

# Love That Selfish Bitch

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

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**Prema:** Dear James, greetings from Alaska! I hope this finds you happy, healthy and enjoying married life. I seem to be in a rut lately. I feel like something is trying to boil to the surface from inside. Something wants to get out, but not sure what. I have a job, a nice house, in a relationship with someone for four years now, I have received many *dharma* teachings and have been blessed to have found you to guide me on this path – and set me straight. I feel no joy in life. I don't really have any positive relationships in my life. Yes, I have a job, and in today's economy there are many who would kill for my job, but I am bored out of my mind! I have a man who adores me but is very negative, and I don't feel it is okay to speak my mind with him. I am trying to work on communication with him.

I am searching, always searching for this joy that is suppose to be inside me. I look inside, and for me it seems empty inside, and there is great sadness inside me. Maybe I am just being a selfish person and need to be more grateful for what I have. I know many have nothing, not even clean water, and who are far, far worse off than me. I should be happy with everything I have. For me it seems hollow on the outside, and inside me is empty and so much sorrow.

**Sundari:** It could be true that you do need to figure out why you cannot be happy with the fact that you have no real problems, only gratuitous ones. The culture of the West is by and large self-indulgent and self-entitled, and as a result dissatisfied and neurotic. However, who is it that knows there is a selfish and sad person "inside" you? Outside and inside, as well as sorrow, are just objects in you, awareness, as is emptiness. You are the knower of them. The knower is not the known.

Emptiness is not a fact. It is an interpretation of an ego that expects objects to have a meaning that is not inherent in them. As the Buddha says, "There is no self-nature in objects." So why do you expect them to be meaningful? This is a common Buddhist trap, getting stuck in the emptiness without seeing that you as the knower of the emptiness are the fullness. Your search will continue until you figure out that YOU are what you are searching for and you are the fullness.

**Prema:** I feel ashamed for feeling this way and a bit scared to bring this up with you. Maybe I need to do practices to help me be more grateful. Maybe I am a selfish b\_tch.

**Sundari:** Feelings are a very unreliable and faulty way of assessing anything because they are forever changing. While they may be a true representation of what you are feeling in any given moment, they are not THE truth. Tomorrow you might have a brighter day and all this will seem silly.

In any case, once again, who is it that knows you feel ashamed and scared to bring this up with James? If you know that you are a bitch, are you really a bitch? And if you are, why can't you love her too? What's wrong with being a bitch? We all have a cranky, grumpy and not-so-fabulous side to ourselves as *jivas*. We are not here to

change ourselves. We are here to know ourselves as we are. If you accept your inner bitch she will no longer be an inner bitch. If you try to change her, she will rebel. What you resist persists.

The bitch has nothing to do with you as awareness. Love all that you are without condition. The only practices that will work are *karma yoga*, *bhakti yoga* and *jnana yoga*. See your partner as God, see everyone and everything as God and adore them as you would God, for they are all the self. They are you. Change what you can change in your life by following *dharma* and being and doing what is true to your nature. Accept what you cannot change and do what needs to be done, knowing that you are not in charge of the results. Continue your self-inquiry, read the scriptures. Go to the ShiningWorld website and regularly read the *e-satsangs*, you will find that everyone has similar problems to yours.

Clean up your lifestyle if it needs it, change *rajasic* or *tamasic* habits in your activities, eating and sleeping. Take care of your body and environment and see it as God too. If you are bored at work then you are working without love. Find ways to bring inspiration and joy into everything you do by being it. Be creative. Give more than you take. Practise acts of random gratitude regardless of what you are “feeling.” Just do it.

**Prema:** I hope there is something you can do to help me see more joy inside me. I know it does not come from outside, material things. All compounded things dissolve.

**Sundari:** There is nothing anyone can do to help you see more joy “inside” you. Your problem is that you see joy/awareness as an object, something that can be gained by doing something or by not doing something. Nothing you do or don’t do can help you, because you see yourself as the doer. If the knowledge that the joy is not in the object is firm then you know that you are the joy. This is your nature. You cannot find this or look for this, you can only remove the ignorance of your true nature as unlimited awareness through self-inquiry. The knowledge that you are whole and complete, pure and perfect, is not firm or you lack self-confidence in it. If you can’t see it, accept it on faith and act as if you are perfect. By this practice you will eventually come to see that it is true.

**Prema:** I know I told you before about being sexually assaulted by someone in the *satsang* I use to belong to, and the fear from this brought up a repressed memory of someone molesting me as a child. It was just a flash, but the fear was so intense and I know around age nine for a long time I would not laugh and always wondered why I never laughed.

So I don’t know if somehow this has something to do with me feeling empty inside and this is the sadness. How do you deal with something you don’t remember but is buried deep in your subconscious? I have forgiven the man that tried to rape me. I see him as being very confused and actually pray he gets the help he needs. I feel empathy for him, to have been on the path for 30 years and still be so messed up. But it’s not surprising, as he was one of Chögyam Trungpa’s early students. There seems to be a few messed up ones from that time.

**Sundari:** Let the past die by forgiving it all, and especially yourself for making an issue of it and especially yourself for not loving yourself. The past is just a story and cannot dictate who we are once we know our true nature to be unlimited unconditional love, *parama prema svarupa*. It is important to understand your past and how it has created the *vasanas* that give rise to the likes and dislikes that ARE dictating your life.

Properly assimilating our life's lessons, positive and negative, and laying them to rest, is imperative. However, once understood, the past can be dropped as the movie that it is and all you need to do is to keep your attention on your likes and dislikes. They are what runs you, keeping you from appreciating your life, from gratitude and from the hard and fast knowledge that you are whole and complete, non-dual, unchanging, unlimited awareness.

**Prema:** So I am a bit scared to bring this up with you. Maybe you will give me hell for being so selfish. I really feel stuck.

**Sundari:** James has no interest in being the judge of your life or your attitude. It makes no difference to him that you consider yourself selfish, because he sees you as the whole and complete, lovable self. Maybe Prema is selfish, but are YOU selfish?

You feel stuck because you reject and unfairly judge yourself. Why not take your good qualities rather than your negative qualities as a basis for your self-judgment? I think Buddhism has done a number on your head with its insistence on changing the apparent imperfections of the reflected self.

~ *Om* and *prem*, Sundari