



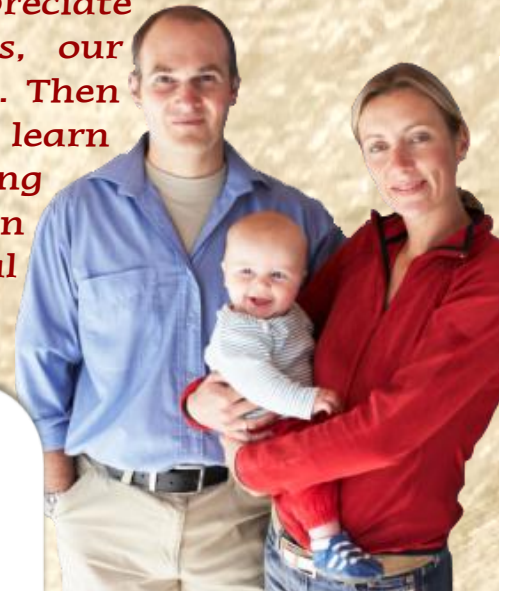
# Married Strangers

"How to avoid becoming married strangers?" This title, typical of transactional analysis seminars, addresses a tragic modern paradox: we have the technology to communicate with people millions of kilometers away, but lack the ability to communicate with people around us. Why?

One of the often-overlooked factors that erode relationships is unrealistic expectation. We habituate ourselves to watching images of perfect persons in action on the screens - images that do not talk back, images that we can summon, change and dismiss, by the mere flip of a button. These images go deep into our hearts and form our subconscious expectation of others. But whether we like it or not, the real people around us are imperfect, as are we ourselves. When they fail to live up to our expectations, we become irritable and hot-headed. Moreover, when they disappoint us repeatedly, the resulting frustration causes us to constantly dwell on their faults and ultimately makes us cold-hearted towards them. Hot heads, cold hearts - isn't this the cause of most of our conflicts?

We can't solve these problems by changing situations, jobs, homes or even spouses. We need to change our own expectations. Spiritual vision, as obtained from the Vedic and other wisdom-traditions, provides us the desired paradigm shift. We are spiritual beings, beloved parts of the supreme whole. As parts, we are cooperators, not controllers. Unaware of our allotted role, we expect people to act as per our own plans. When we succeed occasionally, we become euphoric; when we fail repeatedly, we become devastated. But while struggling to make our plans work, we miss out on the lasting fulfilment that comes by playing our part in the Divine Plan. When we notice and appreciate others' struggles to overcome their conditionings, our hearts warm towards them - and theirs towards us. Then we help each other courageously tolerate and wisely learn from our respective imperfections. The resulting combination of cool heads and warm hearts ushers in material harmony, emotional growth and spiritual redemption.

That Divine Plan has brought us together with others not for material enjoyment, but for spiritual evolution. When we understand this, we develop a cool head in dealing with others' (and our) imperfections.



The Spiritual Scientist

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