

Is There Another Way ?

The man comes home, tired. It was a bad day. He sinks into the sofa, Understands that his wife is already home. He asks for water. No response. He does not understand the his wife did not hear him. Gets irritated. His thoughts, "Who cares for me ? She is not interested in me any more. My duty is only to give. They (she and the child) are interested only in what I provide. They don't want me." Asks for water again. His tone echoes irritation. Wife thinks, "Why should he always command me like that ? Am I his maid servant ? He would be polite even with a maid, but not with me. I have no place in this house!" But she does not say anything. She gives him water. He looks at her. His eyes reflect his irritation. She looks away, but not before he noticed her displeasure. She goes inside and shouts at their daughter. He knows that actually she is angry with him and she is venting it on the child. He feels bad and wonders why she should be angry with him. He only asked for water and that has irritated her so much! What is wrong with her, he wonders. He just can not understand. The rest of the evening goes without any communication between them.

Most couples actually miss their way because they are caught up within their own self and lost their thoughts, unable to get out of their 'ego'.

When they try to relate to each other there is more misunderstanding than mutual understanding because they are not able to see the partner's feelings. everything from their view point of view and their feelings.

Usually they would eat dinner together. But today she says she will have it later. "Is there anything wrong? He asks. "No," she says. Every day after the meal he would help her with the dishes. But today he is confused because she is yet to have dinner. He goes to the kitchen and asks, "Is there anything I can do?" "No," says she. Now he can not contain himself any longer. He yells at her, "What is wrong with you?" She just gives him a cold share, but no words, not wanting to pick up a fight. He feels disgusted and goes to the living room.

At night he feels the urge. He needs her. He thinks, as all men think though wrongly, that sex is the best way to a woman's heart. But he does not dare. Finally he takes the initiative and she obliges. However he can feel that her heart is not there. Now he feels outraged and curses himself and curses her. If only he could remain like the monks, without marrying, he thinks. Days, weeks and months go by and the gap between them keep widening. He is at a loss not knowing what to do. She too does not know what is happening between them.

One day he tells her, "We need to talk." She is happy that he has come forward. She too was feeling the need to talk. But they do not know where to start. Finally he takes courage and says, " I don't know what is wrong with you." "Wrong with me?" she retorts. "Nothing is wrong with me! You see what is wrong with you!" she screams. Both shout at each other. All the bottled up anger comes out. All these months they had tried to avoid a fight. Now what they feared has happened. Both feel bad and they cool down. In their heart, each decides not to fight any more. Nothing can be done to bridge the gap between them, they think. Now the only thing is to carry on somehow. Occasionally, their dissatisfaction would show up. Again they would cool down. Life goes on somehow. They are resigned to the fact that nothing can be done to repair their broken relationship. The only question now is, how long they can go on in this manner. When they hear of a divorce somewhere they think, "May be, we too should divorce." But they stick on together for the sake of the child. But there is no joy, no satisfaction.

This appears to be the story of many families. **But is there another way** ? Suppose it happen this way? The man comes home very tired. It was a bad day indeed. He sinks into the sofa. He understands that his wife is already home. He asks for water. There is no response. He thinks, "She too may be tired. Or may be unwell. Let me see." He gets up and goes to the kitchen. Asks, "Hello! Where are you ? Are you OK ?" "Yes!" she says. He sees that she is very tired. "Had a bad day ?" He asks. "It was awful!" she says. Mine was not better," he replies. Her eyes reveal her concern for him. She notices that his eyes are on the glass in the shelf as he thinks that he would help himself. But before he moves she takes the glass, pours water and gives it to him. "I am glad that I have a wife who understands my needs even before I ask," he says. "And my husband enquires about how tired I am when he himself is tired, says she. They

A few are able to come out of their ego and understand the partner's concerns, struggles and feelings. Then they put aside their own concerns and feelings and attend to the needs and feelings of the partner. Then they come to understand the joy of trusting and giving oneself. The understand that marriage is a self-gift. You gift yourself to your beloved, without reservation and what you get is an immense joy and inseparable oneness.

look at each other and their love works like a tonic. The weariness is gone and they feel refreshed. They are Indians and so they don't kiss each other as the couple in the West do. But their eyes speak the language of their hearts. It is like saying, "*Look into my eyes and hear what I have not said.*" He offers to help her with the cooking. But she says with a smile, "You better go and relax." He knows that his help is a hindrance to her, because cooking is not in his line. He just stands there and watches her for some time. She feels happy when he looks at her with so much love. Then he goes to the living room. And he helps her with the dishes after dinner.

It is not that they do not quarrel. They can be very angry and they do not hide that. They don't yell at each other. They express their anger and say what they want to say. But they don't hurt or insult each other. Even if they use hurting words out of anger, soon they feel sorry for offending the partner. They know that some frictions are part of family life. Yet it is very painful. The more love there is, the more pain there is. The more pain they feel the more love they experience as if love is experienced in pain. Then they make it up. They speak out their pain and bring out their feelings. That is where their mutual respect is seen as they understand the feelings of each other and support each other. Then they feel a tremendous peace and indeed they experience an incredible oneness.

Married for twenty or thirty years their love is as fresh as the love of young couples, but very deep with a trust that is inexplicable. It is a love that keeps growing. And when they make love it is a real expression of their love and it is blissful.

Such couples may be rare. It requires some maturity on their part to live such a love-life. Love is 'give and take'. It is not only giving and not only taking. It is not also 'take and give'. 'Give' comes first. The more you give the more you receive. This may sound like poetry. But that is the reality. If you think only of giving, you will become a self-sacrificing martyr. That only shows that you are a coward or a weak personality who can not tell your partner how you feel. You are actually afraid of displeasing your partner. You want to please your partner because you want your partner for yourself. Trust is wanting here and it is not love. Love has two sides. It is not only giving; it is also receiving. You need satisfaction and you deserve it. You also need to know how to get.

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On the opposite side are the people who ask, "What have I gained by marrying this person?" They only think of 'taking'. It is not a 'give and take'. It means, 'I try to get what I can and you try to get what you can.' Both are trying only to 'take' and both are not satisfied, because there is no love; there is only an illusion of love. Instead they could ask, "What can I do to make my partner truly happy?" If they do that they would be so satisfied that they would not feel the need to ask what they gained.

So, it is 'give and take'. Readiness to give comes first. It is a total giving; It is a letting go fully and totally. It is a total trust. It is like, I don't try to please you; I don't try to get anything from you in return. I don't even look for your love. I just love. When I love with such an unselfish love, it has a power of its own and you just melt in my love as I melt into yours. That melting of two persons into one is called 'love'. It is truly satisfying and it is immensely blissful. The more you give the more you receive.