



UNDERSTANDING WHAT BRINGS US TOGETHER

THE PROMISE OF PARTNERSHIPS

TEXT: UWE VAMDEV FRANZ © 2002

»There is no pain like relationship pain.« A modern-day yoga master made this statement in a talk in Europe. She said further: »Unless you find out who you are, there will be no end to this pain for you, not in this world and not in the next«.

Several years ago a friend of mine who is a pastor in a very popular church in Harlem, NYC, came to visit me in Germany. A group of friends got together, and we had a wonderful dinner for him. It so happened that several couples were among us that night, and because they had heard about his beautiful and meaningful wedding ceremonies, the conversation very soon focused on the subject of why people are getting married. He laughed and said: »Mostly for the worst reasons, for example, because they want to be happy.« Everyone became silent. And he laughed some more and explained to us that if we really were in it for love and happiness, we would strive to uncover these inside ourselves. »To hope to get happiness and love from someone else is a guarantee for lots of pain and crises in relationships.«

So why, why do we get together, what attracts us to each other? Many people wrote about this and will write about this. Some offer wise words, others witty concepts, like men and women are from different planets (so what?!) or, that we just bring our childhood abuses back to life to heal them in our adult intimate relationships. There is truth in all of these theories, but what are we to do with these truths? Why do we feel this pain, this despair, this longing, and most importantly, how do we reconcile these intense feelings in our hearts?

Some of us, maybe wisely, give in and just accept the fact that there is no real long-term happy intimate relationship, some use strong religious rules to get along with each other. We strive for a good-old family happiness but statistics tells a different story: Only 20% of all families in the U.S. are mother-father-and-their-children families, the other 80%, most of us that is, are in many

shades of mix-ups, of not-so-orthodox families of sorts. Often these situations have arisen from partnerships which did not »work« (and quite often, with a lot of pain involved).

Eastern psychology tries to take the emphasis away from the partner toward ourselves and the real roots of our attractions to certain people. How much of our partners do we really understand? How can we avoid to be only caught up in our world, our values, our expectations? If we could just understand, what many of the ancient Eastern texts have told us again and again: The world is as we see it. We create our own heaven and hell, our own saints and devils. Our own inner reality forms our experience of people around us. Sometimes this is so clear, so obvious (specially when others clearly just project their own „stuff“ onto us!).

Where do we go from there? Traditional cultures around the globe propagate something called self-inquiry (not be confused with psychological brooding!). This technique of self-inquiry can help us understand what really brings us together. Our intimate partners are great servants for us (that is where the love really comes in) as they can make us aware of inner walls and limiting concepts which do not allow us to ever meet anyone in our hearts. We use them to point out to us our greatest fears and deepest longings. We use them to help us get rid of our own limited self-awareness. We use them to free ourselves from old and very painful patterns of behavior.

So just getting out of a relationship when we are really just getting into the deeper issues of our own inner bondage, is a sad step deeper into unhappiness. Of course that does not sound so great. But unless we have found out what led us into a certain relationship with experiences we can not bear, we can be most certain to repeat our pattern of partnership choices again and again.

How can we get out of this cycle of pain? By finding out who we really are, by understanding how our own experience keeps producing similar results. We need to work on overcoming our own inner misunderstandings, our own powerful self-limitations. So unless you know what inside of you brought you into a certain relationship it makes absolutely no sense to move on to the next disaster.

Without any knowledge about who you really are, about your own inner greatness and glory, there can never be a real meeting of hearts. Without inner stillness, our own inner jewel will not shine, lighting up all the hidden corners of our fears and thus eliminating them.

This ancient practice of self-inquiry will support your relationship, because it helps you to discover your own root of happiness and love in your own heart. Without that discovery partnerships remain the greatest source of sorrow on this planet instead of being the greatest source of inspiration and self-discovery.



This text is a publication of Uwe Vamdev Franz. He practices and teaches yoga since 1977.
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