

The Vicious Cycle of Self-Doubt

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Dana: Isabella, am I violating *dharma* by NOT leaving Paul? Am I creating bad *dharma*? I'm just so out of balance when I'm with him. I'm probably trying to protect myself from apparent pain and shock. It's crazy!!!! I see it all, but it does not help. I don't seem to get a better disposition.

By staying this long I have at least realized it's not my fault that he's an addict, who then had an affair with my friend and is hooked on porn! and online stuff. I feel sorry for him. He's tormented by his apparent demons. I still get such a shock when I go into the garage, like last week, and find him comatose on the car floor!

When I look back over the years, what I saw then is still there, a shelter, a kind man, but it's not a reason to remain in this toxic soup... I have spent hours and hours looking at James' teachings, Trout Lake and qualifications. I can't seem to fulfill the qualifications or begin to work in a more focused manner on some, with this energy. Or is this all made up by my ego?! To suit me or blame or attempt to get something better. I don't want to get better, I do want to be in an environment where working on the qualifications is paramount and is understood by who I live with. Or should I just work on them and wait for life to change things... or not?! Am I being "Oh, poor little me, I don't like this, boo, boo, hoo!"? What is right action?!

My children have now refused to come to see me if Paul and I are there together, as they say the atmosphere is toxic. It's true! They are right. It's okay, I'm not frantic, depressed or desperate. That may have been before. I'm calm and mostly centered. I just want "right action" and to know what that is! It's time to move, isn't it?

Are these all just pointless thoughts made up by the ego and should I bloom where I'm planted?! I have so so much. *Isvara* has lived a most amazing experience through me! I am in such deep gratitude for what I'm used to be seen through. Confusion, I suppose, as I am not firm yet in the teaching. Understand, but not firm. I hope you and James are so, so well. I'm just loving the privilege of hours and hours to watch James, and be at your website.

Sending so much love to you both, and big hugs.

I'm sure your granddaughter is growing fast! Isn't it wonderful to have Skype and be a part of that! Unfolding consciousness and joy.

~ Much love, Dana

Sundari: Hello, dear Dana. I always have time for you.

I arrived in Tiruvannamalai two days ago and am loving being here again, with my beloved. He is setting everyone on fire; the crowd varies between 80 and 120 participants, a very advanced group.

I am sorry to hear that the mind is still caught up in a quandary, confused about what is *dharmic* for Dana. I think you answered your own questions though, as there is nothing I can say to you that you don't already know.

I have a good friend who is stuck in a relationship she cannot get out of, because she convinced herself that the problem was her, because “he pushes her buttons,” so obviously she still has a lot to learn and is not firm in self-knowledge. What she cannot see is the fact that her mind is continuously agitated (she rationalizes her and her partner’s behaviour under the guise of self-knowledge) is proof that she is not following her *dharma*. She keeps second-guessing herself because what is really behind her growing confusion is her fear of being alone.

Vedanta teaches that the main motivation for people whose aim is self-knowledge is not to seek a romantic relationship, because liberation is freedom from dependence on objects. You already know this. There are many self-realised people who have not dealt with their “love” issues and who have a difficult time in this area of their lives. A binding attachment to the idea that one must have a significant “other” in order to be happy or complete is clearly contrary to the idea that one is already whole and complete. However, this does not mean that one should not have a relationship. If one already is in a relationship, whether one is a seeker of truth, in relationship with someone who is on the same path or not, applying *karma yoga* in all situations and seeing the other as the self is the path of wisdom. Again, there is no right or wrong, only what works, depending on what you are aiming for.

Karma yoga, surrendering the results of action, does not guarantee success in every relationship. Nothing can guarantee success in anything, especially in a contract with an apparent “other.” In all cases, if peace of mind and happiness is the most important aim, values will determine what course of action to take or not to take within the framework of *karma yoga*. The issue is not whether this relationship is right or wrong for you. The issue is as always about what you value most – and the motivation behind what you value. It is possible to see everything and everyone in one’s life as one’s own personal field of existence (*dharma* field) and to serve it all with love and devotion to the self, regardless of the circumstances. *Karma yoga* can be used very effectively to accept what cannot be changed. But it does not work when it is being used to hide from what needs to be changed because of the fear of the consequences. Your life has to serve the truth, not the other way around.

I cannot advise you what is best for you. As a friend and a teacher of Vedanta, I would have to ask you why you don’t value Dana enough to give her what she truly needs, which is peace of mind at all times. The fact that your relationship affords you small graces like time to study Vedanta – well, you don’t need to be in a bad relationship to do that, do you? Is the price not a little too high?

You know you don’t need anyone to complete you. You have lived large and had a great life in many ways. You know what is and what is not “out there.” You know that all you need to define and validate you is YOU. So don’t become a victim of *tamas* (confusion, doubt, guilt, rationalizing, etc., etc.) which builds on itself (more confusion, doubt, etc.) until you are spinning in a vortex of ruthless and self-destructive emotions.

Step out of it. Take a deep breath. Remember Who You Are.

You are beautiful. You deserve to live a good life that reflects who you are on every level. Is living with a drunkard, porn-and-substance-addict really the truth about you? You can listen to Vedanta until the cows come home, but unless you apply the knowledge it is not going to help you much.

What do you value most?

Just answer that question and take whatever action is appropriate with the *karma yoga* spirit, giving thanks and accepting whatever result accrues. If you don't take appropriate action, *Isvara* will assume you are okay with suffering and just keep dishing it out.

It is up to you. We love you no matter what you do or do not do.

~ Big hugs and love to you from both of us, Sundari