

# WE'RE ALL JUST TOO INTO IT

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Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley said that 'the beginning is always today' but for those of us who better know that life truly begins when you successfully enter a relationship. Your life has not mattered up until this point and all your past accomplishments have added up to nothing. Congratulations if you have scored a first date because this is where your life truly begins.

## GOING OUT

If you want to go see a movie or attend an event in the city, do not ask a friend or reach out to someone in the hope of making a new one. Reserve any and all plans for you and your date only. When your friend suggests you choose some plans for dates and keep other plans to healthily balance relationships with other people in your life, do you listen? No, you don't.

## FINANCES

Grab your piggy bank and hide it in an even deeper corner of your cupboard. See if you can hide it in between your second grade costume for the school play where you played a leaf on a tree and all the ugly sweaters you received as presents from your relatives which you'll never ever wear but you can't throw away because you're not heartless. In fact, see if you can push this



piggy bank so far back into your closet that it reaches Narnia because it no longer exists.

The only option for you now is to wait patiently for someone to come along and

buy you that outfit, take you out to get that mani/pedi or treat you to ice cream with sprinkles on top. Because if Donna and Tom Haverford from 'Parks and Rec' has taught us anything it's to 'Be Treated

By Others!'

## SELF IMPROVEMENT

Banish all mirrors from your house. You can donate them to charity, resell them or just drop them from your window hoping it doesn't knock a person out or damage property before it reaches the ground. Now sit tight and wait for a person to tell you how beautiful you naturally are.

## TRAVELLING

In your mind you have a huge list of places you're dying to go to but for some reason all of your plans revolve around checking into XYZ airport with a significant other. For people from more conservative families, "Biye por bor ke niye ghubra" may be what is preached but for the rest who have the option, you could as well join hands together and toss travelling with friends, cousins or solo off the list as well.

Now that you have realised the many reasons why staying in a relationship is your only shot to finding real fulfillment and joy in life, get to work. Do a whole ritual in the graveyard in the middle of the night, sacrifice a leprechaun, stand in open places where you're likely to get hit by cupid's arrow - whatever it takes. You now have one mission and one mission only in life.

# MAYBE YOU'RE TOXIC

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Toxicity in a person can be defined as behaviour that may harm others or even themselves. Therefore, given the wide array of experiences life has to offer, it may be safe to assume that almost all of us have dealt with toxic people at one point or another. It may be a friend, a significant other, a family member, a teacher etc., which proves that it is hard to evade toxicity in life. As a result, we end up having a lot to say regarding this subject matter and how it has affected us. However, what can be done if you yourself are the toxic one?

Identifying toxic or problematic traits in ourselves can be quite difficult as we view the world mainly through our own limited perception. This hinders our ability

to be mindful of our words and actions, which ultimately leads to the development of negative behavioural traits. As every human being is their own unique person, the manifestation of toxicity in individuals does not follow a strict pattern or shape. Sometimes these traits can make us wound the mental well-being of those surrounding us; sometimes the damage we inflict is upon ourselves.

Building upon the previous point, it should be noted that developing these damaging attributes can happen to any of us for a multitude of different reasons stemming from various upbringings. But acknowledging them is not a

shameful matter, rather it is the key to self-improvement. As an example from my own life experience, I can say that growing up, I've always thought of myself as a decent person. I wasn't necessarily the best but I was most definitely not the worst. However, I started thinking I didn't deserve any of the negativity that afflicted me. This way of thinking quickly snowballed and affected my behaviour with others very deeply. I always thought I was always in the right and my apologies were always sprinkled with a dose of self-victimisation without any intention to actually make amends. It took me a long time to realise what I was doing and even longer to mend my ways. But at the end of the day, there was still improvement after acknowledgement.

If you can find yourself relating to any of the things mentioned above, you should be mindful of one thing: you're not toxic, but some bits of your behaviour may be. The toxicity a person may exhibit does not define the entirety of their being, just a reflection of the traumas/negativity that the person themselves had to experience. However, that merely provides an explanation and not an excuse. In situations like this, introspection and compassion for yourself are your best friends. Not only will they open the door for self-improvement, they will help to usher in a healthier way of living as well. Even if you think you may have passed the point of no return, tell yourself that you can build a future with healthier relationships for yourself.

Finally, always remember that there is time.



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