy companionship might be a reason but I'm not. Appreciation of the same activities may be a legitimate basis of a relationship but this limits my appeal because about the only things I enjoy are walking, reading, writing and conversing about God. I've done my business bit and my travel bit and just about every other 'bit' imaginable and I'm not motivated to dig up any 'new' or 'exciting' activities. I'm in the winter of my life, moving inexorably toward the grave, so I'm at the place where an exciting evening involves a quiet conversation with someone I care for on 'important' topics, perhaps an interesting movie, but never a party for mindless socializing, a dance, or a religious function. I'm pretty boring on the activity level if you really must know. Sure, I'll do the 'one off' just for a lark but basically my whole life is taking place 'within' me. If I have any passion it is for satsang, discussion on the topic of the meaning of life.

So I don't do friendships that don't involve some sort of dialogue on the subject of why we are here on earth in these funny meat tubes. I am not ashamed to admit that I am hopelessly bored with small talk and only do it occasionally. I'm getting old and enjoy my

own company greatly and prefer silence to mindless chit chat. I absolutely refuse to do a relationship with 'issues.'

### **Realize that outer solutions are not workable and most existential problems can only be addressed by a commitment to self inquiry**

The problem I have with people who are not consciously on the spiritual path is that because they usually believe that the question of happiness is to be solved only with reference to the options presented by society, (pleasure, wealth, duty, power, fame, relationship, etc.) they often have 'problems,' and 'issues' and are often burdened with inner conflicts. And there comes a point, if the relationship has any depth, that I end up having to share their suffering. This is only bad from my point of view if the person does not realize that outer solutions are not workable and resists the idea of self inquiry...since I believe that most existential problems can only be addressed by a commitment to self inquiry.

### **I'm not here to get anything or to learn anything**

I don't have any problems. I'm not here to get anything to learn anything. My heart is pure. I don't need existential help in any way and I am not going to bring personal longings, guilts, and confusions to a relationship.

### **Seek the Self**

I offer the only solution that I know, the one that worked for me and the one that has worked since time immemorial: seek the Self.

### **Are all relationships worthwhile?**

If the person keeps insisting on making life work according to his or her desires and is basically uninterested in the topic of Self inquiry, then it is a waste of time to pursue the relationship.

### **What turns you on?**

What do I want? As you can see I have really lived. I am not going to get excited by a passionate love affair, an adventure to an exotic local, financial security, or any other worldly thing. What does turn me on is to see people respond to the spiritual message, to see them wake up and get hope and get to work on themselves.

### **Giving is more that just talking about it**

Love is as much about giving as it is about getting. I don't feel happy if I can't give love in the form that most satisfies me: intelligent heartfelt dialogue on the topic of the Self. That doesn't mean non-stop satsang. Far from it. There is nothing more boring than the self - obsessed 'spiritual' crowd.

### **Right understanding is necessary to make man/woman thing work**

Relationships and sex are fine but the man/woman thing doesn't really work until you have the right understanding about it.

### **Relationships are the ultimate problem**

Relationships are the ultimate problem because they are so fraught with anxiety about results. When a worldly person invests so much of his or her self in something over which

there is no control he or she is naturally filled with anxiety.

### **Life is a zero sum game**

In Maya there is always an upside and a downside to everything. So, for example, you lose intimacy when you are out of a relationship but you gain freedom. When you are in one you gain intimacy but lose freedom. If you take the Self's position you won't value intimacy more than freedom or freedom more than intimacy so you will be happy when you are in one and happy when you are out of one.

### **Sin intelligently**

My guru used to say, "sin intelligently" which was his clever formulation of the Buddha's 'middle way' teaching. According to this idea you need to respect your vasanas to some degree or you become repressed, frustrated, dry and loveless. On the other hand you don't want to become a relationship pig and get yourself completely attached to sensations and pleasures. So you pick and choose the person carefully, making sure that she is not too tamasic or rajasic. And you do the relationship as sadhana. You watch your mind/emotions and use your knowledge of yourself as non-dual to manage the mind.

### **Find the love in yourself first**

You don't give up looking for love, you just look to yourself for it.

### **Relationship is not a spiritual solution**

Accept that relationship is not a spiritual solution. It is something that should fit into your spiritual life but not something other than your sadhana.

### **There is a way to live free: follow dharma even at the expense of your worldly desires**

If you want freedom you have to live free. There is a way to live free: follow dharma. Dharma is based on the idea that this is a non-dual reality. A mind that understands non-duality is not subject to the play of the vasanas. It has a clear appreciation of the limitations and sufferings that come from following a vasana motivated lifestyle. Self inquiry doesn't mean asking 'Who am I?' The jury is not out on this question; you are whole and complete non-dual actionless awareness. Self inquiry is living from the non-dual platform, seeing that you are complete already and ignoring the vasanas that try to force you into dependence on objects. Self inquiry is a way of life that means following dharma often at the expense of your worldly desires.

### **Being free means being free of your dependence on objects**

Most of the people on the spiritual path, particularly Westerners, have no concept of dharma. They believe that fulfilling their desires is the road to happiness. So you have them doing all sorts of 'spiritual' stuff and hanging onto their desires at the same time. If a person is going to get free of his or her dependence on objects at some point he or she is going to have to realize that rajas and tamas are counterproductive spiritually and get to work cleaning up the mind.

### **Spiritual practices are useless if you lead worldly lifestyle**

Mind you I 'm not saying not to have relationships and have sex but I am saying that if you

are pursuing a worldly lifestyle don't try to fool yourself into thinking that you are getting spiritual benefits because you are doing 'spiritual' practices and think you are on a 'spiritual' path. Karma does not care whether you are spiritual or not. It delivers results solely on the basis of the action and the motivation behind the action. The suffering came because the actions were unspiritual and the motivation was unspiritual...and for no other reason.

### **“You” are the problem**

Yes, the problem is in you. You have too much attachment to what you believe will make you happy.

### **You are the solution**

The answer lies in life of discernment between what is true (immutable) and not true (changeable).

### **You are alone**

And even if there is love between two people you are always alone and you have to treat yourself as if you are alone. Most of the important things in life have to be done by you for you in the aloneness of your own consciousness. You do not come down the birth canal holding hands with another person. The caskets they bury you in are only made for one.

### **Freedom takes a lot of hard work**

Freedom takes a lot of hard work. You can't just make up your mind that you are free and then expect it to last forever. When the old attachments come up...which they do all the time...you have to fight them, fight for your freedom. It is a big war and it goes on a long time.

### **Resolve to clean up your karma**

When you are attached to anything there is always the companion impulse: to be free. You say, “It was important for me to be free...” You are stifled in this relationship. It is claustrophobic and you want out. It is a natural desire. But the attachment fights with the desire to be free and this drains your energy and confuses your mind. But freedom is more than a feeling. To get free in Maya you have to address the issues that are binding you and break the knots you have tied one by one. It takes time. Yes, the first step is to resolve in your mind to be free but then you have to clean up your karma.

### **Love means that the other's happiness is more important than your own**

She evidently doesn't feel loved by you because if she did she would be happy that you had an inner life and trust that it would come out well...for you. Love means that the other's happiness is more important than your own. She would be counting her blessings instead of finding fault with you and the relationship. And furthermore she evidently doesn't love herself that much either or she wouldn't torment herself with such a silly issue as control. Controlling you is not going to make her inner problems go away.

### **Are you learning from experience?**

If you have been married this long and you are not giving her what she wants and she is not giving you what you want, don't you think it is reasonable to assume that you two are not

capable of satisfying each other's emotional needs any more? Why not admit it? It's really too late for that anyway. At your age you both need to figure out how to get satisfaction from within yourselves. This looks like a spiritual problem to me.

### **You owe yourself peace of mind**

If there is a choice it is to choose freedom. You've boxed yourself into a nice comfortable life on the outer planes but the thought of just going on with business as usual is very depressing. Why? Because how can you be free to be yourself when another person is watching you like a hawk? How can you be free when you allow another person to treat you like a naughty schoolchild? Fuck this notion that you owe her something because you are 'married.' You owe yourself something...peace of mind. Marriage is a spiritual state.

### **Why do you accept life situations that keep you from peaceful mind?**

It is not a question of doing anything in the worldly sense. If I were in your shoes I would tell my wife to back off and get a life. I would give her an ultimatum, show her who wears the pants. Where is your anger? Why do you accept this manipulation and control? She's unhappy and out of control sticking her nose into your business. It shows a complete lack of trust. And you enable her to do this by not standing up to her.

If she was my wife I would tell her that I want my 'space,' that I am fed up with all the emotional psychodrama. And I would be prepared to leave or drive her out of the house...whichever would get her attention. Susanne is not happy and it is not up to you to make her happy. This only she can do for herself. She needs to understand this. But if you force her to look to herself by taking a stand yourself, she will be helped. She may even come to respect you properly.

As for the fear of 'destroying what you built in thirty years' it seems to me that without love what is a relationship? Is it a bunch of memories and some money in the bank? Sure, dissatisfied people live with each other every day for all sorts of dumb reasons...it's a world-wide phenomenon. But is it worth it?

### **It's all up to you**

"I don't want to run away from my responsibilities." You have no responsibilities that matter. You have fulfilled all your responsibilities. And leave 'life' out of it. Life doesn't give a damn what you do. It is up to you.

### **Fix your thinking first**

You just have to get off your lazy ass and start living it. Trying to fix a broken relationship is not going to work. Fix your thinking and the relationship will be fixed.

### **If the love is there, then the problems are not problems**

The real problem is that you both don't really want to face the fact that the love is gone. If the love is there, then the problems are not problems...they get laid to rest and peace comes.

### **Get on with your spiritual work – don't betray yourself**

You should get on with your spiritual work. And the immediate spiritual work you have as I

see it is to get free of these dead end situations so that you can get on with your life.

**The karma is finished when you finish it.**

Karma isn't sitting around waiting to end.

**Don't avoid taking responsibility for the problem**

Life doesn't ask anything. Thinking this way is just a way to avoid taking responsibility for the problem. What do you want...a black crow to fly down your chimney in the dead of night and say, "Seek the Self, Maya is unreal." The signs are your deep existential dissatisfaction, her manipulative controlling ways and your passive-aggressive approach to relationship.

**Be kind to yourself by cutting short your suffering**

You are just fine. Fuck the feelings. This is a small problem. Millions of people go through misery every day. And it all gets resolved eventually. The point I'm making is: be kind to yourself by cutting short your suffering. Why prolong the misery?