Are you in love, or are you in a relationship?

Sadhguru on the difference between attachment and love

Love. I am frequently plying with questions about the subject. Young people, in particular, ask these questions with a very real urgency.

What is love? It is a deep, tearing, disruptive experience, that every human being undergoes at some point in life. The English expression ‘falling in love’ is particularly apt. You don’t stand, rise, climb or fly in love. You fall into it. In that bewildering descent, you lose some of yourself as well. This is what makes it so wonderful.

But relationships are not necessarily synonymous with love. People often enter relationships out of compulsion or calculation. There could be social, economic, emotional, psychological, and sexual imperatives. Nothing wrong with these. But it is important to enter a relationship consciously. There may be compulsions involved, but let your relationship be an aware step, not an unconscious one.

People often mistake attachment for love. There is a big difference. Love is like a flower. If you don’t hold it with awareness, it will fall apart. If you grow flowering plants, you have to water them regularly, watch over them attentively. Attachment is like a plastic flower. It is guaranteed for ten years! It is convenient, but there is no life in it. Love is a nuisance. It can be unpredictable, inconvenient, but it is full of life.

Unfortunately, many young people are in a hurry to enter into a relationship because of what is called ‘peer pressure’. This is the worst possible reason. To make your happiness dependent on outside variables is tragic. It spells disaster for your partner and yourself.

To offer a different analogy, as a guru, I don’t feel the need to don rudraksha malas merely because some other spiritual figures do. I dress the way I choose. Once you are in touch with yourself, you don’t outsource your inner joy and well-being to others. You take charge of it yourself.

If you cultivate just a little awareness in your life, you will find that there is a certain intrinsic fullness to your existence. Nothing more needs to be added. If love happens, it is a gift, not a necessity. There is no longer any pressure to mimic others; you take your decisions with a certain freedom and responsibility.

Remember that your companion is a fellow traveller, a person with whom you are embarking on an exciting life journey. Never mistake your companion for the destination. Above all, remember, it is a privilege that somebody is willing to share their life with you. If you think of what you can extract from them, life will be a living hell. Think of what you can contribute to your partner’s life. If that attitude is reciprocated, you both inhabit a beautiful space.

When you establish yourself in a joyful state, your love is all about giving expression to your joy. Relationships turn now from extraction and distraction to contribution. Joy multiplies effortlessly into bliss.

Whether you’re struggling with a controversial query, feeling puzzled about a taboo topic, or just burning with a question that no one else is willing to answer, now is your chance...

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