



Two Quick Love Bites

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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I am unqualified to dispense relationship advice, yet lately that is precisely what I have been called upon to do more than once.

Being posed specific questions has really gotten me thinking about life, love, and people. Most of my ideas come from observing and participating in various dynamics and relationships, some healthy, some not, over the years. Some of it is from reading up about certain types of people.

A friend/ex student who is thinking of committing to someone with a cartload of baggage (we ALL have baggage but one must discern the quality and parameters of various pieces) came to me and asked for my opinion. Her potential partner has come out of a marriage fraught with infidelity, deception and hysterical narcissism (a real mental illness, by the way). I said to her: it occurs to me that if one was to fall in love with someone with a terribly deceitful,

vain and or manipulative ex spouse, who is still alive and with whom they have kids, one HAS to consider that it means to a certain extent that those energies will seep into one's life. No matter how remarkable, sexy, and wonderful this potential life partner is, the relationship has to be really worth it to take on their past, which, if not dealt with properly, will always creep in.

Things to consider:

1. Does your partner establish and guard the boundaries in relation to that person? Boundaries are our friend, not a sign of being closed off. If your partner cannot handle his/her ex's toxicity as it directly affects your relationship, then it will fall on you to do so, which is inappropriate and unfair. Hysterical narcissists do not want their ex partners back per se, but given their illness, they

also do not want the attention off of them and will often undermine and sabotage their ex's new relationship, especially if the ex is happy.

2. Do you want that kind of spiritual sludge in your life at all? Is the partner worth it? Because make no mistake, if they have kids together, their connection will never be broken fully and a droplet or two of that sludge will fall on to you every so often. HNs also use the kids and finances as pawns. If your partner does not know how to draw lines, your spiritual and emotional energy will be dominated by cleaning up after a HN sludge deposit.
3. Are you sure that your partner is telling you the whole story? Do not be blinded by your love for him. After all he chose to stay with her for decades, despite numerous infidelities and betrayals big and small that he knew about. Do you want to be with a person who has such poor judgment and possibly low self-esteem? Disproportionate forgiveness is a sort of martyrdom, and as far as you know, your honey 'aint Jesus.

Another student, much younger than the previous one sent me a message last month: "What do you do when you miss someone like you are missing a limb but you know that they do not love you or value like you deserve?"

They are heartbreakingly young, 19, and they sounded so forlorn. I wrote back: you are in luck, because I was born to answer this question for you, at this moment, because I know exactly how you feel.

You let go with love. You remind yourself everyday if necessary that though you may love them, you must love yourself more. That missing ebbs with each passing day, only to flare up at the most inopportune moments. So expect that and then it fades away for good. You show the same patience for your heartbreak as you did for their bad behavior. That in their losing you, they have shown wisdom they are not even aware of, because they have lost you so you can be found in the right way, which may not be in the way you think.

Or you can say to hell with (edited, I used an expletive here) all that and you pin a picture up of them on your wall and aim spit balls at it until its covered in little balls of your angry saliva while your favourite break-up song plays on a loop. Usually you have to do the latter to get to all the former. I hope that helps. (She said it did alot, and it was ok to share it)

Sometimes all that, "let's be forgiving, let's be new agey, and loving towards the person who hurt us deeply" and go on a Yoga retreat does not help. If you tamp down the anger and try to be "zen", it takes on a malingering power that actually prevents you from healing. If you are angry, own it. If you are hurt, weep until there is no water left in your body. But, once that's over, no dwelling, and no self pity, and eventually you have to be pragmatic and forgive that

jerk or jerkette. This might be a good time for a yoga retreat. Stand on your head and consider your options calmly. Acknowledging the open wound allows you to think clearly down the line and maybe consider what your contribution was to creating it.

Many of us have been in relationships where our worth somehow got buried or sidelined. But what I have come to realize is that it was obscured not because the other person did not see it, but because we, ourselves, lost sight of it.



The Siesta by Van Gogh.

4. Is your partner open to discussing the situations as they arise in a productive manner? Discussion might mean his having to face his collusion in the messed up dynamic he has with her. Is he mature/strong enough for that?

I was surprised I was able to clearly articulate questions I thought would help her make a decision. She has made one and she said these questions helped. She is a brave soul.