



*My  
Dreams  
are not for sale*

SWATI SAVE

# My Dreams Are Not For Sale

Swati Save

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Read from left to right: Donna Tsfura,  
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**Read from left to right: Deepa Kadam,  
Swati Save, Nikita Mahajan, Deepa Rao**

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# Chapter 1

## IT'S REALLY MAGICAL: HOW I VIEW LIFE?

Living the life you love and loving the life you choose has been the premise of my life. I haven't necessarily followed any existing norms of everyday life. Rather, all my actions have been about being called forth toward a purpose. This book is about how simple life is and how we complicate it with our own interpretations. It highly recommends having a dream than not having one or worrying about implementing it.

If you want to live a life you love, here's the secret right up-front; listen to *yourself*, honor your spirit, and listen to what your soul has to say. If it says make money, then go for it. If your calling is to make a difference in the world, and to live a life of purpose, and you are clear that it won't necessarily give you the luxuries you would have otherwise, then go for it. If you are absolutely clear of what you want in your life and you are clear that you can handle what comes with it in order to manifest it, only then, set your eyes on it. Stop blaming others for your misfortunes or breakdowns. How about being responsible, right now?

When I took on a stand for world peace or India's transformation or Africa's water and energy challenge or taking on an absolutely challenging research that I wasn't sure how to get it done, I created a team and followed a leader to keep my commitments alive. In the process, I paid a very heavy price for believing in myself, but there are no regrets! That's the magic of life; you get what you put in. I pursued what was important for me. Whatever I did inspired *me*, which is the most important aspect of causing a transformation, for yourself and for others. This inspiration took me through thick and thin, rain and shine, success and breakdowns. This reminds me of the journey of being a caterpillar.

Butterfly, what is a butterfly<sup>1</sup>? It is that which represents the quintessential form of miracle or transformation. It's what you are meant to become. It flies with beautiful wings and joins the earth to heaven. It drinks only nectar from the flowers and carries the seeds of love from one flower to another. Without butterflies, the world would soon have few flowers. Can you imagine the miracle that we are, that is really meant for us to be the messengers of spreading the seeds of love and peace? Now you know why there is so much hatred, revenge, crisis, war, and pandemic diseases around us? It's because we have stopped loving and caring for each other like the butterfly. How can I believe there's a butterfly inside you or me when all you see is fuzzy worm? How does one become a butterfly? How does one have an extraordinary life particularly when all one experiences is barriers, hurdles, challenges, and breakdowns? What if there is no such thing called failure? It's just like beauty; it lies in the eyes of the beholder. This book is about those conversations you are dealing with, about transforming your so-called existing circumstances to those in your favor, for the good of all humanity!

“You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar.” “You mean die?” asked Yellow, remembering the three who fell from the caterpillar, out of the sky. “Yes and

No,” “What looks like you will die, but what’s really you will still live. Life is transformed, not taken away. Isn’t that different from those who die without ever becoming butterflies?”

“And if I decide to become a butterfly,” said Yellow hesitantly. “What do I do?” “Watch me. I’m making a cocoon. It looks like I’m hiding. I know, but a cocoon is no escape. It’s an in-between houses where the transformation takes place. It’s a big step since you can never return to caterpillar life<sup>2</sup>.”

Metamorphosis is the experience of fulfillment when you accomplish the task or milestones important to you. How many have experienced being morphed while being in love to get married to man or woman of your dreams? Haven’t you risked it all to be with them for life? Don’t your wedding vows say, “To have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us apart.”<sup>3</sup> You are guaranteed a life that you deserve and are worth after you are morphed, and you will be the *only* one to know when that happens. Your life will be turned 360 degrees when you go through this transformation; otherwise, it’s not metamorphosis. It’s some day-to-day chore.

To be honest, I figured this out the hard way after years of failures, setbacks, delays, and loss. I was not prepared for hardship the kind that was required and called forth to deliver my results and what I was up to. Maybe I dreamed too much, maybe I didn’t have what it takes to win. I thought and almost gave up what I stood for when somebody powerful saw that I was honest to what I really meant.

The entire time since I declared what I am up for, people questioned my integrity and capacity to deliver. That is all that was there between me and my dreams to be fulfilled, and I got it when I addressed my integrity. I got it, that there are no free rides for transformation and you got to do, what you got to do.

During transformation or in transition, it will seem to you or to anyone who might check on you that nothing is happening because metamorphosis always takes place silently. Pregnancy is the classic example of metamorphosis of a mother and her child. And there’s something else beautiful about this! Once you are transformed, you really fall in love with life, the kind of love that makes you live full out. Ask a first-time mother or a newlywed how much they love their life! It’s better than all the hugging and squirming the caterpillars do in its cocoon. “If you transform, you can fly and show others how beautiful life is. Maybe they will want to transform too and take few risks!” Yellow, the caterpillar was torn in anguish. How could she risk the only life she knew when it seemed so unlikely she could ever be a glorious winged creature? And Yellow decided to risk for a butterfly. “Imagine I didn’t even know I could do this. That’s some encouragement that I’m on the right track. If I have inside me the stuff to make cocoons, maybe the stuff of butterflies is there too.”<sup>4</sup>

You got to risk it all, to get the very best from life. I could very confidently say that my transitions in life have been a metamorphosis. It looks like you lose your identity, but in reality, you are about to transform yourself. Most transformations are painful; in case of butterfly, they have to fall off from the cocoon to become a butterfly and fly in the sky and enjoy the flowers. I am clear that my transitions have been painful and embarrassing to the least. But you got to do what you got to do in order to have the transformation you are seeking.

Playing up close and personal with life I got to see its harsh realities, from all aspects. That’s why I assert that I have completed my metamorphosis, and I am ready to experience the beauty and love in

the world through the eyes of a tiger, not as a caterpillar. I wonder how many are out there that are like those millipedes that wait and wait to know which leg to put forward to accomplish anything in life without anticipation. Why is it so hard to take the first step toward what's important to you. If it's not the right one, you will hit against the cold stones of reality and then you take another step and move forward.

I get moved by the poem "This Is the Time of My Life" which underscores the essence of how simple life is. Therefore, I thought of mentioning it here. It reflects how my journey has been so far! How I waited for years for life to turn around in my favor, partially to impress my family and community. How I lost everything in love and got everything back when I forgave people and moved on. During this process, my perceptions and my character were questioned; my projects and initiatives were trashed only because I did it my way. Against all odds, I rose from ashes to phoenix. I had always questioned if life should look a certain way? My ideals were shattered in the process of unlearning being a failure, only to discover the good news that life has always been ready for me to take on. I learned the hard way that I was *the* only one in the way from fulfilling my dreams and manifesting its intentions.

When I was twelve, I was advised by the "elders" that only after you have accomplished certain things in life, can you be acknowledged and be respected in the community. That was stuck with me forever, until I un-collapsed fame and living with dignity—the right to pursue what you deserve and are worth. Writing and getting this book published is a direct outcome of this enlightenment. I got profoundly related to "being powerful" and believe that it is direct outcome of how you participate in life on daily basis and translate your conversations into actions. Most famous people get what being powerful is, but not all powerful choose to be famous. After all, it takes a significant amount of intentional efforts to sustain being powerful. That's why some people are rich and some are poor in spite of being powerful. It took twenty-eight years of my life to unravel this profound mystery and had the courage to dismantle all of my existing conversations and norms about life.

Being more than a face in the crowd has never been my goal. Being driven doesn't necessarily make you successful and help to achieve your goal; I figured that out after few breakdowns. Pursuing what's important to me, and passionately doing it, has definitely altered my conversations of being a contribution in the world. Being detached from any outcomes has helped me a lot whether they are breakthroughs or breakdowns! I have never made any result mean anything or made anyone wrong for the outcomes. I have paid a huge price for honoring my word; few crucial compromises for which I have paid dearly but again no regrets. By the way, you will not always come across people who understand what it means to honoring their own word and are present to its impact. Why do you think there is so much disorder in the world? I used to feel that being out there and making a difference in the world was not for me. Standing for any cause was not for ordinary and middle-class families. I used to say to myself all this was meant for "others," such as family heirs, famous actors, tycoons, industrialist, and political leaders. It took significant amount of courage on my behalf to demystify this myth for myself, and the result is this beautiful book. If you give up making yourself small, you probably will stand up for yourself and achieve all your dreams. If you are going to wait for someone to come and turn things around in your life, here is the news; no one is coming to turn things around in your life.

Being ordinary is OK; you don't have to be a superman or a superwoman. But you can be committed to producing extraordinary results in every aspect of your life, on daily basis inspiring

each and every person you interact with or do business with, such that they are left with the experience of being heard and taken care of. For me, producing extraordinary results is far more powerful than owning a Rolls Royce.

Believing and acknowledging yourself is the direct outcome of owning your power that will propel you to take that first step toward your dreams. It would also mean being prepared for anything that would come your way to achieve it, sustain it, and cherish it. I am in awe of these life processes—the craving to have it, followed by happiness of owning it, and the sadness of losing it from your life; life is an enigma.

Living life fully is nothing but optimizing every opportunity that comes your way almost every second of your life. But it's up to you to utilize them in the right way. Jim Rohn once<sup>5</sup> said you have to love what you do, but that's not necessarily true. What is true is that you have to love the opportunity, to build your life, your future, your health, your success, and your fortune. Knocking on someone's door or making that extra call may not be something you love to do, but you love the opportunity of what might be behind that door or call. For example, a guy says, "I'm digging ditches. Should I love digging ditches?" The answer is "No, you don't have to love digging ditches, but if it is your first entry onto the ladder of success, you say, 'I'm glad somebody gave me the opportunity to dig ditches and I'm going to do it so well, I won't be here long.'"

At any given moment, you can be inspired by having found something, even though you are making mistakes in the beginning and even though it is a little distasteful taking on a new discipline that you haven't learned before. You don't have to love it; you just have to learn to appreciate where you live, appreciate opportunity, and appreciate the person who brought you the good news and who found you. Appreciate the person who believed in you before you believed in yourself. Appreciate the person who said, "Hey, if I can do it, you can do it."

"If you will embrace the disciplines associated with the new opportunities, you will soon find that your newfound self-confidence starts to grow, and you go from being a skeptic to an optimist for your future. And soon, you will find it to be the most thrilling opportunity in the world. What if every person you meet out there believes in you and is an opportunity in itself, what then? Imagine receiving unlimited mileage in trusting your capabilities from each interaction you have, particularly in this day and age<sup>6</sup>." Can you generate yourself for that kind of listening for yourself and others? *Wow*.

What if your success depends on the hinges of those doors that are lifetime opportunities for you? If some of these open doors are miracles and closed doors are breakdowns, won't you befriend all those transforming your life! One of them could perhaps become your friend for life, shouldering you in thick or thin or a mentor shaping your career. These opportunities are truly life-altering experiences. Life is truly magical; it really provides everything that you need. And sometimes in the beginning when we are just getting started, we don't always see how big an opportunity is, we just have to wait. So before you are tempted to give up or get discouraged, remember all successes are based on perseverance, resilience, faith, commitment, discipline, attitude, and a few stepping stones along the way. You might not like the stepping stone you are on right now, but it's sure to be one of the many stones that lead to great opportunities in the future.

Just like a coin has two sides, so does an opportunity. An opportunity can bring you victory, and sometimes, it brings you completions. Sometimes, an opportunity takes you sky high, and sometimes, it takes you down under. If you step on stones that don't go anywhere or don't produce any results, what do you do with them? What do you do with these stones which are nothing else but representing

your actions—well, I would say, pile them together; climb upon them, and cross the barrier successfully onto the other side of wall toward a life that is worthy and waiting for you.

If someone gives you a “turkey,” have a thanksgiving dinner and invite your friends over party and have some fun. If someone gives you lemon, make lemonade and enjoy the drink. If someone causes breakdowns in your life, write a book, become a *New York Times* bestseller, and live life happily ever after. Altering circumstances in your life is solely in your hand. Don’t ever become a victim of life circumstances. You know what I am saying? As the Newton’s third law states every action has a reaction, what goes around comes around. Every action and every step has value in itself; you just need to know how to add value to them. Yes, you need to trust your actions and judgments. That’s where a team of committed people around you will make a difference for a successful transition. For example, if a country has milk and sugar in plenty, they should consider making chocolates. That’s how you could add value to every opportunity that crosses your path; outcome could be a victory or a failure. But what if there is no such thing called failure; after all, language creates the world around us according to our convenience.

Remember how the yellow caterpillar expresses her fear of taking risk by saying “how would she risk the only life she knows when it seems so unlikely she could ever be a glorious winged creature?” When you take on anything new such as starting a new career, immigrating to a new country, getting married, being a mother, or anything that is a new territory, you experience the fear of uncertainty. It’s but natural. During transitions, it certainly seems unlikely that you would accomplish the goal that you have set yourself for. Well, that’s where you have to take risks while stepping into uncomfortable areas, such as pursuing a degree, getting a job, finding your dream man, getting a fast-track career, pursuing a research, and a well-balanced family life; all successful people have taken risks with their lives to accomplish what they have set their goals, even in the most odd situations.

At the beginning, the caterpillar is also anxious while manifesting its transformation; in spite of being fearful of heights, it takes the first step toward flying in the sky and experiences loving life like never before. Is it possible that by giving up resistance you experience falling in love with the very thing you resisted? Yes, it’s possible. Somewhere in the world, someone surrenders to resistance and completes his/her transformation on a daily basis. In return, they get access to a new realm of what is possible in their life. I believe it completely. When you complete one experience over other and move on in life, life offers you miracles. You know that feeling when you graduate from school, anxious about your new employer, able to get straight with someone who is double-crossing you, and even as small as getting a parking spot or able to get a good spot to sit in a bus or the train. These “ahh” experiences that you get when you accomplish something on a daily routine or in mega projects, that really turns you on, is the caterpillar experience I am talking about the inbuilt ability you own to move mountains by a simple action like trusting yourself.

The life-altering breakthroughs, such as getting married, being a mother, delivery of a child, receiving prestigious honors for breakthrough research, negotiating a high-salaried job that reflects your true worth, signing a memorandum of understanding for a multibillion dollar deal, and managing a powerful team of people also leaves you with an experience of being transformed and fulfilled. In all of these circumstances, you can never “un-turn” the experience you have received: after saying yes to your lover, being a mother, giving birth, and producing extraordinary results. These transformations always stays with you, just like being a butterfly. They give you access into a new paradigm for experiencing the miraculous in your life; the journey continues, a new realm is unraveled!

All experiences give you a new perspective of life—a new taste of it, every time you learn something new. There is nothing like you are young, so you get to have less or small cut of experiences; I don't think so. I believe age has nothing to do with experiences you receive; the more you play full out in life, the more you get to be transformed. One could say that in our society we have decided that age should play a role in getting a job or seeking a partner in life. But that's past—in this day and age, this conversation is nonexistential. Your past should never decide what you should get in the present nor should anyone else impose on you what you should do or who you should be. This is one of the messages this book relays. We are used to deciding things from our past experience, but I believe that is not where transformations are based; they are based in the realm of causing things in present which has nothing to do with your past experience or age or wealth. Remember, during transformation, if anyone peeks in your life, it looks like nothing is happening, but transformations are silent warriors. They take shape in your present while empowering your future.

Here are some examples of extraordinary people, who have managed to bust “a” myth and dismantle existing conversations around education, age, achievements, success, and being a contribution in the world. Bill Gates who made his first million dollars when he was merely thirty-one years old, of course, went through his share of roller coaster rides while making a choice of pursuing what's important to him. He struggled around his choice of pursuing prelaw in Harvard or pursuing his dream. It was the cover on *Popular Electronics*, a picture<sup>7</sup> of the Altair 8080 and the headline “World's First Microcomputer Kit to Rival Commercial Model” that made history in Bill Gates's life and propelled him to create *Microsoft*. Microsoft currently has revenues of US\$73.08 billion for the fiscal year ending June 2012 and employs more than 89,403 people in 112 countries around the world. Would Bill Gates be making \$73.08 billion/year by being a Harvard graduate lawyer if he hadn't chosen to pursue his dream and developed the company in 1975 with his childhood friend Paul Allen?

Céline Dion busted the myth around the age of a life partner and dismantled the conversations of being a success in the face of no agreement over her circumstances. Céline Dion, born to a large, impoverished family in Charlemagne, Quebec, became a young star in francophone Canada after her manager and future husband, René Angélil, mortgaged his home to finance her first record. René Angélil and Céline Dion have twenty-six years of age difference that brought them together by music. The entire world has seen Céline Dion literally transform herself from a gifted preadolescent into an international superstar. Who would have imagined that Quebec's best-kept secret could have conquered the world the way she has if she hadn't trusted herself with René Angélil<sup>8</sup>?

J. K. Rowling<sup>9</sup>, the renowned author of Harry Potter series caused a breakthrough in her own life by altering her breakdowns over a period of six years, which included the birth of her first child, divorce from her first husband, and a move to Portugal eventually settling in Edinburgh. Rowling continued writing *Philosopher's Stone* in local *cafés*. Unable to secure a place in a nursery, her daughter would be her constant companion as she worked on the book. This same woman, who didn't have money for her daughter to be in a nursery and a proper place to write her novel, has sold over 450 million copies worldwide. In March 2012, *Forbes* magazine estimated her fortune at £576 million (just over US\$1 billion) making her the first person to become a US billionaire by writing books. Although Rowling had to alter her conversations, stand for her own convictions, and go for what she was worth, and *she got* it and so can *you*.

So why do we hesitate around dismantling existing conversations that have access to what is

crucial to us in making those choices in our life? Why is it so important to look good in the community? Why has community put such fake stances to live a life? What's the cost we are paying for having it around us?

Have you noticed that *we* subconsciously choose to live an ordinary life and create noise in those who chose not to live in those norms? We create conversations with others to us, others to others, and others to you. We create conversations that *can cause our transformation or have us live an ordinary life*. Of course to live an extraordinary life, you have to be ready to make extraordinary efforts and give up conversations that are hindering your growth. These choices will look like reality to you—for example, choosing to have a job that you are miserable in or having a criticizing family or sarcastic colleague(s) or not having an understanding partner who supports you to balance career and family. We get stuck in trivial things that life throws in our way such as promotions, miserable relationships, traffic jams, and indigestions etc.

Transitions come your way because you have unconsciously taken actions and chosen to have a change in your life. These decisions take shape exactly the way you have asked the universe to develop your future. So if you asked for a job or a man, he will show up out of blue, just the way you want it and when you are ready. These transitions in my life have left mark on me, sometimes deep cuts; although, they have not stopped me from taking actions that would forward my life, I have always focused on what's going on for me, my priorities and not being bogged down by people's prejudice and opinions.

Let me share with you my experience of my transition, the divorce. In a traditional Hindu family, the conversation of "divorce" is unheard of. I have extremely thoughtfully taken the decision of divorce that has left a deep gash on me. But yet it has not stopped me from experiencing love and compassion. In fact, I should say that it has been the *turning point* in my life that I have been able to access the most of my breakthroughs. I would assert that in these realms of breakdowns I have gotten access to my strengths and weakness. I took every bit of circumstance and experience in a stride; of course, this was a very willful and intense experience. It was during this phase in my life that I understood the importance of love!

For an Indian woman to understand love is a completely different process. We really don't experience love the way westerners do; for us, it's more about being committed. We can be committed but not necessarily have love in life. How many of us have this situation in our life—the lack of love in one area or another, and we still continue to live miserably with it, ignoring the sadness that surrounds us. Why? Because it might create conflict or take an extra effort to enroll your community.

The journey toward transforming oneself is always an enlightening process; there is no substitute for it, no instant gratification; you have to give up making yourself wrong. I should confess it's really magical to be alive and be able to receive graciously whatever life has to offer to you. Life is an opportunity that consists of breakthroughs and breakdowns and you don't get to choose them. Sometimes you got to go backwards in order for you to move forward.

In my life, I have always been adding value to it, from experiences and opportunities, from breakdowns and breakthroughs. I have taken setbacks with a stride; forgiven professional jealousies and let go of people from my friend, as well as professional circle, who were draining my intentions. I have never seen any opportunity as waste. I have gone four years back, and it's helped me propel years forward. Every request you accommodate, something else displaces. It's sort of like,

compromising upon your point of views, and *you* are 100 percent responsible for it.

All of the above has made me wonder how I happen to be this way; the daredevil young dreamer, who doesn't have any reservations of helping a person, or extending oneself for making someone else's dreams into reality without getting any returns or having the tenacity and perseverance for standing for my own dreams.

You will agree that life can't be lived fully, without experiencing breakdowns. A breakdown for me is an opportunity—the route to success; an unseen pathway. I have altered many of my circumstances in life, just by standing for my cause or beliefs in the face of no possibility. At the beginning, people didn't align with my actions. Later, after they saw the results, they could understand *me*. First, they fight you and then they accept you and then you win. In disruptive transitions, such as divorce or moving to a different country, you have to be willing to be misunderstood for a long time before they get you. One thing I accepted that breakdowns don't see what “age” you are living in when they happen; you have to deal with whatever you have to deal with. It provides you with an opportunity to learn about yourself and your community. I can sum up my experience in following words:

“I believe I'm here for the results and the opportunity of living in pure and honest intentions.

I believe I'm the possibility of being a river of dreams and miracles through commitment.

I believe I am here to have my life be on the hot seat, to be willing to go through breakdowns, or whatever else happens to get to the breakthroughs that give me my life.

I believe I'm here to invent new ways of being, based on nothing—to show up in my life and in the world.

I believe I am here because in my intuitive heart I know that my life on earth revolves around bringing the new model of conversations into the world, especially with researchers and for world peace.

I believe I'm here to give my love to others because I can and because it is the same love that they have for me.

I believe I'm here to rediscover the hidden—the motives, the rewards, the bullshit, the castles in the sand, the moon and the planets, wishes, dreams and fantasies, and the unknown world of other people.

I believe I'm here to do the things that were important to me that I forgot about or avoided.”<sup>10</sup>

It is well said by Tom Ruthledge “who we are, the kind of people we will be individually and collectively is ultimately determined by one thing—how we relate to fear.” I believe the way you relate to your breakdowns in life gives you the access to your own transformation and transformation of others and to your breakthroughs. My mantra for you to have access to your breakthroughs is “*I can do it because I am worth it.*”

# Chapter 2

## WHY BREAKDOWN IS AN OPPORTUNITY IN LIFE DURING TRANSITIONS

I believe breakdowns are those opportunities that are knocking at your door while you have fallen on your knees and in despair. Breakthroughs are those opportunities that are caused by your perseverance of opening those closed doors when you have exhausted all possibilities. After all, transitions are those magical moments that give you the first glimpse of what's in store for you in the future.

A “breakdown” in an area of our life presents with it an opportunity to guide us through “transition”: The upset of a breakdown can provide an extremely valuable insight when we are “authentic” with ourselves. When one is moving through a life-changing transition such as a relationship break up, the ability to be authentic with oneself (about being the source of the breakdown and being accountable) provides a direct access to the source of greater self-awareness and understanding. This consciousness will help you to sail through the transition with the benefit of new direction and purpose<sup>11</sup>.

“Life will give you whatever experience is most helpful for the evolution of your consciousness.<sup>12</sup>” This is so true. You will not experience anything in your life that is good or bad, that you are not able to comprehend. My experiences of life have been nothing but some wrong decisions encompassing some blunders, few absurdities, lots of confidence, and high spirits. All of my experiences have been extraordinary; my *breakthroughs* have been *extraordinary* and my *breakdowns* have been equally *extraordinary*. There are no regrets. It would be rather stupid to think that breakdowns don't provide any value. In fact, one thing that I have noticed about my life is that I have always gone backwards in order to move forward. What I mean is that I have gone through series of processes of unlearning success before I reached a breakthrough, and I have always cherished these “aha” experiences.

Transitions are miraculous events. You indeed have to be blessed to receive them in any form. They have enriched my decision taking ability ten folds, as well as made me tolerant. I have always played full out and scraped my knees, got burnt out, or exhausted, but at the end of it, they are exhilarating experiences that you could do anything to receive, and the results have been phenomenally mind-blowing.

According to Newton's third law, every action has a reaction. In spite of being honest, we do come across people who cause intentional breakdowns. Well, we know though what goes around comes around, so take it easy and enjoy life! Let the universe deal with the nasty ones. But then, how does one deal with double standard people that you come across in everyday life that lead to breakdowns in our daily lives? There is no formal training or book to deal with these kinds of experiences and malice. We have to ask for Lord's grace. We go to school to get trained to earn a degree so that we “make” money. We go to grooming school to learn the etiquette's of proper behavior at the table,

dressing appropriately, and being graceful with people.

But we don't get "any" formal training or schooling for choosing a right life partner, the importance of love in life, making the right choices, budgeting, saving money, being a good parent/sibling, being a good lover, raising a child, being a good mother, being a good employee/employer, prioritizing life, starting your own business, taking risks, being kind, and being humble. How do you know what is right and wrong in life? Would you understand making the right choices after attending the University of Hard Knocks? And how many years would you attend it that would make you a good lover, good parent, or a good employer? Will it help in assessing the person in front of you that may rob, cheat, and treat you inappropriately?

My judgments in trusting people have misfired that have gotten me backlashed, burnt, and exhausted, leading to massive breakdowns in my life. My ideal with respect to trust was shattered! I sought help in wrong places, sharing my breakdowns with wrong people. This aggravated my situation further, as those same people started manipulating the circumstances for their good and became the reason of my harassment, humiliation, and abuse.

This certainly has made me think whether pursuing your dreams and ambitions be at the cost of our and other's well-being? No it can't, that's why you see so many breakdowns in the world. Can you ever be happy by making someone else miserable, sad, and humiliated? I don't think so. That's why you see so much chaos in the world because there are some professions in the world that thrive on other people's breakdowns. These people fall under the category being miserable. They are trying to pursue their "dreams," might really be jealous and unhappy themselves of those who are pursuing what's important to them.

*"Who you are is a function of the people you hang around. You hang around with people who compromise their life. You will compromise your life. Not that these people are walking around saying "hey, I have compromised my life," but you know they could have done so much more with their life. You hang around with people who have and will have the life they want . . . guess what kind of life you will have.<sup>13</sup>" So if you are experiencing being miserable and helpless around your life regarding a situation that is because you have compromised in your life upon someone else's advice. Try listening to your soul, honor your transitions; they are sacred.*

Yes, there is competition in the world. But proving your worth to the world to be called as a winner is not defined as "dreams"; they are called survival gimmicks. There is a clear distinction between genius and survivor. Genius creates pathways to fulfill his or her dreams encompassing all its pitfalls. Survivors cling to others to fulfill their tasks. They are terrible in understanding that they have to take the first step toward what's important to them in spite of the risks it might entail. Breakthroughs doesn't occur by predicting it and are not around the corners of circumstances of a manifesto or a mandate or a scheduled program. Breakthroughs are miracles that show up out of blue when 100 percent commitment matches with magical unconditional passion.

As you start taking on leadership roles, there will be support and praises along with comparison and criticism. This is very natural because ordinary human beings love comparison coming out of unhealthy competition. Commitment, passion, miracles, destiny, fate are the core of life's sweetness that can't be manipulated by greed, comparison, or criticism. What is going to happen is going to happen—you can't change someone's destiny. It might turn around late, but it will happen.

Some powerful people do try to manipulate circumstances that didn't exactly happen to their expectations. How will you deal with such a situation?

As human beings we are very good around generating chaos and conversations for what we like and of things we don't like. Hatred, antagonism, and misunderstandings are an outcome of these conversations and thrive around gossips we have with ourselves and with others. Just as conversations create rifts, they can also create peace. That's how I have addressed my breakdowns, being responsible and present to the conversations around me and addressing them powerfully without being upset, "tuning" down the noise that was generated by jealous and sarcastic critics. I made every effort to alter every sarcasm and doubt regarding me, keeping intact my character, integrity, and what I am up to in life, without making anyone wrong.

Therefore, I underscore that breakdowns are an opportunity to experience miracles in your life; only that, it's a pathway that doesn't look the way you intend it to look like to achieve your goals. I have also noticed that your "committed listeners" will always stand by you when you are going through breakdowns, and it is the time in your life when you can weed out "fakers" around you. I came across all sorts of circumstances, saw who manipulated my situation, and abused my vulnerability. I was shocked to see the extent with which people have misbehaved when they get opportunity. The nonsense that went through in my life was predominantly because I allowed myself to see people as being helpless and am 100 percent responsible for that. Most of them couldn't even take the fact that I was creating something big; this idea of creating something big in life during breakdowns is not really accepted in community, "a concept of creating from nothing" of having and living, a life you love by design.

That's what cocoons do, remember? They are preparing themselves for being a butterfly while they are in the cocoon. The outside world thinks that nothing is happening, breakdowns are sort of like that, opportunities that knock on your door when you are on your knees, fallen and desolate.

Most of us get used to tolerating unworkability in our life, and our circumstances "take" higher priority in our life, particularly during transitions. Our choices are based on circumstances and not from what we are worth. The world around us is always changing and so does our priorities. The community around us will start talking about what we should do and dissuade us from pursuing what "we" think is important. This is when you address unworkability in your life, by "replacing" the team of people around you if they are not supporting you to produce results to alter your breakdowns and have a new team around you that will "*nurture*" your leadership. You being nurtured during this phase is so important and sacred. It is during this phase you stop tolerating being "nice" with people around you that have you sell out on your dreams.

Tolerance is a very admirable quality, but how far can you comprise your well-being? And again, pretending that it's all OK to sacrifice what's important to us is a sign of you not being true to yourself. Transitions are those milestones in life that operate in the realm of being unreasonable with yourself and others, outside the world of enrolment. If we get de-enrolled in their possibility for future, then it wouldn't be possible to see how powerful it is to have a life we love and enroll others in its manifestation that could be larger than life. I believe transitions are those serendipitous happenstances in our life that softly land you in a place that is your very own space that call you forth to live an extraordinary life. After all, transitions are those moments that give you the first glimpse of what's in store for you, in future.

Most of us associate success and accomplishment as an outcome of years of experiences; what if your experiences and accomplishments have nothing to do with your past and everything with your present where transition resides? So essentially we are in perpetual transitions. The only thing that is

constant in life is change. How many of us are stuck in past and causing breakdowns around our life and not present that it's an outcome of our unworkability in life of accepting of the changes in our life at the same pace as they occur. This costs us being cause in the matter for one's life those magic and miracles that are unconditionally accompanied with life's transitions.

High risks come with high payoffs. I have played full out and scraped my knees. I have time and again hit against the cold wall of realities, one of them being I can't go beyond a false ceiling and I have to ask for help. Transitions taught me to swallow my ego and *ask for help*; they forced me to stop looking good and do what is right. I have always risked to play bigger games and stretched my limits of my contribution. I have always been given the playground that I wanted to play in and scraped my knees and got back into action. Most people deal with success as a "must do" thing, not like a continuous flow that sometimes go through peaks and sometimes through valleys.

Dalai Lama has said that great love and great achievements involve great risk. Although he reminds us that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck. So the bottom line is take great risks to achieve great things, and if you don't get them, think it as a wonderful stroke of luck! So don't regret for not having something's being a part of your life. Have you ever experienced being breathless because suddenly your experience outruns your needs and makes you feels vulnerable to the risk you have taken? Our ego doesn't allow you to surrender in life because we don't like to depend on others.

There were times during my transition that people questioned about my intentions and called me with names such as pest, nuisance, crazy, irresponsible, rebel, and a loose cannon. It was hurtful to hear this from people, particularly those whom I thought I was close to. My grandma says that when you start compromising your priorities or your morals for people around you, it's probably time to change the circle of people around you! It was hurting to see that people were abusing my circumstances for political reasons. I learned vultures thrive on others' remains. During your transition, you need people that you can trust your life with. It took me awhile to identify trustworthy people. I assert that most people don't understand what you are going through during transition phase, which results into them interjecting their point of view on you, causing clash of opinions, unsettling of emotions, and insecurities leading to a lot of noise in your life. This lead to chaos in my professional and personal life, leaving a deep wound that will take a while to heal.

Noise is that surprise element that you have to deal immediately during transitions. The longer you wait, the deeper it goes. Gossip generated by others is last thing you want during this time. Therefore, being responsible for your actions and the unnecessary chaos generated from it is *the* most important thing you have to address during breakdowns in life. I am not talking of street cars or aircraft flight noise; I am talking of people who intentionally, willfully, or sometimes unconsciously create noise in your life; it might probably be an outcome of their anxiety to help you, or be part of your journey so that you know you are not alone.

*I experienced compassion along with a lot of confusion.* It was again an outcome of people not being able to understand what was going on with me; honestly speaking, I myself didn't know what was going on with me. The feelings of distrust and disappointment were hanging "at large" over me. My relationship with money altered for good; yes, I am a stand for having peace and prosperity in the world, *and* I wanted to take care of my world too! At the beginning, I wanted to stand for the world "first" at the cost of my well-being. I was naive and didn't know how to defend myself. I didn't know what the best way to accomplish myself and how to choose priorities. All I knew is who I was for the

world, what I wanted to be, and what was calling me forth. The future was calling me forth; the leadership in the world was calling me forth and I couldn't hide it any longer. I had revoked my right in playing small and being ordinary; this landed for ordinary people as being a rebel. I paid a *huge* price in taking on a leadership role. I questioned my quest for peace and prosperity in the world and why I wanted to be extraordinary, when it was so easy to be ordinary, play small, have a 9-5 job, just let others do what they want because the world is not going to change anyways. But then, cold reality struck hard on my face!

After attending the University of Hard Knocks for four years, I understood the “harsh” realities of life. I could have gotten it sooner or later, although I *got related to life* completely just by being present to the rich experience that life offered to me as breakdowns. These realities, of course, landed pretty rough on me. I believe some people receive experiences in different ages in life. I received them in early age, and I have come to an understanding with my experiences—big or small, good or bad, I have taken them in pinch of salt and moved on.

I see this through Mark Twain's eyes, “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” I think twenty years from now, I won't be disappointed that I didn't fall in love or didn't pursue what's important to me or made the choices that were critical for me. *Can you see it?* The person or maybe yourself who hesitated, waiting for the perfect time, only to see their dreams, hopes and goals fall short. Not because the dream was awful, but because they hesitated and tolerated unworkability in their life and succumbed to their circumstances and sold out on their dreams.

What are you waiting for? The right day, the perfect weather, Mars to be in line with Venus? Darn it, take that important step to move closer to your future; let me give you the good news, no one is coming to give you the future you deserve or going to do your work for you. I believe success is moving things forward by completing things from past. There is no perfection in this process, and there is no cookie-cutter formula for success. Your circumstances will be different than someone else's, so your actions will be unique and experiences equally mind-blowing. Don't become the bleached bones of millions who so close to victory decided to wait and eventually died. I believe if you will be taking those steps toward fulfilling yours dreams, victory is yours.

Although who I had to be and what conversations I had to give up in order to make these miracles available to me is an experience in itself. There were times I was on breakdown, during my transition. I was disillusioned with my actions and couldn't trust anyone around me. I was hiding from people, and yet I was talking about transformation; it was a structure of existence around me, to remind me of addressing my needs. I believe it's my culture that had me tolerate the nonsense from people and the unworkability in my life. Looking back, I think I have been gracious with people, and it was OK who they were choosing to be with me.

My strength of having positive conversations kept me away from my pitfalls, my disempowering conversations about my mistakes, and myself. It kept me being a leader in the world and in my community and kept me present to my passion for making a difference in the world. It made me accept my ideals that were shattered. I knew I had strived hard to come this far and was losing ground because of some circumstances I didn't know how to handle. Finally, it was God's grace that brought me to the shore from turbulent waters and so will you.

Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some blunders and absurdities have crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; you shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

# Chapter 3

## HOW MUCH LOVE COULD YOU STAND?

Let someone love you just as you are. As flawed as you might be, as unattractive as you might feel, as unaccomplished as you might think you are; let someone love you just as you are. And let that someone be you.

—Sandra Kring

We could stand a lot of love . . . anytime, and any place. We are always hungry for love. But love only comes to those who are fortunate and thankful for those around them. Are you one of those blessed one that cherishes love and values it beyond anything? If you do, how much love do you have in your life? Who do you love the most, your mother or father, sister or brother, grandma or grandpa, aunts or uncles, girl friend or boy friend, husband or wife?

Love is simple, but we complicate it, just like everything else we do in life; we could love everyone or we could just be there for the special one! But then, we worry about looking good, about what the community would say if we love someone, or if we don't love someone, really—that's what our life revolve around.

Do you think affection is same as love? If being committed or affection is being in love, then where does physical romance stand? How much love can we really stand?

Can we love someone fully without an expectation or conditions? How do we define unconditional love, and is it meant only for those who give you what you want, or it can be available to those who don't give you the full attention?

Let's see at the parable of the weeds that provides you with a simple yet powerful insight that undeniably gives you the strength to embrace forgiveness to love someone powerfully. It gives you the "will" to do the right thing and assists you to distinguish between a righteous and a compassionate person who supports and loves you against all odds.

It begins this way, Jesus told them: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

"The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' " "An enemy did this," he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'"

"No," he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

The parable of the weeds Explained Jesus's disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and

the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He, who has ears, let him hear.

This parable reflects that in one’s life . . . sometimes, you have to surrender and trust; things will work out.

I got clearer that surrendering to life is the best solution to all problems. If someone has planted weeds in my life, *he* would send a harvester angel to pull them out too. I am clear that universe will deliver to take care of the harvest that is so important for its very own survival; love in this case is the food for human soul to keep it running to generate miracles. The last frontier that humans seek for itself is not space or stars, its *love*. Love sustains our very existence; it generates our greatness to contribute in the society.

Traditional families see love differently; if you have been raised by someone who is traditional, your experience of love will be different than someone who is being raised by a nontraditional parent or guardian. In traditional families, love is mostly about being a stand, it is not verbally expressed; it is expressed through actions. While those who are raised in western culture, it’s about being vivid, about saying what’s there for you. Falling in love might be a bit easy for a nontraditional lover than the traditional one’s who wait silently and patiently to express themselves.

So is love the basis of a strong marriage or a relationship? Yes, it is. Love is the profound respect you owe to your partner as a bare minimum promise to live in a lifelong peaceful relationship as a representation of the oaths you took during your wedding ceremony! You know it’s easy to write this, but as someone who started to see love differently *only* after I got divorced, I know for sure that you can’t take love for granted. I took love for granted; I thought it was a given from a marriage and that I didn’t have to make efforts to bring it to fruition and sustain it. I failed miserably in my marriage because I didn’t see this coming and strive to be worthy of giving respect and receiving it in return. My divorce forced me to look at my traditional choices and beliefs!

My loneliness that came in as a free package with my divorce made me inquire into my values, choices, beliefs, and traditions around me. In spite of having lot of friends around me, I was sad. Love was missing. I related love with fear stifled self-expression, doubting myself around my decisions and choices. How many of you will believe that I had never dated until I got married? So the divorce was a bold step; I could have perhaps compromised on love. This showed big time in my life with the choices I made around men and their limited interactions with me. I started unconsciously being around men who were unavailable. It didn’t occur to me until I was left on the lurch to be taken care of. Coming from a traditional family, I never knew it was important to be in love with the man you marry! How will I? In my tradition, this was a restricted area to dwell into and self-express. For how many of you this is a no-discussion area? How many of you are miserable in finding the right guy or being with the right one? We don’t see love that is around us, until we lose it.

This is true around most Indian women or should I say it applies to all married bedrooms and other cultures, particularly developing economies where freedom or self-expression is costly. It could also be in the form of compromises you make and not say a word about it as a form of unconditional love. Does this nurture your relationship in which just one person in the marriage keeps giving?

In developing countries, most children live with their parents sometimes, even after marriage, expressing oneself to men or women is never given a priority or occurs as important; it is something one never thinks ever existed. Therefore, sometimes, innocent relatedness gives wrong signals to men, leading to intense emotions and unnecessary misunderstandings. How many of you have gone through this phase in your life, of being misunderstood?

Our naïve, honest, straightforward interactions can be taken out of context, primarily by those who don't understand genuine relatedness. That is why you see actors and actresses are linked to many. Nevertheless, men like honest, naïve interactions; they can be vulnerable around women who are straightforward. But this also leads to a lot of heartache, which can be avoided.

It took me thirty years of my life to really discover how love is terribly important in life; and that it is the most valuable, priceless, and precious thing in life.

I discovered you could rebuild your career, regain your health, but you can't reinvent love; you can "refind" yourself with it. Love leaves scars on you. Of course, you will find new love to heal the scars. You can also recover from the trauma you went through with love in life. But love is fragile and delicate thing that it takes full attention to bloom it, to nurture it, harness it, and to make it something so special that it will pull you like a magnet toward the person you love every moment of the time.

It was certainly difficult to see this truth in my eyes. I was willing to compromise having love in my life and what I was present to was the cost I was paying for not having love in my life. It brought me closer to what I valued the most in my life. Love, leadership, and contribution in the world was calling me forth, constraints of past were disappearing. Future was calling me forth to be in action. That is when I started to inquire into the intention of divorce; marriage was not fulfilling me as a woman and digressed me to be a loner and workaholic. I wondered now how I could be in a marriage where your spouse doesn't appreciate and love one for what they are up to in life and take an effort to know who they are. How many of you don't feel appreciated and understood by their partners and makes their everyday life into autopilot mode.

How many of us seek for trust within our decisions at night during lonely hours? I reestablished my firmness with spirituality, with *God* at wee hours. My outlook about *God* has outgrown beyond religion and is mostly about discipline, of being with someone powerful and steadfast that you can turn to no matter what in the times of need. For good, this belief reinforced during my transition when I badly needed to trust someone every time I looked back for help and knew he was there.

The more you are motivated by love, the more fearless and free your action will be

This is very true, although I came across really disgusting insecure men, which has caused me to question this being free around men. This has largely come out from my experience of betrayal, deception, and make wrong and hatred during the phase of my transition. I have experienced nonsensical manipulation and humiliation by men who were insecure in their own rights, and in spite of it, I have maintained my stand for peace and prosperity.

How many of you forget to take care of themselves during a transition in life? It might be getting married or moving from one city or country to another or changing of jobs or having a child. Most of us do. We forget to make ourselves a priority to be taken care of. *“If you’re not being treated with the love and respect that you deserve, then you need to check your price-tag. Perhaps you have marked yourself as being on sale. It’s you who tell people what you’re worth by what you accept.*

*Get off that clearance rack and get behind the glass where they keep all the valuables. Bottom line: Value yourself more.—Mercy James.*

Even when you are a loving wife, caring mother, passionate worker, or simply the best friend, you have to put yourself on the top of the pedestal because no one is coming to take care of yourself when you go through the roller coaster. Those who don’t like it, take them out of your friends list—no kidding.

I had unconsciously forgotten that all my previous structures had been collapsed during my transition, the divorce; I forgot that I no longer had the financial fancies and securities that I had before, which later lead me to a financial black hole that took me few years to get out of. This also forced me to take decisions that most of us won’t take, such as volunteering for projects without a pay just to keep myself busy or hanging around a man who was not available for me or taking a student loan which was not necessary since I already had two degrees, thinking it would help me to restart my life anew! Well, in all these decisions, I never made myself the priority, which led to a lot of trauma and unnecessary headache.

I am grateful for all my life lessons which have guided my path to who I am today. No regrets. I am thankful to all my amazing angels around me who have guided me to look powerfully toward my exciting future! That really is how I have been able to cross all my hurdles and barriers till date.

When we are young, we take love and happiness for granted. I had never known what it means to be happy, and I still don’t! How do you know that it was important to be happy in a marriage? You have to jump in the water to know whether you are a good swimmer, right? After marriage, how many of you had the experience of being confused of your priority or rather got confronted by your choices? I was lost in taking on the responsibility. Again this was a transition I didn’t know how to be and I was reacting to my inability. You know what happens when you react rather than be responsible for one’s actions—upsets. I had *lots* of upsets during this transition and an opportunity to build my muscle as to how to alter them. I think I did a good job in altering my upsets into a realm of something good for everyone.

For those who are married or in process of being married or choosing the right one, here is something for you. Have you ever dwelled into what you have to constitute yourself to be in order to step into being a loving wife or husband, mother or father! Yes, you have to constitute yourself to be a loving, forgiving, and an unconditional stand for yourself and for others in your life. That can be challenging for someone who was single for awhile and suddenly stepping into marriage or motherhood or getting a new promotion which could entail taking new responsibilities at your workplace.

During my transition, I had an opportunity to understand and dwell into what it is to be married or marriage? I conceptually knew that marriage is often convenience between families, sometimes pleasant understandings, and occasionally a love affair. For me, my marriage was convenience between two families; it was an arranged marriage where there was an intentionality between both families, his and mine, to have us married. Sometimes, this concept works, and sometimes it doesn't. In my case, we mutually parted, no regrets and we are still friends because there was no expectations and upsets during the separation. I still adore his family, and it did occur to me that I was not married to his family, I was married to the man!

I do want to take this opportunity to apologize to his family and him, for not going the extra mile around making it right with him. Perhaps I had an upset about something such as how I want to live life or the support I needed around me. Well, this might have led to me not being generous with him around my expectations of him and in return not being of service to him. This conscious insight which was built over years had me to decide to part ways! It was the first time I was being of service to him, I should say!

Marriage, I see, presents most exciting as well as most wretched conditions for human existence. You can either thrive in the relationship or get jaded away! The choice is yours. You can't say it was destiny to flourish in a relationship. You have a primordial role to play in how things will occur around you. You have to be in the driver's seat to make things happen for good or for worst. To be normal, I saw that this union of affection generally tends to lift mortals higher when you are vibrating on the same level. Even if I wasn't honest in my marriage, I should say that I shared my love in the form of giving to people around me, sharing whatever little I could. I believe it was my guilt in my marriage that I was being that way. Aren't most of us are?

It took me awhile to get it that I was on a breakdown around my finances and life. In the face of that and being a young dreamer, it was impossible for me to operate being ordinary. I didn't know how to operate as being ordinary human being, and I still don't. All I knew was that my circumstances were nowhere near ordinary, and who I had to be in the face of that was nothing less than being extraordinary and that has brought me so far!

These insights made me think over and over and over again why women compromise around having love in their life, most of the time it's about looking good in the community and fear of being an outcaste. It took me awhile to get this insight, and it was too late for me to put any structures around it to address it powerfully. I relied on people, thinking they could assist me around my breakdowns and that was a mistake. I should not have assumed that people would help me be happy. That was an

absurd belief, given the fact that people have to deal with their own circumstances and conversations regarding their own transitions.

Within a culture that I come from that is patriarchal to its core, it was difficult to talk about love not being in my life, forget about discussing divorce. Such bold women are fingered at and made to go through ridicule in the community versus when men talk about such things there could be discussions on social situations that all community should listen. In old days in India, widowed women were not allowed to marry, but a widowed man could marry any number of times. Even now, man's professional life and his assets are legally protected. During divorce proceedings, a woman has to "ask" for her rights, and her value comes down to negotiating dollar amount in form of alimony.

I discovered that women are taken less seriously professionally! Their professional ambitions are stepped over by powerful merciless men who play for their needs. I also noticed that communities' point of view of how women should contribute is overridden by their choices. In the face of all this, I was standing for my dreams—ordinary dreams such as a good job, good man in my life, good house and children, and if possible a legacy to make a difference in the world. In the face of no support, political manipulation, and hard-core betrayal, I succumbed to my overwhelming circumstances.

What I discovered about me in this process is that I was a stand for unconditional love. Then finally after year and a half, I gave up conversations of no possibility and disempowerment and intentions showed up. I was present to love after a long time. This is when experience of love was special to me. Here I was divorced and screwed at the age of thirty-three and embarrassed that I was a failure at love or maybe I was not present to what it meant to be loved or sharing love. Sometimes, when you go through a lot in life, you become numb to love and its presence around you. How many of you who work, work, work, and at the end of the day, what is present to you is fatigue and not love?

Yes, I paid a price for not being present to love or acknowledging how love was present around me. My upsets and expectations withered all hopes that were there around me. I was responsible for my loss. It's a shame that I had to go through a massive breakdown to get the value of love in my life, to achieve a finger-licking partnership with right touch of depth of understanding and compassion. But then, that's life. I invite you all that don't wait to accept and express your love to a loved one around you. Just do it, now! Right now after a long pause, I am inquiring within myself to see whether I was ready to commit to a romantic relationship. I am inquiring whether I would provide what it takes to make it happen and last forever, questions that I had avoided before. This has pretty confronting for me.

That's when I looked into what's missing the presence of which will make a difference in providing an "unconditional love." I believe as a child, I didn't have it in my life, and in my 20s, I was busy proving that I was capable of making it in the world, and therefore, I missed it out during my marriage. I mean does a woman have to know in her early years what a role man plays in her life or does she have to figure it out through trial and error. I didn't know that you need a man's unwavering trust, his assurance, and his unconditional love for her growth and development. I learnt a lot of what it means to be a woman and her needs by going through a divorce. It was quite a discovery

for me and that's not a recommended route to go through, . . .

However difficult it was for me to believe this, my future was calling me forth, and the constraints of the past were disappearing. I knew that as high I could reach, could I grow; only as far as I could seek, could I go; only as deep as I looked, could I see; only as much as I could dream, could I be! And deep within I knew this was the time for me to reach, seek, look, and dream. The timing didn't matter; my intuition was telling me to take the leap of faith.

Life revolving around commitment to something bigger than you think is enchanting. Who you have to be to step into the possibility of "just making simple requests for support" will be an experience in itself. Do you want to try that on with someone that is important to you, but stopping you because you can't trust the outcome will be in your favor? Can you take this on, after you read this paragraph and make a simple request to someone you love and see what happens?

I had to take a hard look into my conversations with myself, to cause breakthrough around my love scenario. I have noticed that I took bigger risks and rose for bigger tasks, bigger than what I could manage before, only after forgiving the past. This is only possible when you trust your actions and make simple requests. At times, I have failed my trust, and at times, I have surpassed people's expectations. At times, it has been quite challenging to believe in my judgments, and at times, my judgments were on the dot. I understood that to play with powerful people, you have to be intentional, rigorous around producing consistent high quality results. I also understood from my interaction with successful powerful people, that it took more than just trust to play with high-powered, high-integrity people. I always wondered if these people lost their integrity while achieving their goals to be where they are, how often they play immoral games to make a difference in the world.

I am a believer in dreams and miracles. Manifesting what you stand for in real world needs more than good feelings and intuition. You need people on your team who are committed to your stand and for whom you are.

I dealt with people that acted like morons because they made me wonder whether they believed in dreams! Most of the time, you will come across people who will doubt your ability to deliver. You will have to trust your intuition. Leonardo Da Vinci has a beautiful quote about dreams, "I roamed the countryside searching for answers to things I didn't understand. Why shells exist on the top of mountains along with imprints of plants usually found in the sea? Why thunder lasts longer than that which causes it? How circles of water form around the spot, which has been struck by a stone? And how a bird suspends itself in the air . . . ?"

If there were no miracles, we would not be seeing shells on the mountain, a child in a womb, rainbow in the sky, and men falling in love. I believe the world is waiting for one more long-awaited miracle "a world with peace and prosperity." I am up for causing this miracle in my lifetime. How will this look like . . . time will say!

# Chapter 4

## UNCONDITIONAL LOVE—MEN IN MY LIFE

“When a woman says *what*, it’s not because she didn’t hear you. It’s because she is giving you a second chance to change what you said.” When a man says *why*, it’s not because he loves you. It’s because he has suddenly recognized your worth and doesn’t want to lose you.

Circumstances do not make the man, they reveal him—James Allen

This is the truth.

“A man who treats his woman like a princess is a proof he has been raised by a queen.” This is not true only with a man and wife relationship, it is true with a man’s relationship with every other woman he interacts. You can’t treat someone like a princess and the other women like a trash. That doesn’t work and hasn’t work till date, in any community in the world.

If you have a man in your life that treats you according to his convenience, then it’s time for you to let him go. If you are not his first priority, then you should let him be with his chosen priority. I have come across men who wanted to show off their power through disposing me, really disgusting men; most of them behaving out of their own insecurities.

Men can break you or make you—*yes*, this is the reality. Just like all others, I have had contributions in my life from a lot of men from different walks of life and different traditions. I am taking this opportunity to acknowledge my partnership with men and what it has taken of me to cause transformation in the world. I experienced both peaceful and insecure men. This chapter narrates both good and bad experiences of them, which gave me good life lessons that I have no regrets!

Doesn’t your father make you into a capable young girl, doesn’t your brother support you to be who you are, doesn’t your husband shoulder your dreams, but have you seen your colleague or your boss or your business partner standing for you the same way your family members stand for you? That’s right, your relationship with the men in your family shapes your interaction with all other men, and the experience they give becomes colored with your interpretations.

Honestly, my understanding of men and their struggle with ego and power is so little. I am not sure why men do things that don’t make sense and then try to prove themselves in order to put logic under those decisions. My understanding of Indian men, the very essence of it has been through my interactions with them, and if you see through the old patriarchal lens, the unsaid tradition in India, it’s primarily been the power struggle within themselves and others around proving their superiority. They are always at war within themselves. This is *the* truth. A woman has to understand a man, what makes him restless, and that would be the key for her happy life.

There are two fundamental elements in nature to understand. One the male—the Yang, which is

aggressive and dominating; the other the female—the Yin, which is nurturing and gentle. In the past, they were kept roughly in balance, but now men have created the tools, the weapons—both intellectually and physically—to bring these two principles way out of balance. We have been placing mechanistic tools in the hands of power-oriented patriarchal people. I'm saying you men are out of control. I, you, and we—we all are the victims. I assert that destruction or going to war or revenge really is a male thing. Women, most of the time, have been nurturers, caretakers, or peacemakers. What do you think?

With the conservative traditions and demanding community life, there is no other way an Indian woman would be able to know how to be with men, except her interactions with family and work life. Women in Indian culture are raised by staying with their parents, and so the form of devotion can be interpreted as commitment to their husbands, fathers, and brothers, the only way they know about unconditional love. In Indian tradition, unconditional love can be interpreted as take what you have and be happy with the love that's given to you. Compromise—that's the name of the game. Women, most of time, compromise their self-expression, their cravings for pleasure and happiness under the fear of being tabooed as an outcast if not behaved within established norms. Men look upon women as “object of love”; this is not a notion prevalent in India but everywhere in the world—some places, it's subtle, and some places, it's part of a tradition.

I predominantly see the following patterns around men that I would like to present so that you could look for yourself how a man is operating in and around your life. “Being in charge of your destiny” is the mantra that you should never forget. This might help you begin your new life that is waiting for you as follows:

- a) They are not sure that their feelings will stand the test of committing to you.
- b) They are not ready and are afraid to take any responsibility.
- c) They don't make you their top priority.
- d) They ignore you.
- e) They gift things to you so that they can make you dance to their whims and fancies.
- f) They date a lot of girls before deciding if you are worth for him.
- g) They are in for some fun, so watch out!

In all these circumstances, a man always and most of the time *is* insecure about committing. It's a natural tendency for them. They are possessive, restless, and indecisive. To actually be in a relationship with a man, you have to be ready to fully experience breadth and scope of being judged, followed by comparison, and then takes the hit for good or for good-bye's.

Even when you hit the jackpot, i.e. he agrees to be in a committed relationship, there is always a back door open. You have to assure the man that he is going to be taken care of. That is when most of them head for marriage responsibility.

But in India, most marriages are done traditionally; they are arranged. It works for most of the time, and sometimes, they don't, like mine. Arranged marriages are like those eharmony.com portals where families match their intention, expertise, and expectation of both groom and bride to be. Love may or

may not be present at the beginning of these marriages, but it certainly creeps in slowly with a vigor and integrity that builds a solid bedrock foundation in these relationships.

I have included in this chapter philosophical elements of love<sup>14</sup> referenced from “*Philosophy of Love*—an Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy; also referenced by the Greek terms, *eros*, *philia*, and *agape*. Generally the term *eros* is used to refer to physical attraction that constitutes of passionate, intense desire for bodily pleasure; often referred to as a sexual desire, hence the modern notion of ‘erotic’ (Greek *erotikos*)<sup>15</sup>.

In contrast to the passionate yearning of *eros*, *philia* includes a fondness and an appreciation of the others at compassion level—a platonic love, but with empathy. The *philia* integrates not just friendship or devotion but also loyalties & trust to family, job, or disciplines.

*Agape* is more spiritual type of love refers to “the paternal love of God for man and of man for God, but this is extended to include a brotherly love for all humanity”.

The concept of Gandhi’s universal love is mired in loving all equally but philosophically it’s logically empty. Aristotle argues that “One cannot be a friend to many people in the sense of having friendship of the perfect type with them, just as one cannot be in love with many people at once for love is a sort of excess of feeling, and it is the nature of such only to be felt toward one person.” Mahatma Gandhi will disagree with Aristotle on this, for him loving universally and unconditionally was to the core of being a loving human being, although his love for Kasturba, his wife was devotion even when he didn’t spend time at all with her.

Has any tradition, culture or language been able define as philosophically beguiling as love itself? Can a person in love be relevant, timely, and appropriate, so that they can be accepted in the community? Is love something that is tangible, understanding, and describable? Love may be expressed to others through silence or actions or through the phrases such as, “I am in love,” or “I love you”. But what “love” means in these sentences is merely a momentary expression, a fleeting state of mind that can’t be evaluated by set rules or principles. Love is a condition of mind that can’t be fathomed by scriptures, pedagogy, sermons or rules.

What is appropriate in one tradition may not be appropriate, comprehensible, and describable for experiencing love in another tradition. Nobody loves ideally or through Aristotelian theories, or follows ethics of Kant and Kierkegaard. I believe to experience love, you have to cross boundaries, be vulnerable, take risks, trust your instincts, and go for it. This certainly can’t be done intentionally or by manipulating an outcome, it happens absolutely unknowingly, and by the time you know you have crossed the borders, it’s too late. There is no ethical description to being in love or falling in love. Even those with high integrity will tell the price they have paid to let go of the ego of looking good to be with its love. Love is not for those who are timid and have self-doubts. It is the territory of the *powerful*.

Love isn’t something natural. Rather it requires discipline, concentration, patience, faith, and the overcoming of narcissism. It isn’t a feeling, it is a practice. If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to all others, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment, or an enlarged egotism.—Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*

Aristotle’s notion of *philia* are acts of causing friendship such as being, doing and having kindnesses in their friends life; doing these acts unasked,unsaid. *Philia* or affection can not emanate from those who are jealous, quarrelsome, gossipy, aggressive in manner and personality, and who are

unjust.

If good characters give good friendships or best virtues, then we can surmise that love between rational and happy would necessarily be the same. But in reality that is not the case. Most of the time those with diminishing qualities are happy people while those with rational outlook are miserable. This is because love can't be equated to equality or right to same happiness through association.

A business collaboration is based on utility, on mutual reciprocity of similar business interests; once the contract is over, the association concludes. Similarly those friendships based on the pleasure originating from the other's company, is primarily coming from their actions or compassion. Parental love is different than one experienced in a companionship—reciprocity still plays a major role in both circumstances.

Nothing in the world can take the place of Persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'Press On' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race—Calvin Coolidge

If love does possess "a nature" which is identifiable by some means—a personal expression, a discernible pattern of behavior, or other activity, it can still be asked whether that nature can be *properly* understood by humanity. Love may have a nature, yet we may not possess the proper intellectual capacity to understand it; accordingly, we may gain glimpses perhaps of its essence, but its true nature being forever beyond humanity's intellectual grasp.

Accordingly, love may be partially described, or hinted at, in dialectic or analytical exposition of the concept but never understood in itself. Love may therefore become an epiphenomenal entity, generated by human action in loving but never grasped by the mind or language. Love may be so described as a platonic form, belonging to the higher realm of transcendental concepts that mortals can barely conceive of in their purity, catching only glimpses of the forms' conceptual shadows that logic and reason unveil or disclose.

On one level this admits that only the experienced can know its nature, which is putatively true of any experience. The uninitiated, the incapable, or the young and inexperienced—those who are not romantic troubadours—are doomed only to feel physical desire. This separating of love from physical desire has further implications concerning the nature of romantic love.

Some may hold that love *is* physical, i.e., that love is nothing but a physical response to another whom they feel physically attracted to. Accordingly, the action of loving encompasses a broad range of behavior's including caring, listening, attending to, preferring to others, and compassion.

The distinction "behaviorism" confirms that love is a series of actions, choices, and preferences that are observable to oneself and others. According to the distinction, since love is observable suggests also that it can be theoretically quantifiable: If A acts in a certain way (actions X, Y, Z) around B, more so than he does around C, it can be logically concluded that A "loves" B more than C. The caveat with the behaviorist vision of love is that it is susceptible to the poignant criticism that a person's actions may not show their inner state or emotions; A may be a very good actor.

Expressionist love is similar to behaviorism in which love is conveyed through various state of expressions toward a loved one, that is generally communicated through artistic language forms like words, poetry, music, or behavior, such as bringing flowers, caring for old, giving up a kidney, or adopting a child. This is a reflection of an emotional state, rather than an exhibition of physical responses to stimuli. This form of love can be defined as a spiritual response, the recognition of a need of the soul that nourishes one's own soul, or complements or augments it. The spiritual love accommodates mystical, as well as traditional romantic notions of love, but rejects the behaviorist or physicalist explanations.

In political philosophy, love is examined from a variety of perspectives. For example, some see love as an instantiation of social dominance by one group (males) over another (females), in which the socially constructed language and etiquette of love is designed to empower men and disempower women. This is patriarchy. It is not by coincidence you see more men in politics than women.

The ethical aspect of love involves moral appropriateness of loving, and the forms it should or should not take. It raises questions such as: is it ethically acceptable to love an object or to love oneself? Is love to oneself or to another a duty? Should the ethically minded person aim to love all people equally? Is partial love morally acceptable or permissible (i.e., not right, but excusable)? Should love only involve those with whom you can have a meaningful relationship? Should love aim to transcend sexual desire or physical appearances?

How does conditional love occur in real life on daily basis? I'll love you if you do this or act that way or perform in some way that meets my expectations. Most of us receive unconditional love as a child. We needed it, then to pacify our attention, our sexuality, our tears and/or our vulnerabilities because parents or society got fed up of our childish tantrums. So in order to stop the tantrums, elders gave attention or pampered us. We put on a performance by denying those unapproved aspects of ourselves to get the maximum number of strokes. It was not real acceptance of ourselves we received as children, just an absence of condemnation of the aspects we hid. But this is from a child, but what about adults?

Conditional love is widespread today among adults in most relationships. We couldn't possibly love them if they do this, or they dislike us, or they have the wrong views, etc. If you don't act the way I think you should act, then I'll reject you—it's quid pro quo. You are totally unacceptable to me if you lie, cheat, two-time me, hate me, treat my family wrong, don't agree with me on issues, etc. But if you do jump through my required hoops, then I'll love you (conditionally, obviously). Conditional love creates many knots in us as children which we then later as adults need to untie.

So then the question arises why a man would love a woman unconditionally? Once you ask "why," there is a set up for "under what conditions would," thus conditional love. That said, if you have been a father of a girl, or a brother of a sister (and even if you've been neither), you might be able to relate to all women as if they are your daughters or your sisters and provide love from that foundation. A man "might" offer unconditional love in order to receive it. Quid pro quo. This is because most men believe conditional love is hard work and unfulfilling.

A man's a man for all his life, but once a knight is enough which is obtained by being married, an unconditional commitment for life. This seems to have a lot to do with context, from the perspective of how the man holds "woman" based on cultural heritage and historical conversation. The context could be all over the map from old traditional roles to divine goddess. Unconditional love is a function of surrender.

It's an ideal called unconditional love. If it were not so rare, and brief, we would not be so afraid and angry. Who can remove ego selfish survival instincts from their thoughts and actions, and still have ways to express love? Who can recognize and accept such love when it is offered? How would a woman know unconditional love when it was offered? What if she wants more? Unrequited unconditional love is that something you would like to offer? Maybe the level of love that is unconditional is not desirable. What then?

When a woman allows a man to love her unconditionally it is a sweet gift. If she appreciates it and cherishes that unconditional love and throws a little love back to the man once in awhile, that man knows heaven on earth! How long does this unconditional love last after you stop feeding them with attention? Ideals do get shattered.

To sustain unconditional love, effective communication including nonverbal communication is a challenge for all relationships, whether they may be of same sex, a parent and offspring, generational and intergenerational, adult and child. Men, as boys, because of the ways in which they are raised struggle with emotional expression around giving or receiving physical affection. It may be of no surprise when, within a "committed" relationship, men struggle to recognize love when offered or when they have it to give. It could be that they are less practiced than girls.

On the level of ego, men want unconditional love just as much as women, if not more. Why? Because their needs might be greater due to partial deprivation during their boyhood. For a man, to give unconditional love, he has to be truly grown from his life experiences, and past relationships, and has to be very comfortable with himself. This is because an overly active ego cannot allow unconditional love. Most men never experience the tools and are not open in receiving what would allow them to grow into a man that can love unconditionally. I believe most are behaviorally trained to expect something in return. So a man that loves unconditionally does so because he has learned how to truly love from a good place, with good intention.

Being rigorously trained in leadership distinctions since the age of twenty-two, I knew the tools and techniques to distinguish what was right and wrong for me. I knew I have to be with love that's true, an unconditional love although I should confess that I failed at love being so busy with professional life. Not until I was divorced that I knew how important the man's role is women's life. On one hand, love is a product of patriarchy, and on the other hand, love is incomplete without the presence of a man. What a paradox we have to live in life? Celebrating men to satisfy a woman is certainly a balancing act in itself.

Coming from an absolutely orthodox, culturally sensitive, traditional family, making the right choice and pursuing what's important to me was an eternally difficult task. It has been the clash of east and west traditions; surviving that has been quite an exciting ride. There has been immense sensitivity

over my choices, something I never expected to face and didn't know how to handle. Being in action for not being happy in my life was soon becoming a problem. In a culture where tolerance is integral part of survival, getting divorced for not being happy was no pass. You got to adjust was the advice. You have to accommodate him was the suggestion.

“Stop being a demand,” I was told. You don't have anything to offer, so take what is being given. *Wow!* That landed hard on me. I took what came my way and accepted the generosity of being great with me in whatever capacity they could.

Man acts as though he was the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man.

—Martin Heidegger

It's been eight years now that I have been divorced. The entire time, most of the community wanted to see me either reconciled with my former spouse or married again. Nobody supported my vision, and I mostly went searching for jobs. They were the most demoralizing years; during that time which I was naturally attracted toward men who were I should say made a difference in the world. Even now, I can say that my former spouse's family is “the best family,” but then I wasn't married to his family. When my eyes started to waver, I knew my marriage was not working. Integrity had to be restored; I took the blows and did it my way.

If you are wavering toward other men for seeking moral support that are not within your family, then that is a red flag; it is a sign of perhaps clinical depression or fatigue or frustration that you don't know how to address within the norms of your family structure and community at large. According to my family tradition, we never dated, ever. The Indian family system is designed that way; we stayed with our parents, and most of time, we did what they told us. I never had opportunity or was trained to understand what conditions of satisfaction one need, and important to have, for an intimate relationship. This also includes the power to understand your own circumstances you are surrounded by; first and the most important one is does the man in your life support your vision or what you are up to? Did you give justifiable time to think over these things, before you got hitched, engaged, and subsequently married?

Given the history of Indian tradition, you will be amazed to know that the Indian men operate three centuries in parallel in their everyday lives. They are in forefront of their professions by contributing substantially in shaping the twenty-first century; they are possessive and protective like those in twentieth century when they are raising and being with their family members and are absolutely dominating around their life partners in their nineteenth-century bedrooms deciding what is right and wrong for the family. It's extremely difficult to understand the psyche of an Indian man.

I never expect to understand the intricacies of cultural dynamics in an early age although as a woman, I have started to grasp and grapple with things around me as I have been growing up. The demands of being an extraordinary human being in our culture is the best side of it, and the biggest caveat is it misses out the essence of living a life without meanings; Indian tradition is rather complicated and its patriarchal system is what drives these meanings to extreme abuse.

Men that I have collaborated with were powerful in their own respect, fully evolved and understanding the intricacies of the world. When a fully evolved and responsible man sees a powerful committed woman, I believe they get who we are and our stand in the world in the face of the interconnected traditions. But then, some of these men have also been a source of some or other form of anguish, humiliation, or anxiety. Some of these men were good, bad, or ugly. That's how life is made of—mixed experiences.

This also aggravated my frustrations around dealing with men, which dearly impacted my personal life. I have never dated, in real sense; I had this question how to ask a man for date?

Personally, I don't feel it is romantic or attractive for a woman to ask a man out directly. Most of my male friends find it off putting if a woman to ask them out. They tell me if the woman is really really attractive, they will respond to her. But usually because they feel they can get easy sex from her. They tell me these relationships don't go anywhere. I find that a more subtle approach like eye contact and flirting is more potent and sexy.

What good is a man to accept a direct invitation from you? A friend will, but you are not interested in having him for just friendship, right? Some men will accept your invite because they are too embarrassed to say no or don't want to hurt your feelings by declining. They will join you just to be nice. This may not always be the case, mind you, but often it is out of politeness that they accept the invite. In case, a man wants to go for coffee with you, then he would ask you to go for a coffee. You can be friendly and initiate a dialogue, but let him ask you for more. This way you will know if he is interested in spending more time with you.

Men love to go after a woman they like or are attracted to. If a man doesn't ask you out, then he is either not attracted to you, not interested in you as a potential something, or he's a little shy. Looking your best, being friendly, a bit flirtatious, and wearing a caring, loving smile will bring the shy one out. If he talks with you, talk with him a little bit. Be open to get related. Make him feel at ease. In a little while, say something like, "I'm thirsty. I'm going to get a drink/coffee/water, whatever . . ." Let him take it from there. If he asks to join you, then he initiated it and he wants to spend time with you. If he doesn't, then he was not very interested in you for more than that interaction. At least, you'll know. Trust me, if a man wants you, he'll find a way to let you know.

"Would you like to go for a walk with me?" If you ask a man you are interested in, he could probably say "Sure," or he will say "Not now." In order to check the indication you could say, "How about now! We could walk through garden and then have a cup of tea or hot chocolate together." If the man is inclined to know you more, he will join you. This is a forty-one-second conversation that will transform your life, literally.

But there is another scenario in which the man could say I don't feel like it or I don't have time? In order to check if he is interested, you could ask him if you can call him again some other time. If he says I will call you back when I have time, it's an indication he is not interested. This is a seventeen-second conversation, and it concludes with you having full understanding of where you stand with this

man.

What is standing between you and the man you adore, that you can give up to transform your situation? Here's the distinction that will provide you access to power around your circumstances. It's called being stopped. You can alter this circumstance by writing the man's name on a piece of paper, and under his name, write all the complaints and expectations you have of him. Then, identify the way of you are being around him, such as possessive, demanding, suspicious, happy, or simply ignorant. Focus on who you are being and / or what you imagine his reaction to be. Keep the drama out and see if you can recognize for yourself what's not working and whose presence is not making a difference in your life.

Now choose a place to stand, such as generosity, gratitude, or simply unconditional love, and have a conversation with this man. It could be as simple and straight as, "How about you and I go on a date?" Then, be with the moment. If there is silence, then be with it and await the answer. Be with the now. The yes or no will follow. This will help you be in charge of your happiness, rather than allowing the other person running with it.

Consider that there is no "how to ask" but a "how to be." The key is genuine vulnerability, freedom to be sensual, and being emotionally available. I'm talking state of mind and body language. Reveal more of your natural beauty that's hidden behind the layers of clothing, share your smile above your intellect, and be open to personal one-on-one connections vs. political alignment. Be a little naughty and have a damn good time!

Couple of things about talking to anybody—if you do it out of desperation, then you will get only desperate or people that feel sorry for you. Get out of your head, and put your attention on the other person. Have no resistance, have power to create. See letter B.

Give up attachment to outcome; you can never manipulate being in love or loving someone! Give up that; it means anything if he says yes and that it means anything if he says no. Regardless, his actions are not about you.

Be casual. It's just an invitation and he can say yes or no. It can be something like, "You know what? I find you interesting, and I would like to know more about you. Would you like to grab a cup of coffee/tea next week?" Maybe a possibility! Remember, it's *be, do, have*, in that order.

When you are going for a date, have no expectations. Come from nothing. Clear your head. And talk. Remember you are not getting married. *No expectations!* That's a powerful place to stand in.

Smack them around—guys have issues with sentences, questions, acts, all sorts of crap. So once in the while you got be a little physical, to get them out of their heads and get them present to you. A shake hand, wink with a smile, a little pat on his shoulder, a hug here and there, and little playful taps on the cheek. It's all good and will only work with the man in front of you. Just don't get too physical, not at first date. Yes, sometimes smacking is good. Oh, and don't smack them to the point that you knock them out.

Cook well . . . Sometime, being a little physical doesn't work. He's just too much into his own stuff to notice you or anyone or anything for that matter. My mom once told me that she could get my dad to do anything she wanted by cooking for him. True story! My dad did some pretty outrageous things like wash dishes, vacuum the carpet, and take out the trash all because he was promised food at the end of it all. Old quote "Boys think with their heads, Men think with their stomachs"

If all the above fails, three words . . . Ball and chain . . . works on some men all the time, and believe it or not most marriages are based on this concept. If being physical doesn't get him or cooking for him isn't working, you have to simplify your approach, and I don't know any other method simpler and more effective. You lock him down with a ball and chain, and he isn't going anywhere. You can then proceed to ask him "will you go out with me?" or hell at this point it's more like "you're going out with me . . . *now* . . . or else" It's so simple; it's brilliant.

So quick recap, "How do you ask a man out?" First off smack them around, then cook for them, and then lock them down and then ask "Will you go out with me?"

There is no right or wrong or how to or this way's better or worse or man, do I love that ball and chain idea? There is no reality in any of this. So my request to you is that you give up that there's a certain way to do things or getting it right (cause you never will) or the "man, I must have him 'where's that ball and chain'" and look at who he is for you or who you are for him and what's possible of being in a relationship or not being in a relationship. Get present to the emptiness and the meaninglessness of it all and go from there.

If you think like a Neanderthal (cave person), it's a great structure. They operated from trust, a natural instinct; you can't do with it. I trusted men and got abused by some and respected by few. I had casual friendships, but men don't like that. They like to be attended to, exclusively, even married man. Shocking, isn't it? Marriage is sometimes abused by those opportunists to rise in their career, is used as a license to seduce, and get work done. Integrity and fidelity have become rare species these days. The more sophisticated you are, the more discreet the actions.

I did indeed come across men who demanded of me to be and do certain things in my life; this was professional life. Not dated anyone before I couldn't fathom whether this was dating or whether this was an affair. Men can and have unabashed used their professional prowess to control women in professional life, by not giving them promotions for years, abusing a women's situation until they get or receive what they want. Men are a species that mutates according to surrounding atmosphere for their own benefit. This is an unquestionable truth.

Spouse—my spouse never got what it means to partner with me. I sought support from other men for my breakdowns; fortunately, I had the technology to understand what was going in my life, and I did indeed went an extra mile to understand what was going on in my spouse's life. I failed to understand him and that led to a breakdown in my marriage. Indian men are complicated and intense. Indians traditionally take abuse or unhappiness quietly. I have paid a huge price for not being able to understand my spouse; I wish had appropriate tools and support to get me through this phase of life.

My dreams and what I was up to was put on hold. That's how this book came about, trying to understand my choices, their impact and implications and really being a contribution to the community as an outcome of this enlightenment journey.

I am absolutely certain that most of you who are reading this have encountered something like this in one form or the other. This is not something new to the world, where women work but still we seem to be fragile in our relationships with powerful men. We always seem to be the one who comprise everything for getting our lives together. The reason why I am addressing men that I have encountered in my life is because there are three types of men in the world. This will assist you in categorizing and managing different situations, which one could encounter during their prime time in their professions. They are insecure men, loving men, and peaceful men.

What can an insecure man do? Create a lot of chaos. What can a loving man do? Spread a lot of happiness. What can a peaceful man do? Create an atmosphere for extraordinary partnerships and miracles. Choose. Life is simple, we complicate it. I am not saying I am perfect or ideal; in fact, I am far from being perfect. I am just saying that I am worth it, and that if half of the men with whom I did business had gotten this, my life could have been much different.

"*Insecure men*" generally dominate women's situation and demand of her to be a certain way. It makes me wonder how there can be "women's empowerment" in the world when it is full of these kind of men, who do not want women to take leadership roles, but instead make her desperate by creating circumstances beyond her powers.

What surprises me the most of men is that they really can keep a straight face and make demands of women they want to pursue. It really doesn't matter to them, whether the women are married or single. Being married is almost like a license to flirt for most men. This man was married and so was I, and boy, it didn't bother for him to hit on me. He knew my situation, and he was in a position to contribute in my career and he chose not to until I gave him what he wanted, and I closed the chapter with this man.

You will come across men who will be obsessed of you and the things that you do in the world. I did. It took me a while to get such men out of my life; it didn't matter whether I was being their friend or wanted to continue my friendship with them, what mattered to these men was that they were in charge of the situation while being demanding on me for working on certain things; if not, then they started to get upset, particularly when other men helped me around my career aspirations. That was scary! Imagine dealing with obsessed men who know how to manipulate the circumstances around them for their benefit. I found it difficult to believe what I was getting into. Married men get away creating a lot of nonsense, no matter what the consequences are. Have you come across such jerks? I am certain you have.

I have come across men who have watched me falter in my career and kept a smug on their faces trying to tell how powerful they are. Some men were in a position to give me support to my intention that could have altered my professional circumstances; they choose to keep talking about it. They only staged shows. Men are good actors; the older they grow, the better they get at it. It was like people showing off the carrot they have and don't give it to you until they get what they want. So be it, I didn't get the necessary funding, and I lost my job. One thing is clear to me by now; a woman

absolutely needs a *godfather* in her professional life, particularly to avert dealing with abusive men.

When you come across men who play with your professional life, you should know of the bat that you need to exit the work space immediately, no questions asked. Because sooner or later, these perverts will start hitting on you, given the fact they are seasoned player. How do you think the conversation around “women’s empowerment” survives in these vicious circles? Do you think a woman has to sell her dreams to get her the respectful position in the community? I don’t think so. The conversation around women’s empowerment has to go a long way, even in twenty-first century. Men are men, and women are women!

It never occurred to me that married men flirt; this was news to me, and yes, this was a sign I was growing old and knowing how life works. Of course, I was stepping into a different world, a world that meant only business. Are we ready to take our rightful place back? Are we ready as powerful women to partner with men with equal pay and rights?

The reason why I am so bluntly putting forward my life experiences around men is for you to check what is going on in your life, around the realm of men? How many men have you encountered by the time you become forty years old that treat you like trash? Have you been able to stand up and say to them stop it or leave me alone? How many of us endure the abuse because you get something out of it—the job security or a promotion? You don’t hang around such men unless you are getting some form of payoff out of it. This is simple logic unless you are committed to suffer in your life. So my request is if you are in one of the situations I have mentioned above and are suffering in your life, it’s because you are choosing it to be there.

Powerful men will contribute powerfully to everyone’s life although if the fine line or boundary gets crossed; it’s likely they will encroach in your personal life. Sometimes, it’s OK, but the boundaries get wishy-washy. As you grow, you will learn by default to take care of yourself. I have come across men who have intentionally caused breakdowns in my initiatives because they weren’t aligned to their intentions. These men were the “*opportunists*” lurking around silently to pounce on things for their own good and checking if there were lame ducks to put the blame on.

The philosophy has distinguished the love in three forms—eros: playboy-type; philia: opportunist-type and agape: insecure-type. What I am distinguishing here is the types of men who showed or expressed their love to me in different shades and forms. But then, who marks the invisible boundaries of behavior, and who is there to manage those out-of-control men whose behavior is just out of line?

I will conclude this chapter with this saying

The universe is one great kindergarten for man. Everything that exists has brought with it its own peculiar lesson. The mountain teaches stability and grandeur; the ocean immensity and change. Forests, lakes, and rivers, clouds and winds, stars and flowers, and stupendous glaciers and crystal snowflakes—every form of animate or inanimate existence leaves its impress upon the soul of man.

—Orison Swett Marden

This is the description of men who learn the good from the universe to shape them and contribute concrete and positivity in the community.

And then there is

Oh the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are—chaff and grain together—certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with the breath of kindness blow the rest away.

—George Eliot

This means if you come across chaff in your pathway, with the breath of kindness, blow them away from your life and enjoy your destiny that's waiting for you.

# Chapter 5

## RIGHT CHOICES WITH RIGHT PEOPLE

### AND RIGHT TIME DO MATTER

“A much loved bit of urban folklore is the piece about engineers analyzing the bumblebee. They reviewed its construction: its wingspan, weight, body mass, size, and strength. They came to the scientific conclusion that flight would be impossible for such a creature. The structure and strength of the bee’s wings, according to scientific reports, simply could not support its body. *Its good thing that bumblebee was not informed, because it certainly could fly—as high as it wanted,*” Bumble Bee folklore<sup>16</sup>

I believe this applies to every one of us—people judge, assess, manipulate, sabotage, and thwart your aspirations and dreams, some intentionally and some unknowingly. Most of us are not present to the impact of others’ actions, on us, until time has passed. Most of us give us what they think others should receive and not what they are asking for. If bumblebee knew it could not fly, then I wouldn’t be surprised that it would have impacted its action. Most of us also wait for an approval from the world to acknowledge our actions and be aligned with what the community would accept, and therefore, we compromise on what we could be for the world.

Therefore, I believe that having right people in your life to manifest your dreams and visions by being your moral support, is extremely important, particularly during your transition phase in life. It’s important they believe you are capable of being the cause in the matter of manifesting your dreams, even when you are at odd with the circumstances. If they are saying and being otherwise, then you should not have them around you, particularly during your transition phase. It’s important for one to know that people have a clearing, a disposition, or a potential of causing the miraculous, which they need to harness for optimum results in one’s life. But most of the time, we don’t trust ourselves of our actions, and that’s why we can’t cause the miracles.

The most important thing that I have learned is you can step beyond the limits of your identity and move into a future mapped by what is possible, not by what has happened, but what you are going to cause yourself to be. This has provided me with an access to live powerfully beyond the limits of what I already know and alter the circumstances. The notion of possibility has had a paradigm shift from an abstract ideal to a day-by-day reality. Life became framed in a new way. I created teams, milestones, and deliverables. The way I approached the world and the way the world approached me changed. This gave me an access to peace of mind, through moment-by-moment approach of being present to what has transformed in and around my life, the very nature of what is possible in life. One thing I accepted is, that not all people around me had the same access of knowledge to transform life, and therefore had to rely on my own convictions and beliefs around how to generate results in a given circumstance and whom to trust to cause the results.

I also noticed during transitions it’s essential that you identify who is causing your life versus those

who are only being a “coyote” around you that is just being around and not making any difference in your situation. You need to have a clear understanding of your conditions and options, because you are the *one* who will absorb the impact.

How did I produce results in the face of no cooperation? People thought I was a failure because of my breakdowns. That’s because they didn’t understand my actions, my decisions, and my silence. I didn’t go to those who ridiculed me and my choices, to justify them. I never made anyone wrong because of their shortcomings to see through my actions. I had a listening of myself that I am worth it and I was trained in leadership technique of what it takes to produce extraordinary results.

Obviously, the results in the world were not the same as my listening about myself. The outcomes I wished to cause were not possible because there were breakdowns in my life that were overshadowing the present. It was clear because the people who were being on my team or in my circle of trust didn’t have same listening of me, or they could have caused my vision to begin with.

In your life there will always be one person who will be an unconditional stand for you; it could be your mother or father, husband or wife, brother or sister, a close confidante, or later on in your life, it might be a close colleague. They will keep causing you to be an effective leader in every aspect of your life. They are your source, your alter shadow, and your happiness in life. These people will deliver the transformation that needs to be caused within you and create the possibility for themselves and your life. The paradox of this structure is that these same people could cause breakdowns in your life and have you be ineffective.

Using this very concept I could say that most of the people who came in my life during my transition caused massive breakdowns around me, indicating very clearly that they were not causing me or aligned with who I was. So one of the thing I have accepted out of this experience is you need to constantly change your team to produce effective results. It’s not that anyone is good or bad, it’s just that they are not aligned at that given moment to who you are. People on your team have to be a clearing for you to produce extraordinary miraculous results. Anything in between is clearly an unworkability scenario. However close you are to someone around you, if they are not producing results, you got to replace them and have someone else be there; it is not making anyone wrong or something, it is just how the universe works and you got to get this straight.

I want to share an experience of a young woman about her choices in her life and her experiences while making those choices so that you will get an insight around how to view a choice in life through a different perspective.

“A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up.

She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose. Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second, she placed eggs, and in the last, she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word.

In about twenty minutes, she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, “Tell me, what do you see?” “Carrots, eggs, and coffee,” she replied. Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling

off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, “What does it mean, Mother?”

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity . . . boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened.

The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water. “Which are you?” she asked her daughter. “When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?”

Think of this: What am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship, or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside, am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain when the water gets hot; it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?”<sup>17</sup>

The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way. The brightest future will always be based on a forgotten past; you can't go forward in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.<sup>18</sup>

I believe the above story narrates how your choices do matter and how you get value added by the experiences in life and most importantly the meanings you add to them.

# Chapter 6

## IS IT WORTH IT TO STAND FOR YOUR DREAMS?

First, “This is true joy in life. The being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. The being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.”

As I turned forty-two, I have accepted certain realities of life along with the breakthroughs and the breakdowns. One of the realities I really enjoy is being a world citizen, intentionally committed to its well-being and a privilege to be a contribution.

George Bernard Shaw has said it splendidly that, “I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no “brief candle” to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations”<sup>19</sup>.

Every day, we are presented with opportunities to live as if it’s business as usual, or create something exceptional, something beyond who we’ve been, what we imagined, and what we know ourselves to be. Each day is a new occasion to express ourselves individually and fully, to challenge existing options, to set aside current standards, to question firmly held assumptions, to break, or even reinvent the mold.

Putting that within the context, do you believe in your dreams? Do you think you are worthy of dreaming something bigger and better for yourself and your community? If the answer is yes, then you got to trust your actions as well. What are dreams really? They are the unfilled visions or intentions or fantasies of yourself or others. Some wait for others to do it and some take actions; you either succeed at it or fail. You get to learn both the ways. What do you think leaders thrive on? All successes have been on the grounds of building a dream, dreams thwart you into action. You dream to have a better and bigger life—higher education, good promotion, thriving business, or a great life partner. You first dream to have certain things in your life and in the world. Dreams are not wishful thinking, neither is it hoping for something to happen someday. It’s a pipe dream until you don’t take action. Manifesting these dreams into reality is a different ball game. It is about standing for it yourself and that’s what this chapter about.

I want to share with you an ancestor from my family, Dr. Rakhmabai Janardhan Save<sup>20</sup>, widely recognized as Dr. Rakhmabai, who stood for what she believed and pursued her dreams to make a difference in the community and the world at large. I will take this opportunity to mention the circumstances she had to go through to reach these goals. One then questions the morality of these actions and the cost you have to pay to achieve them. Dr. Rakhmabai—An Odyssey written by Mohini Varde was referenced to write this chapter and wish to acknowledge the author Smt. Varde for researching on her—a topic and a feature that has been oppressed for decades.

Dr. Rakhmabai Janardhan Save was the first practicing woman gynecologist in India and in my family. I am sharing her courageous odyssey in this particular chapter, not for her professional

achievement, but because of her grueling experience and journey during her divorce back in 1880s when women in Indian tradition were going on pyre with their dead husbands, a system called as “sati.” This was an era when women’s rights did not exist. The nineteenth century in India is known as the patriarchal century, where ill treatment was given to the woman by the man under the influence of the patriarchal system and the use of fear psychosis to tame the woman. Divorcing someone you didn’t approve was not dared in those days.

The rise of the concepts of democracy<sup>21</sup>, equality, and individual rights were introduced during colonial era i.e. 1850-1915, in India. Rakhmabai’s father was a Surgeon General for the British, and therefore, her outlook toward life was different as she was exposed to broad thinking. It was during this era, few courageous Indian men initiated the first phase of feminism to uproot the social evils of sati (widow immolation), to allow remarriage of a widow, to forbid child marriages, to reduce illiteracy, and ensuring property rights through legal intervention.

Rakhmabai’s divorce was the first divorce in India in 1880; this was a bright young woman seeking her right for dissolving her conjugal understanding with a man she was married when she was eleven years old and “decided” to dissolve it because she saw her husband would not be able to forward her life. It is impossible for one to fathom the courage and confidence she must have bestowed upon herself to take this step. Particularly, when a woman decides such a daring act during an era of childhood marriage, sati, and dowry system, it’s noteworthy to acknowledge the stand for her own rights. A judiciary system in India was also not ready for her courage nor did they have any laws for such a situation at all.

Britishers were concerned about the case, which went for three years, causing immense humiliation and embarrassment to Rakhmabai and her family, leading to the demise of her father at an early age of forty-five years. This woman lost two fathers by age twenty-two—her biological father Pandurang Save when she was one-year-old and stepfather when she was twenty-two years old.

I can only wonder the agony she must have gone through to stand for her dreams, to become a physician, a vision mostly inculcated by her stepfather’s upbringing who was the “viceroy surgeon of the Governor” and who had a stature equivalent to a “Lord” in those days. It was her father in early 1880s in her early years sowed the seeds for a genuinely liberated lifestyle for women in the society.

Rakhmabai’s divorce single handedly posed a threat to the generations of exploitative tradition and dogma in India. This all happened in 1880s, when there were no conversations or laws for women’s rights. Tilak, Karve, and all came to join his efforts, but the pioneer of women’s right in India was none other than Lord Dr. Sakharam Arjun, Rakhmabai’s father. Rakhmabai’s behavior shocked not only the alien British rulers but also the traditional conservative hypocrites, amongst the Indian society. Rakhmabai, who was merely exercising her right as an individual caused Indian traditions to go in an uproar and was later penalized a six months of jail for her own divorce.

In 1822, the Bombay Education Society was established to specifically address these issues in the society as well as cause trained English speaking people for creating a proficient workforce for the British, which was an outcome of Macaulay era reforms stressing proactively on areas of education and learning.

Rakhmabai was born on November 22, 1864 to Jayantibai and a bright young civil contractor, Janardhan Pandurang Save; a family that influenced women’s right reform process in India. The primary players were her grandfather, Harishchandraji Yadavji Chaudhari and her stepfather, Dr. Sakharam Arjun. It was her stepfather who had adopted various facets of western lifestyles because

of his “Surgeon to the Viceroy” position within the British government in India influenced her the most.

Rakhmabai lost her father, Janardhan Pandurang Save when she was one year-old and was raised by her grandfather Harishchandraji Chaudhari until she was ten years old and was married with the assent of her mother and grandfather to Dadaji Bhikaji when she was eleven years old. Although due to her teenage year, Rakhmabai’s family decided to have her be with her mother and grandfather until she was ready to stay with her husband. Immediately after her marriage, Jayantibai was married to Sakharamji Arjun, and Rakhmabai entered a new household with her, whose influence and inspiration later had her be a first women practicing doctor (due to demise of the first women doctor Anandibai Joshi, who died without practicing) in India.

Dr. Arjun was a respected doctor within British administration. So deeply fascinated by herbs, he tried to supplement allopathic healing knowledge with science of Ayurveda, leading him to carry an extensive research in medicinal properties of herbs and their roots. He was also one of the seven founding members of the Bombay Natural History Society, established on September 15, 1883. As a child, Rakhmabai was a growing witness to all these developments, and her response was that of awe and inspiration. Needless to say, Dr. Sakharam Arjun’s contribution to social issues and society had a deep impact on young Rakhmabai.

Dr. Sakharamji Arjun was not only an expert in botany but was also aware of impact of social reforms on the community. He was part of the social revolution that was taking shape in India, and contemporary Indians like Dr. Arjun were playing a critical role. Sakharam Arjun conjured upon vision of a “Bombay” fifty years down the line, where factories and mills would be employment networks, with the local bazaars being full of products manufactured in this country. He knew to meet these new and challenging world it was imperative that literacy reached all levels of society. Dr. Sakharam Arjun mobilized scientific and technological education in India to develop scientific attitude among people. He was later awarded the title of “Surgeon of the Viceroy.” Rakhmabai spent the most influential childhood years from six to nineteen years under Dr. Arjun’s guardianship during which period he had written five books.

Rakhmabai, at age fifteen was exposed to women’s literary movement, which was initiated under the guidance of Sakharam Arjun. Male section of educated Maharashtrian population stood behind this cause, convinced of the women’s role as revolutionary potentials of the new knowledge systems and importance of their education in twentieth century. All these experiences carved a niche in Rakhmabai’s outlook toward life.

Dr. Rakhmabai reference is brought up in this book not because of her exposure to contemporary movement or her achievement in professional world, but also to share who she was being during her divorce and what she had to take in order to achieve her dreams. I could say that her divorce overshadowed the achievement of the family and herself, something that could happen only in India. The courage she exuded during her transition is breathtaking.

It was in March 1884 that she filed for a divorce or dissolving her conjugal rights as they were mentioned in those days, her eleven years of child marriage during the entire period of which she stayed with her parents and never consummated. A three-year trying phase in her life to receive her divorce has been certainly a tone setter for reforms around women’s right in Hindu marriage laws. This case certainly generated immense public opinion and interest as it challenged orthodoxy and time-revered tradition. This was all in 1880s, a time when women were not having any rights, and

were sent to pyre when their husbands died. I want you to “imagine” of the tremendous strength this woman had in her actions, and what it must have taken for standing for her own dreams and convictions to manifest them into reality.

Hindus from different cities asked the British why they were getting involved in Hindu marriage traditions, which lead to social revolution in India. There were no laws around divorce in those days, and reformists were at total loss in solving the case. British were concerned about the uprising and unrest this case was causing in India.

During all this uproar caused during the Rakhmabai Dadaji’s case, Rakhmabai’s mother Jayantibai sent her to England to receive her medical degree from London School of Medicine for Women. On August 14, 1884, Dr. Sakharam Arjun wrote a letter to the editor of *Times of India*, embarrassed by the situation Rakhmabai went through during the dispute with her husband. He mentioned in the letter “if the dispute which had arisen in her marriage was solved in some way or the other, it was imperative for her to continue her education in order to be able to stand on her own feet in a financially independent fashion where her life could be totally enriched by education. Minor widows too, who seemed to have no other opportunities except continuing their lives in the midst of household chores must be given all opportunity to develop their personalities through higher education. They must have the capacity to earn their living themselves, and men must never be found lagging in their efforts to carrying reforms toward this end.” This was Dr. Arjun’s vision in 1880, which took note that secondary place of women in society was the obstacle in the way of their seeking knowledge. He called upon the male counterpart in the society to look into the state of women whom they call their life-partners. His stand for women’s right showed from the fact he walked his talk; the fact Dr. Arjun had a second marriage with a widowed women i.e. Rakhmabai’s mother in 1880 is very inspiring and enrolling. He urged through his letters to the Hindu community to discard old ideas and replace them with new ones that are progressive.

As you see, Rakhmabai was blessed with a heritage of spiritual, and well-educated family, and therefore found it difficult to accept her husband, after eleven years of marriage, during the entire time of which, she chose to stay with her family. Her family was also in forefront for having reforms in women’s rights, and therefore supported Rakhmabai’s choice to dissolve the marriage contract. A lot of disgruntled and frustrated community members did not appreciate British changing and influencing Hindu traditions and called Rakhmabai with all sorts of names.

Rakhmabai vs. Dadaji case was an ideal platform for women’s right reform, which brought into forefront the unworkability of the women’s situation in India. This suit took place when any social reforms were labeled as hostile intervention into the old and orthodox beliefs firmly entrenched into the minds of people. It was this hostile atmosphere that prompted Jayantibai to send Rakhmabai to England in 1887, and after her return to Bombay in 1895, it was this very hostile attitude that prompted her to move to Surat in Gujarat in 1895. In India, this case created a widespread interest and added to the 1870 movement of social reform with regards to situation around infant marriage, remarriage, education for women, widow’s situation, and so on. In 1881, the government had “managed” to fix the minimum age of marriage at ten years.

In 1857, Bombay was a center of modern education in Maharashtra, with eminent personalities such as Jaganath Shankarseth, Dadabhai Naoroji, and Rakhmabai's stepfather Dr. Arjun influenced upon creating new policy of education with centralized universities being set up in Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. It was partly this educational reform system that brought Rakhmabai into action and declining to go to her in-law's house citing unacceptable differences in lifestyles of the pair, natural disposition, and their personalities. Rakhmabai exercised her right to freedom of thought and suffered its consequences in full—a six-month jail term. She was labeled to not being a Hindu, as well as not being a lady at all; she faced tremendous slander.

Dr. Rakhmabai belonged to first cadre of Indian Lady doctors in India; Dr. Anandibai Joshi and Dr. Anny Jaganath (who became a doctor a month before Rakhmabai), both didn't practice in India. Dr. Rakhmabai was also someone who was the first one who had established medical practice in India before the end of the nineteenth century. She was also six years junior to Dr. Anandibai Joshi, who was unable to put her skills into practice due to her ailing health and her untimely death.

Rakhmabai also faced caustic criticism from a lot of quarters. *Times of India* in its issue of July 15, 1888, mentioned, "A Hindu husband had not perpetuated legalized rape on his Hindu wife and, therefore, an English judge finds it in his wisdom to cut the solemn connections of the holy wedlock."

On March 3, 1887, three years into the case of Rakhmabai vs. Dadaji, the judge gave a clear judgment that Rakhmabai got to stay with her husband, and in case of violations of the order, the defendant should be ready for a jail term of six months for contempt of court. Of course, it took a significant effort on behalf of Sakharam Arjun to reverse the order and on top was ridiculed. The reason for holding Rakhmabai accountable as a defendant was that court perceived only one thing; A Hindu lady who was married according to Hindu traditions and rituals was refusing to live with her husband, a refusal that amounted to violation of Hindu tradition and practice. The court thus held her guilty.

The orthodox followers of the case thanked the British and were glad that the judge had imposed the defendant to be guilty and thanked them for not interfering in Hindu laws and resented their attempt to change Hindu social tradition. Rakhmabai faced a six-month jail term and faced it with extraordinary strength of her mind. Rakhmabai in the process of her divorce went through mental agony for four years. The marriage was not forwarding a purposeful life for her. Her stepfather's untimely death, which was partially due to the pressure, and her financial proposition fast deteriorated, and her dream to pursue her higher education was becoming bleak. She, however, didn't lose courage in the midst of personal crisis; she maintained her poise and grace, without any revolt. So strong were her convictions of making a difference in the world that she exuded a will to be a cause in the matter of her life that she chose to serve her sentence with a decision to pursuing her education in medicine in London.

During the same timeframe, British were going through a dilemma of the consequence of liberating Rakhmabai or thousands of women from wedlock; a priority the British later agreed not on their list for India, especially if it stood a chance of millions being incited to a revolt! Pundita Ramabai, another woman in forefront supporting Rakhmabai's case, wrote on her verdict "Hindu philosophy doesn't give any distinct identity to a woman. Man is considered as her owner. She should live as per his will even if she is a widow. The British have permanently tied down women in order to fulfill their contract with Indian men." Pundita had hit British on their weak spot and rectified in a way by supporting Rakhmabai's education in London. When Rakhmabai returned back to India after

completing her studies, it was Pundita Ramabai who hosted her at “Arya Mahila Samaj” in Bombay, a pioneering women’s organization that her stepfather had helped to cause.

During the same period as Rakhmabai’s case, Dr. Edith Pichi Phipson had supported a lot of women in the medical field in England. By lobbying with Indian doctors, as well as those in England, an American businessman Sir Kettridge took lead in convincing the government to promote medical studies for women in India. In 1874 due to ceaseless efforts of Dr. Elizabeth Garret Anderson, London School of Medicine for Women was formed. It was Dr. Phipson, who had known Dr. Sakharam Arjun and his stand for women’s movement, that later caused a breakthrough in Rakhmabai’s life and had her be the first woman practicing physician in India.

At an age of twenty-two years, when Hindu girls were totally absorbed in their family lives, Rakhmabai was pursuing her dream of becoming a physician. As there was no hope of any support from her native people, Rakhmabai predominantly relied on the British to cause this breakthrough for her. Till 1887, the question of medical education for women remained unattended, largely because of the patriarchal system. It was Lady Dufferin, who initiated the “Medical Women for India” initiative, and in 1888, a fund emerged out of her perseverance called “Dufferin Fund” used largely for the education of women in medicine. It was a “Protection Committee” of this fund that paid all the dues of Rakhmabai’s trial. It was Dr. Edith Pichi Phipson, who took Rakhmabai under her guidance since she knew her stepfather Dr. Sakharam Arjun very well, whose vision for her and contribution to the society. It was Dr. Phipson who took initiative to send Rakhmabai to England and enrolled her friend Lord McLaren to accommodate Rakhmabai during her stay in England.

For Rakhmabai’s grandfather Harishchandraji Yadavji and her mother Jayantibai felt that through her achieving higher education could be compensation for having gone through such an ordeal. Rakhmabai’s grandfather felt very uncomfortable though to send her into an unknown land and had her promise certain things before she embarked on the journey of freedom. Those promises included 1) she shouldn’t eat beef, 2) not marry an Englishman and 3) not forsake Hinduism, and adopt Christianity.

After intense discussion with her family members and friends, on March 17, 1889, Rakhmabai boarded the ship *SS Shannon* and left the coast of India; she reached London port after four months of travel on the ship and totally experienced the becoming of a butterfly and transformed. During her tiring journey, she had an opportunity to introspect the endless conversations she had with her family to convince them to support her for her future studies. She had to put up a brave front in the face of ridicule, embarrassment, and humiliation for standing for her own future and dreams. Women were not supposed to be ambitious; in those days, they were supposed to be child rearing and husband caring. All these thoughts floated her mind as the ship entered the London dock on a very foggy day as she wrote in an article later. Sir Walter McLaren a member of British Parliament and Lady Eva McLaren had come to receive Rakhmabai at the port and acted as her guardians for rest of her stay in London.

Dr. Rakhmabai came back to India in 1895 and opened her practice in Surat. She died in 1965, fulfilling her dream of being a doctor and living the life she loved and being of service to people.

The purpose of including Rakhmabai’s journey in this chapter is for one to get an opportunity to introspect their easy life they are blessed with and acknowledge the fact that if she could accomplish her dreams in dire circumstances she was made to go through, you can easily accomplish your vision,

your dreams in this day and age; you just have to keep standing for yourself! Are you willing to give up all those conversations that don't align with what you are up to . . . Are you ready to live an extraordinary life . . . then, here it comes to you.

“Within our reach lies every path we ever dream of taking<sup>22</sup>.

Within our power lies every step we ever dream of making.

Within our range lies every joy we ever dream of seeing.

Within ourselves lies everything we ever dream of being.”

—Hallmark

# Chapter 7

## COMPLETING THE CIRCLE FULL

Eleanor Roosevelt said, “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

How will you complete the circle full? Do you always make a daily wish list to address issues that are important to you or make yearly New Year’s resolutions? Completing the circle full is really about healing yourself by forgiving the past, being present to what’s around you in the moment, and being ready for the future. Is it that simple? No, it isn’t. We don’t really complete any circles full in any aspect of our life. Neither have Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, or Jesus for that matter completed their circle full.

When you stop looking for that magic rainbow and burn your ego into ashes, you will embark upon the journey of completing the circle full. It’s about honoring your spirit and surrendering your soul to listening powerfully to your heart’s intuitive desires.

What I learned in the process of being with the moment is that you got to have a structure, a team around you to manifest your dreams, which is nothing else but completing a circle full in an area of life that is important to you, particularly when you are in a transition in your life. These transitions could be getting married, having a child, moving to a different country, changing jobs, going back to school, falling in love and yes, last but not the least “divorce.” I learned this lesson a hard way that transitions are incredibly challenging and difficult to complete, unless you have a team or a structure around you for its seamless transition, and to maintain your spirits high at all times!

Then there is love that I have covered in this book through a perspective, a special circle, that only few are truly blessed to experience. Love is so sumptuous and delicious, its taste meant to linger in your life forever! What does it take to “maintain” that taste in reality, with life showing up? My experience of love has been in the realm of accomplishing tasks in my professional life, not until I got “divorced” that I realized there was no love in my life and acknowledged the fact that I have never experienced love in my life. The void in my life made me wonder how I came this far alone. I guess Indian culture just makes the Indian women resilient to any circumstances in life. We are not really educated for loving someone. Love is not necessarily an important priority in one’s life for most of us; we all take it for granted, particularly within Indian context. Some express it through words, and some express it in the form of actions such as compassion and sympathy. Words are symbols. Yes, there is awareness beyond our words. Awareness in the moment can only happen when one is complete from their past experiences. This happens spontaneously with an experience. “The seeker goes to the heart of these symbols, remembering that symbols cannot be exhausted by words, only by silence.”<sup>23</sup>

Most of us have incomplete circles in being loved; it may not be necessarily in love life, it could be a close relationship such as parents or siblings. The best you can do is get clear of the impact on the parties involved and choose being responsible in not allowing the circumstances overpowering you. This is critical because the perpetual and volatile nature of our circumstances can create unnecessary

misunderstandings, and therefore, we have to keep recreating our self day in, day out.

Silence *is* the most *powerful* healer when it comes to completions. I have dealt and come across such nasty and vicious men in my life although I have never been angry to anyone of them, or made them wrong. I have simply moved away from their space quietly, and it's amazing what silence has done on them! It's enlightening. "Silence is the most powerful healer at the end of the process, for completion, because it takes healing to enter into the silence."<sup>24</sup>

I learned during my marriage that love couldn't be substituted by external happiness. I also learned it hard way that I have to be proud of my man and love what he is up to, as well in his life. My divorce made me see love for men; something my upbringing never made me realize this aspect of life. I also noticed men love to support powerful confident women, and at the same time, play with their ambitions. It's funny my circumstances forced me to see love, not as a sin, as what my culture defines, but as an expression to celebrate men. I wondered why I had to go through a divorce to experience importance of love in my life. I guess this experience was my full circle related to my marriage.

It was during this period I noticed and acknowledged men who had been around me in my life—powerful, passionate, committed, and educated. I noticed more than ever that the men I appreciated were making a difference in the world. I have always thought that making a difference is very sexy; is that just me or there is someone else who joins me with this viewpoint? It's all so strange now while I am writing down this, all along love was right in front of my face. I never ever thought of them romantically; I loved to have them in my life. And suddenly, I saw someone making a difference in the world, and he knocked my socks all right! Someone who was twice my age and terrific. On one hand, I was vulnerable of being divorced, and on the other hand, I didn't know whether I could trust any of my decisions. This was the beginning of my roller coaster journey; an intuition I had a premonition of particularly around judging men.

I am an unconditional stand for peace and prosperity in the world, to have each and every citizen access to basic rights. But can a person be of service to people without having love in their own life, particularly when their peace of mind is displaced by the pretext of contribution to the community or public service. Traditions and norms does not matter anymore in this context. This is a universal truth; if you are not happy yourself, how can you make others happy?

When I first came to the United States, it was a full circle regarding me pursuing my higher education abroad. That ideal got shattered later on in my life, but the fact of the matter was I created an intention and manifested into reality. I have dealt with harsh realities during my transition, most of the time I didn't know what to do, and I was clear this was not midlife crisis I was dealing with. Transitions are not identical; if you think you handled well delivering a baby means you could be a good manager, it doesn't work that way. Every set of circumstances has an effect and an outcome associated with it, most of the time people associated within those circumstances also get impacted.

There was a time when I had no home of myself in the United States, no job, and I was lonely for a long period of time. There was a time I had as little as \$50 in my savings accounts in the United States. It's impossible for me to gauge the courage that I had gathered and trusted myself, to cross the finish line, complete the circle full, and powerfully address all the challenges and barriers in my way toward my prosperity and growth. I came to United States fifteen years ago, and I paid a huge price with respect to my well-being and prosperity due to the divorce. This was another shattered ideal in my life. What I am conveying here is the simple truth that "transitions are and will remain

challenging.” Nevertheless, you always have an edge over this situation and not allow yourself to go into the tunnel called self-doubt. Having a seamless team around you, your seamless transition is supported. I guess I didn’t have a right team around me to accomplish my transition seamlessly.

It is clear that in creating a “new life, by completing your circles in life to its fulfillment or manifestation,” you need to have an absolutely *powerful team* around you who will be committed toward your success in life. This is where you will experience the completion of the circle called unconditional love. The discovery of me being a lone ranger and doing things my way have hit hard on the face; since then, being in love has taken priority in my life. Closure around the conversation I am lonely did miracles. I was present to love everywhere, work, family, friends, and in men around me! Wow . . . completing a circle full does do miracles. It’s great when you ask for something from the universe. Universe is always a *yes*; you just have to ask for it.

There was time in my life that I was scared to be alone, in spite of being married. This fear overflowed into my next transition “separation leading to a divorce”; the hardest and roughest transition that completely transformed me.

In celebrating men, you get to be part of their “stuff” as well. During the wedding vows, they say “in sun or rain” together, we will be there till end. Divorce for me was a shattered ideal of this “in sun or rain” story line. I was not ready to drag my former spouse into a pressure zone of my expectations; instead, I didn’t take any alimony. It was a mutual understanding that was win-win for both us—his peace of mind and my new beginning. It was a very powerful completion with absolute integrity causing my life to move forward. I and my former spouse are still in good terms, an outcome of completing powerfully.

The experiences that I had in all areas of my life—personal, professional, and financial have been so unique, weird but yet exquisite and authentic. I could say I am one of the kind rare happening. You can’t get such experiences by taking courses or reading books; an extraordinary journey happens to those who are ready to climb the mountain to get that tiny plant or scrap their knees to get the fruit from the top of the tree or cross the ocean to touch the beautiful golden sand. Yes, it will be a roller coaster journey, and it’s not necessarily recommended to those who are unwilling to take surprises and deal with uncertainty. The territory you will be trotting into will be an unfamiliar, risky, unknown zone. It is in this realm you will find completing your circles full. I have never heard that a completion can be planned. It’s always in the unknown that you get unprecedented miracles.

Completion with men is the single most challenging topic that could take hours to debate. But it is also the most critical element for completing any circle in your life. Men are always “bewildered” on saying the right thing; they seem to be lost over how to contribute in women’s life, and so any contribution they offer comes across as controlling and dominating. Well, it’s taken me a while to acknowledge this insight and it’s been quite enriching to see men from that angle. I have learnt about men, those I interacted with—to be extremely sensitive, obsessive, and as compassionate as they are abstract. They are transparent as much as they are complicated. They are sexy, and they are gross. They are good and naughty, both. They love to be pampered and taken care of, and you can’t tell them what they should be doing because they are so grown up that they don’t like to be told.

This book is an also celebration of those young leaders who have stood for their dreams in the face of no possibility and have a triumph over their past. This book is also for those passionate young and dynamic leaders who are silent warriors who have given up on their dreams and yet think somewhere, somehow, and someone will step up for them and fulfill their intentions. Hopefully, this

book will succeed in inspiring those who have given up on their intentions, visions, or basic rights. *People* who have compromised in their life and achieved success in later years of their life know only their way of being to be the right way and will therefore have no other way of being to achieve success. These kind of people will challenge you in your life if you go through a path that they don't align with or understand.

I believe therefore it is for us to design a life that one wants and manifest it into reality. Structures like business coach, mentors, committed colleagues, close friends, and family can be on your team to hold you accountable to manifest your dreams and making it happen!

The structures that I had put in place for completing my milestones to complete my circles full were early morning intentionality calls at 5:30 a.m. to create a list of what I could accomplish in the day, followed by 7:30 a.m. gym, yoga, and meditation every morning for my inner harmony, a vegan brunch for healthy life, and once a week educational seminar to constantly upgrade my conversations around my participation in the world. You could create similar structures to complete your milestones, to manifest your intentions, such as having a buddy for completing an assignment, a committed colleague for your promotions, partnering with a sibling for doing your gym, or contributing your time for a cause that is important to you.

I believe that putting effective structures of existence calls one forth into action that are aligned to their future, at least it has been effective in my case. I have been able to produce extraordinary results in my life, particularly during transitions. Just as we have structures around managing our finances, I suggest that we ought to have structures for being extraordinary. I assert that our "being" gets impacted the most during transition, and a structure around it to keep generating yourself from nothing is crucial. This will help you from not going into depression; keeps you in action and vibrant. This structure will keep you present to who you are for the world, particularly in this fast-paced day and age when we tend to forget to be extraordinary with people.

As a young dreamer myself, and someone who believes that life shows up no matter what you experience, only one thing you got to do is not sell out on them. In spite of hardships that I have gone through, I am still standing for what I value the most in the world. All that I have endured has gotten wisdom out of these experiences although it isn't necessary that one "should go through these experiences to achieve their goals in life. The whole purpose of having a structure of existence for success in your life is to avoid these pitfalls or lessen the impact of them.

I got an opportunity to observe people around me that were willing or unwilling to play with me toward causing my dreams. I got to inquire into fears, into my breakdowns, and my bullshit. I saw how I react when my ideals are shattered. I get de-enrolled if things don't go a certain way. I finally accepted that all people don't operate with high integrity as I do, and I accepted that people will run over you, treat you like a doormat, and talk things about you *because they know you are doing something in real that they can only dream of!* I accepted a fact that people are envious because they want what you have. This was a powerful insight that shook me, a completion of full circle! How many such people are out there who are unsatisfied and unhappy those are around you on daily basis, not just in your life?

I believe in Bruce Wilkinson's preaching's through his book *Prayer of Jabez*. The prayer "O God and King, please expand my opportunities and my impact in such a way that I touch more lives for your glory. Let me do more for you!" is extremely powerful and intentional. It relays the message that God has cut for everyone their share of experiences and opportunities. It proposes an interesting

equation, “one’s ability + experience + my training + my personality and appearance + my past + the expectations of others = my assigned territory.” Mr. Wilkinson preaches further that “God specializes in working through normal people who believe in a supernatural God, who will do His work through them.” He presents God’s maths which looks like: “my willingness and weakness + God’s will and supernatural power = my expanding territory.” He mentions further that if one starts asking in earnest for more influence and more responsibility, to honor in the name of God, he will bring opportunities and people in our path to fulfill his vision. I believe this is profound. This prayer is part of my everyday structure to empower me, and keep trusting my confidence.

I believe what David Thoreau has said about dreams “if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with success unexpected in common hours.” I believe that a common man can cause uncommon results if they create an extraordinary team around them. Extraordinary people remove the ceiling above them to achieve their dreams and then boldly step forward to manifest them!

Love for me is a Godly experience, only those who are blessed and understand its value will cherish it. Finally at forty-two, I have understood the value of love. Now that I am present to love, I think I have always been blessed with it and didn’t know how to reciprocate it.

Jesse Owens has said, “We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams into reality, it takes a lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort.” Determination, self-discipline, great team, success structures are the ways for completing the circle full to fulfill our dreams.

How many people you know have compromised on their dreams because they have chosen to do so? A lot of them, right? This book is an acknowledgement of those young leaders that have compromised on their dreams—are unhappy about their choices, and are not taking any actions about it. This book is also a celebration of those Young Leaders that have stood for their dreams and made it BIG.

How many of us have chosen to stay in a job, profession, relationship, and marriages for convenience and in return enrolled others to do the same. It’s interesting, how life goes on, whether you choose to live powerfully or not. So choose to live life powerfully, pursue what’s important to you, and savor every moment on those experiences of you going through the breakthroughs and breakdowns while growing with it. This is for me is the key to *completion of full circle* in your life and others!

# Endnotes

- 1 Hope for flowers, Trina Paulos
- 2 Hope for flowers, Trina Paulos
- 3 The Book of Common Prayer
- 4 *An excerpt from the book "Hope for the flowers", a tale by Trina Paulus*
- 5 Jim Rohn, motivational speaker
- 6 Jim Rohn, Inspirational Speaker
- 7 <http://www.digibarn.com/collections/mags/pe-jan-1975/index.html>
- 8 Celine\_dion\_family\_ceasear\_palace ~ google.com photos courtesy
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- 20 Dr. Rakhmabai—An Odyssey by Mohini Varde, Minerva Press, 04394-749, 2000
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- 22 Proverb by Hallmark
- 23 Swami Rama
- 24 Don Walker