

# Ghosts of the past

Relationships of a distant past sometimes have a way of creeping up on us, especially after marriage. There may be times when something we see or hear reminds us of a person from our past with whom we shared a special bond. Inadvertently we sometimes find ourselves comparing our current partner with our former. It can be disconcerting, leaving us perplexed and wondering about whether or not we should keep in touch with our 'ex'.

Comparing a spouse to a former partner is bound to suck all the happiness out of a married life slowly and surely. Playing this comparison game prevents us from moving ahead in our current relationship because it means we have one foot stuck in our past. Even though comparing a situation to a similar past experience might be instinctive, and not a frequent occurrence; comparing the person is never wise.

Every individual brings something new and fresh into a relationship and no two

people are alike. No two relationships are alike as well. Instead of comparing whether or not our spouse is better than our previous partner, we should learn to enjoy our current relationship and live in the moment.

To put it simply, comparing our partner to others is just not fair to him or her. It is always important to remember the reason why our 'ex' is our 'ex' and why our spouse has made it this far with us.

Let us not devalue our spouse by making unfair comparisons. Accept their faults and cherish their merits. Relationships are never built on comparisons but on the feelings of love and mutual respect.

But what must one do when these ghosts from our past come knocking on the friendship door? Should we open it or keep it closed forever?

This could be a sticky situation. This basically depends on various factors. If friendship was the basis of the relationship

from the beginning then slipping back into it post break up is a definite possibility because it is familiar territory. Similarly if the break up was a mature mutual decision, then again, being friends with them might turn out just fine. On the other hand if the beginning and the end of a relationship was tumultuous with a lot of unresolved feelings of love, hate or hurt, the possibility of a genuine friendship with that person flies right out of the window.

It needs to be said though that whenever we share a relationship with anyone, especially if it is long term, we invest quite a bit of ourselves in it. Is it really fair to just bid them farewell forever?

In order to even consider being friends with a former partner, we must be crystal clear and brutally honest about our feelings towards them. If at all there exists even a little bit of attraction between each other, or we cling to the feeling of ownership regarding our former partner, then any

attempt to be friends might backfire horribly.

It is extremely important to take into consideration the comfort level of our spouse with this decision because hiding even a platonic friendship from a spouse has the potential to ruin trust in a marriage. However, if we are secure that the boundary of our current relationship is impenetrable, only then should we pursue a friendship with a previous loved one. Needless to say our utmost priority should be our spouse and our marriage.

At times, even something as trivial as being connected through social media can often turn out to be an unhealthy fixation, end sometimes letting the past be in the past is the healthiest option. Being friends with an 'ex' is like a tightrope walk and it is wise to indulge in it only if it is really worth it.

By Samina Hossain



# Long distance love

"Love knows no bounds" is what we say when we have found the one and we know we want to live with them for the rest of our lives. Time feels like hours. There are misunderstandings which come in the way and sometimes insecurities too, but we have to ask ourselves if we are really taking the existence of the other person for granted and perhaps not realising how things would have been more difficult if their existence, where we could hold their hand or see each other face to face wouldn't be possible? Seems familiar? Yes, we are talking about long distance relationships.

Often we hear about how people have the idea of long distance relationships not working and that relationships nowadays can't even work out for a year being two miles apart from one another rather than thousands- but not all relationships are like that. It obviously is a hard situation to go through to but not necessarily an impossible one. Talking to few couples and understanding their situation is when we know, it

is not necessarily distance that holds one back from loving one another.

The real life story of Aria and Akib is perhaps one even Nicholas Spark would have difficulty coming up with. Distant from the very initial stages of their relationship, Aria had to move from cities to cities and then countries as well. They fell in love when she lived in Bogra and then shifted to Chittagong and finally thought her parents would settle in Dhaka. Things were going very amazing for them until Aria's parents decided to move to Thailand. This was the most difficult situation Akib could go through because it wasn't easy for him to travel a thousand miles as often. They were getting used to being together most of the day while they could until Aria had to move out to Thailand too. "It gets so difficult. The feeling of not fitting in a country where you are surrounded with strangers gets to you harder when you know that these were the times you needed your partner-in-crime with you." Aria and Akib have been together

for five years and they couldn't be happier. "Only time will let you know if the idea of long distance relationships is really a myth. Patience is the key, my friend. It is all new to me but it is nothing impossible to go through because time passes us by so quickly anyway," says Ibtida whose partner recently went abroad for his studies. "He gives me his utmost attention and doing that through Skype and phone calls isn't a very easy thing to do, I tell you. I could never be insecure about him and he feels the same way. Do I want him to come back and do I wish I could see him every day other than two times a year? Ofcourse I do. But this is where reality strikes in. It's difficult but we do what we do for the best of our future and I respect that," says Parisa who can still feel butterflies in her stomach when she Facetimes her partner and it has been three years for them. "I hate sleeping alone and my children stay awake the whole night studying and doing God knows what kids do these days but I keep myself

occupied and I have gotten used to it. Job, children and painting sums up my whole day," says Rehnuma, a working parent, giggling as she talks about her husband who has been working abroad for about seven years now and comes around every year.

Listening to stories only makes us know how difficult it can be for certain couples to be apart from one another and how much we can appreciate our loved ones even without their bodily presence. Love surely conquers all negativity and insecurities and a forever after maybe something that future holds for those lovebirds who never give up on each other. As a friend or a parent we can always support the idea and never look upon it as a difficulty but as a strength. So to those lovebirds who are apart from each other, do not be sad because distance means so little when your partner means so much more.

By Sumaiya Tasnim  
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