

The Seven Year Itch Story

It has been said time and again — 'Marriages are made in heaven and celebrated on earth'. The 'made in heaven' part of the deal is all sorted out and is supposedly predestined, so let us assume there is not much you can do with that. But, 'the celebrated on earth' part is when the ball is in your court.

It is common knowledge that every marriage goes through a rough patch at some point or the other and no two reasons for that 'rough patch' are ever the same.

What is this seven year itch?

The first few years after marriage are often referred to as the honeymoon phase of life. This is the time when couples put their best foot forward for the benefit of their partner. They live in their own euphoric bubble of loving, caring and pleasing each other. They tend to compromise on a lot of things just to make each other happy. But after a few years of this, the bubble does burst.

By the third or fourth year of marriage, there is generally a child in the picture and one or both of the partners either feel neglected or feel their spouse is not helping enough with the newcomer. Add to that the pressures of normal day-to-day life.

With all the newness of the relationship exhausted and excitement subsided, life starts following a predictable routine pattern and reality sets in. The supposed finality of the situation hits you in the face — this is what the rest of your life is going to look like. And that's when the itch of dissatisfaction and resentment starts.

For better or for worse, marriage is a constant work in progress. Whether or not you can prevent your marriage from hitting that itchy road bump is relative, but forming certain healthy relationship practices will definitely help soften its blow.

Having a group of close friends to confide in is an advantage, but having some-

one older to discuss your troubles with gives you a lot more perspectives, because more often than not they have at some point in their lives crossed this exact same stage, whereas your peers may themselves be struggling with it.

Anika (name changed on request) has been happily married for 12 years now. She met her husband while on a holiday; they fell in love and soon got married. She recalls a time in her marriage after she had



just had her son.

She said, "We had suddenly started to fight a lot on small issues. I used to take to heart any negative thing he said to me during those fights. That would bother me for days and made our relationship sour."

Lucky for her she confides a lot in her mother. "I used to talk to my mother regularly then and from her I learnt the value of letting go."

Clinging on to feelings of hurt only torture one person and that is you, while the person who caused the heartache goes about living life normally. The sooner you are able to let go and forgive that person, irrespective of whether they asked for it or deserve it, you save yourself a lot of unnecessary stress and heartache.

However it also needs to be mentioned that it is never a good idea to sweep your marital problems under the rug and pre-

ter.

Hisham and Shezeen (names changed on request) come from two very different family backgrounds, one very modern the other rather conservative. In the initial years of their married life they each tried to change themselves to suit their partner, but gradually with the passage of time they both got weary of trying to be someone they are not.

"After the first few years of marriage, both of us came to a point where we were constantly struggling to change each other's lifestyle and that led to a lot of fights. The love between us was always there but we could not seem to let go of the hope that the other would change," said Hisham in a pensive mood, recalling those days.

When asked what changed between them, Shezeen recalled, "I met with a life threatening accident one day. Thankfully I survived it but that brush with death suddenly bought everything in perspective for the both of us. We learnt to accept each other for what we are without trying to change. We have been happy and peaceful ever since and are currently enjoying part two of our honeymoon phase," she said with a broad grin.

Just the way trust is the foundation of a good relationship, so is acceptance. Married life becomes way simpler once you are able to accept your spouse for the beautifully flawed person s/he is. It is draining to be with someone who is dissatisfied with the person you fundamentally are. Marriage does not mean you have to agree to everything. It is acceptable to have different opinions and beliefs. As long as you are able to accept and respect the other, no matter how different one is, both will remain on the same side of the coin.

By Samina Hossain



THOUGHT CRAFT

BY NASRIN SOBHAN

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Krondoshi Pothocharini by Atul Prasad is one of my very favorite songs and always strikes a certain chord in my heart. It reminds me of a beautiful winter evening some years ago at the home of a gentleman who frequently hosts evenings of music and song. From where we were all seated, I could see the night sky clear and dotted with stars. The lady who sang for us had the voice of a nightingale, and as I closed my eyes, to listen to the music, I was transported to another world.

Atul Prasad also brings back early memories of my mother in our Karachi home, sitting on the floor with her harmonium, singing *Jabo Na Jabo Na Jabo Na Ghore*.

Until that particular evening I had never heard her sing, and, in fact, I did not even know that she could, or that she had a really melodious voice. She was persuaded to bring out her harmonium by her brother, who was visiting from Chittagong, so we enjoyed an evening of listening to her

favourite songs.

For our amusement, my uncle would sing Kishore Kumar's comedic songs from Lukochuri, which always made me laugh, because he would accompany the song with comic gestures and expressions. We passed some pleasant evenings with this music interspersed with games of carom and rummy.

My mother loved the music of Rabindranath Tagore, Atul Prasad, and Kazi Nazrul Islam, and till the end of her life she would keep the radio tuned to Kolkata Radio. If I tiptoed in while she was napping and turned it off, thinking it would disturb her sleep, she would immediately wake and say, "Who turned my radio off?"

Protima Banerjee's rendition of *Tomay Keno Lagchey Eto Chena* from the film *Harano Shur* has been a tune I hum often. Some ten years ago, on a long train journey from London to Edinburgh with friends, while we were discussing our old musical

tend that everything is fine. That only helps build a huge wall of resentment between the couple.

Not only is it necessary to discuss your problems and find an amiable solution but also in cases where there is no solution, beg to differ and make your peace with that difference. Have a screaming match if you need to, but it is always better to get it out of your system than to let resentment fes-

favourites, I decided to divert everyone by singing for them.

I did not inherit my mother's voice but my off-key rendition of the old song went down so well that they demanded encores. I obliged with *Kono Ek Gayer Bodhu*, originally sung by Hemanta Mukherjee, and a few other tunes. Between the sandwiches and coffee, and my singing, which was accompanied by much clapping and enjoyment, the time on the train passed quickly.

Sometimes, I would accompany my mother to Gulistan Cinema, where we would watch romances starring Suchitra Sen and Uttam Kumar. The cinema hall was clean, and the audience civilised and quiet, so we really enjoyed the story and the music to the full.

One of my favourite songs was *Tumi Jey Amaar*. After the film, we would go to Baby Ice Cream for my favourite vanilla ice, or to Chu Chin Chow for Chinese food Dhaka-style, or to Bham Pharmacy, or to Beauty

Shoes to get something new for me.

South Asian music and films are hugely popular in the most improbable places. On a trip to Samarkand in the late seventies, one of the local Uzbeks came up to greet us and told us in Russian that his favourite song was *Mein Awara Hoon*, and repeated happily, "Dev Anand, Dev Anand."

And, finally, who can forget the *Urdu Lag Ja Galey* from the film *Woh Kaun Thi?* I always felt this would have been the song that the mythical Anarkali would have sung to Prince Selim before she was walled up by Emperor Akbar.

Recently, while browsing YouTube, I came across a different, modern, rendition of *Lag Ja Galey* by a male singer called Sanam who has a voice like silk. I am glad I discovered his music, as it will be a delightful addition to my collection of well-loved CDs.

To me, music is the language of happiness and memories.

Golden tunes