

Exploring the Intricacies of Marriage Through Shobha De's *Spouse*

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Shobha De has always been a Page 3 writer and I have always thought her to be dealing with the emotions and turmoil of that particular section of society. But I have been belied out of my prejudiced opinion about the writer by her judicious guidance to a happy married life.

There is no doubt about the fact that 'Marriages are made in Heaven' but they are fulfilled on the earth. This is a bond which is holy and permanently bound on the grounds of truth and love. Nevertheless, this trust and love has to be observed by both man and woman which alone will put their life on tracks leading to an even and satisfactory culmination.

Shobha De has touched almost all the aspects of a married life and tried her best to balance the content on the rails of justification. She has not sat back and preached at the couples, rather practically put herself on the altar of marriage and opened up her mind and delves deep into her life and tried to instruct and convince us through the nitty-gritty of her own life.

The relationship of a man and woman gets recognition in society through marriage. Two different persons brought-up in different environment, customs and temperaments are thrown together and are expected to live in peace and harmony. In the olden times, no doubt it was possible as the woman had to compromise greatly not only with her desires and temperament, but also with her belongings and emotions. That was all because the woman was mostly illiterate and dependent on the man. In contrast, today when the woman is equally qualified and doing may be a better job than her husband, can she be expected to do the same. Certainly not and therefore, clashes would result as a consequence. Hence in this world where each sex requires space to co-exist and flourish, man has to break out of the age-old shell and accept and recognize the importance of woman, not only in his life and house but also in the society. This acceptance is very necessary for a happy and fruitful married life. Though the couple may not have much time for each other today, Shobha De says that there are many simple ways to make each other know their presence and importance in their life.

Compromise is a key word to a peaceful married life but as Shobha De says, is not enough for a happy and satisfactory married life. Compromise may not mean love in a married life. One should be very clear about one's expectations out of a married life. Adjustment and compromise devoid of love may make one's married life dull and lacklustre. To make each other feel their importance in each other's life, a quick hug and a kiss of love also goes a long way to clear the clouds of doubt from the mind of both husband and wife.

Marriage without quibbles is incomplete. With accordance to Shobha De's views, I also believe that where there is love there is disagreement. Without annoyance and pamper as a consequence, love cannot thrive. No marriage is only romance and romance all over. It has its demerits, troubles and turmoil too. One has to balance the carriage of marriage on the wheels of romance and logic.

I absolutely agree with Shobha De that marriage is an idea. Now it is up to you how you can develop the idea with your prudence. It is in the hands of each couple to make the idea of marriage becoming and happening or miserable and drudgerous.

Marriage is an idea which is very personal and should flourish between a husband and a wife. The moment it becomes public, the success of the idea is jeopardized and the end inevitable.

Both husband and wife should keep it in their mind that it is their idea to live together and make a family of their own; hence they should not tolerate interference of any outsider in their life. The moment such encroachment is made, their idea do not remain their.

According to Shobha De, '3T's' theory should be followed by a couple to make their lives happy and adventurous. '3T's' theory is of TIME, TOLERANCE and TENDERNESS. In the marriages where the three unities exist, those marriages are sure to sail on happily, peacefully and of course successfully.

Let's first discuss these three keys to a happy married life. TIME is very important for the foundation of a relationship as well as for its flowering. A husband and wife though unite through love or arrangement need time to understand each other. Couples who have affair between them before marriage claim to have given enough time to each other to understand the likes and dislikes of each other. Even after such conformity, they disagree and quibble with each other after marriage, complaining on each other of a change in attitude. Actually, before marriage they were lovers while after marriage, their status, change into husband and wife who have to cohabit with each other through thick and thin. Conditions of life do not remain the same. Time takes its toll and subjects each to such situations where their patience is tried to the extreme. It is then that the couples prove the firmness of their relationship by adhering to each other and facing the buffets of tough time. A couple that stands the ground and is successful in the test of time will be the happiest couple on this earth. A marriage is all about time. Both should take out time from their busy schedule and spend it on each other for a happy future.

Tolerance is another important feature of a successful marriage. Each person has his or her predilections and cannot change completely for each other. No two persons brought-up in different environment amongst different set of people can be alike in their tastes and temperament. So it becomes necessary that they should be tolerant towards each other. With time, the couples know the soft-points and violent-points of each other and therefore with the budding of love between them, tolerance towards each other creeps

in slowly and unknowingly. Respect for the feelings and emotions of each other will naturally make them tolerant. There would be moments when one of the partners might lose patience and burst for reason unknown to the other, at that time, the second partner should be tolerant and understand the mental turmoil through which his/ her partner is going through and after sometime when the fructuous moment lapses, the disturbed partner will be regretful for his/her behaviour. Furthermore, the couples are usually engaged in different professions which have separate demands. Under such circumstances, it has been seen that many couples break down and lose patience with each other. This might prove fatal for a relationship. It is here that the key of tolerance, play a vital role. Both the partners should sit and discuss over the need and urgency of their jobs and on mutually agreeing to continue with the jobs, should sort out their problems amicably and with tolerance without letting the vicious 'EGO' come in between their relationship. It will be seen that not only will they flourish economically; they will become an ideal couple for others and lead a happy and peaceful married life. In our society, it has been seen that it is mostly the women, who are tolerant and overlook the mal-treatment meted out to them by their husbands and in-laws. They have been fed by their parents that a married woman's right place is with her husband and in-laws and therefore she should tolerate and adjust with them. This attitude of the parents, not only encourage the bad elements to torture the poor girl but also result into their death. Here we are discussing about tolerance, time and tenderness which may be accepted and followed by a certain section of society but then there are also such couples and houses, where these magic words are unknown and flagrantly overlooked and violated. My appeal is for such couples, who are married but do not observe the basic norms of a married life.

A relationship where the husband is egoist and stoically harsh towards his wife, treating her like a doormat and the wife is docile and subservient, accepting the treatment as her fate is lifeless in totality and is not going to benefit any member of the family. The worst hit, are the children, whose childhood would be stunted in such a stifling atmosphere of the house. Such a relationship is nothing but a chaos and will lead to either a disaster or a miserable and pathetic end.

Tolerance also denotes consideration and observation of the norms of marriage under strenuous situations. Besides emotional and mental tolerance towards each other, there should be physical tolerance too. The demanding hours of work might leave a couple drained of any desire for sex, which may create a rift between the two. Here again, if the couple show tolerance towards each other by both, not forcing the other against his/her will and showing annoyance but rather easing the tension by a loving hug or an affectionate squeeze, they can go a long way in melting the ice tending to settle between the two. Nonetheless, the couples should sort out this problem between themselves to save a long term disaster. Though not frequent, the demand of sex between the couple,

remain and should be catered to or the consequences may be horrifying by giving rise to the chances of straying.

The third and vital key to a successful marriage is tenderness. Tenderness is required in almost all types of relationships to make it a success and so does it play an important role between a husband and wife. This type of relationship irrefutably entails responsibilities, which have the power to shake a man. A tender word, a touch of tenderness or a look of tenderness between a husband and wife can go a long distance in strengthening the bond between them and relieving the strenuousness of the responsibilities. The wife who leaves her parents' house and enters an unknown territory of a new family, require patience and tenderness from the in-laws and mainly the husband on whom she banks for all her problems and happiness. The new bride should be given time and space to realize where she has landed and what her in-laws want, from her. Instead of loading her with a horde of demands, they should be polite and instructive. At this juncture, a tender word from her husband and some consideration from him can enable her to know her in-laws and tackle them accordingly. In the vice-versa, the bride should not enter the house of the in-laws with a negative feeling from the start. She should remember the fact that they are related to her husband and a negative approach in the start would be derogatory to their relationship. A wise bride will always let things take their time and taking a back seat should observe and plan her moves which can enable her to carve out a favourable niche in the household. A slight tact on the part of a wife can make her the favourite 'BAHU' of the 'SAAS' and the whole lot. Such a move will also impress her husband and can create a rapport between the two and strengthen their relationship for good.

Apart from this, no matter how much a couple tries to co-operate with each other, they cannot deny the fact that their preferences, likes and dislikes vary. The moot point is their co-ordination on this ground. The husband may have friends which are close to him but disliked by the wife and vice-versa, may create a deadlock in their relationship. In such a case, the ego of both clash and can precipitate into a crack in their relationship. The wise thing that a couple can do is ponder on the importance of the issue i.e. friends or their married life. Most of the couples would definitely choose their married life as nothing can be more important than they themselves to each other. The wise thing would be to strike a balance and decide a way out of the quagmire. They can attend to the friends unacceptable to each other at a time when the other partner is not there but of course within his/her knowledge or there will be the chance of being labeled as unfaithful. This way both can avoid unpleasant encounters. There is another twist in this matter. The boyfriends of a wife may not be acceptable to a husband and vice-versa. In this case, both have to have faith in each other but remember the limits of their relationship. The wife must tell her man-friend not to call her after work when she is with her family and the same prevails with the husband. This way, each will not feel deprived and can happily adjust with their unknown friends.

Another important source of bond between couples is their baby. The correct planning of a baby is very necessary for a couple because this is such an undertaking in life which might make their life either heaven or hell. All depends on the acceptability of the child in their life. The child should come in their lives only after they have known each other well and are mentally prepared to welcome the advent of the new addition to their family because a new born baby is very demanding and can eat up the major chunk of a wife's time that a couple would like to share with each other. There may be days when the couple may not even get time to talk to each other, leave alone sleeping together. Such sudden change of situation may cause strain and frustration to the husband mainly as the wife, a newly turned mother would be very busy with the baby. A prudent and a loving husband would understand the situation and the pressing conditions of the wife and without cribbing and grumbling would help her with encouraging words and relieving her sometime with the baby and patiently dealing with her tantrums, and why not when the idea of the baby was mutual. Such a behaviour on the part of a husband will not only strengthen the bond of love and affection between the couple but also sow seeds of a happy and peaceful rearing of a healthy child.

A husband and wife relationship is thus not only physical but also mental and emotional. Both should stand by each other through thick and thin and not run off to seek solace else where at the slightest provocation. After the relationship between a parent and a child, the relationship between a husband and wife is reckoned with awe and respect. It is very easy to break up a relationship and put an end to it but the credit lies with a person, to uphold and stand by a relationship through the vagaries of time.

Our culture is therefore very rich and respectable because it teaches us the importance of relationship between a husband and wife and its importance could be seen in India still at this time when the western wind is trying hard to blow away the aura of our culture from our mind and heart. Shobha De has done a commendable work in taking up such an immense topic and putting it threadbare before us, forcing us to stop, look and ponder and review our marital relationship and make amends if and where required.

Works Cited

SPOUSE (The Truth About Marriage)---SHOBHA DE, Penguin Books, 2005.