When you live in this world, there are various types of complex interactions happening. As your field of play increases, the complexity of interaction also increases. If you’re just sitting in a cubicle, working on your computer with only one other person, you need only a little understanding. But if you’re managing a thousand people, you need a vast understanding of everybody. Now, suppose you’re managing a thousand people and you want all these people to understand you, then you’re not going to manage anything. You need to understand the limitations and the capabilities of these thousand people and do what you can; only then will you have the power to move the situation the way you want it to go. If you’re waiting for these thousand people to understand you and act, it is only a pipe dream; it is never going to happen.

The closer the relationship is, the more effort you should make to understand them. Somebody becomes closer and dearer to you only as you understand him better. If they understand you, they enjoy the closeness of the relationship. If you understand them better, then you enjoy the closeness. It is not that the other person is totally bereft of understanding. With your understanding you can create situations where the other person would be able to understand you better. If you’re expecting the other one to understand and comply with you all the time while you don’t understand the limitations, the possibilities, the needs and the capabilities of that person, then conflict is all that will happen; it is bound to happen. Unfortunately, the closest relationships in the world have more conflict going on than between enemies.

In your relationships, you’ve fought many more battles than this and are still fighting; isn’t it so? This is because your line of understanding and theirs is different. If you cross this L.O.C., this Line of Control, they will get mad. If they cross it, you will get mad. If you move your understanding beyond theirs, their understanding also becomes a part of your understanding. You will be able to embrace their limitations and capabilities. In everyone, there are some positive aspects and some negative aspects. If you embrace all this in your understanding, you can make the relationship the way you want it. If you leave it to their understanding, it will become accidental.

If they are very magnanimous, things will happen well for you; if not, the relationship will break up.

All I am asking is: do you want to be the one who decides what happens to your life? Whether they are intimate relationships, professional, political, global or whatever, don’t you want to be the person who decides what happens in your life? If you do, you better include everything and everybody into your understanding. You should enhance your understanding to such a point that you can look beyond people’s madness also. There are very wonderful people around you, but once in a while they like to go crazy for a few minutes. If you don’t understand that, you will lose them. If you don’t understand their madness, you will definitely lose them. If you do, then you know how to handle them. Life is not always a straight line; you have to do many things to keep it going. If you forsake your understanding, your capability will be lost. Whether it’s a question of personal relationships or professional management, in both places you need understanding; otherwise, you won’t have fruitful relationships.

The way you are right now, the very quality of your life is decided by the type of relationships you hold. You better make the needed effort to understand the people around you.

Sadhguru J. Vasudevan is a contemporary mystic rooted as strongly in worldly and pragmatic manner as he is in inner experience and wisdom. Named one of India’s 50 most influential people, he has addressed prominent global forums on issues as diverse as socioeconomic development, leadership and spirituality. He has served as delegate to the United Nations Millennium Peace Summit and the World Peace Congress and has been special invitee to the World Economic Forum (2006-2009); the Australian Leadership Retreat (2006) and TED (2009).

His interviews are featured in The New York Times, BBC, Bloomberg, CNN and CNBC. He is the author of several books, the subject of four books and co-author of the Amazon Bestseller “Midnights with the Mystic”. His public talks frequently draw crowds of over 300,000 people.

Founded by Sadhguru, Isha Foundation is a non-religious, non-profit organization with over 200 centers worldwide and one million volunteers. Isha Foundation offers Inner Engineering Online - a practical approach for inner transformation in a fast paced world. The course designed by Sadhguru presents simple, yet powerful tools for an individual to experience life on a deeper level with more awareness, energy, and productivity. This program is an ideal opportunity for those with time and travel constraints to experience the same profound effects of the traditional Inner Engineering program, which has impacted millions of people over the past 25 years. To learn more, view the free introductory talk, or to register visit www.InnerEngineering.com.

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