

# I thought I did Information to Transformation

Psy. Greeshma Nataraj



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Stories Matter

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## FOREWARD

Meet Greeshma Nataraj, a therapist whose work extends far beyond the conventional. She is the heart behind the "Greeshma Nataraj Counselling Café" and the creator of the FACTS therapy program (Face the FEAR, Accept, Commit, Transfer To Success). In this program, Greeshma employs hypnotherapy, psychotherapy, CBT, NLP, and DBT, bringing about meaningful changes in people's lives.

Greeshma is known globally for her impactful work. It's not just Indians seeking her guidance; individuals from around the world have found solace and support in her therapeutic sessions. From cine artists and journalists to corporate professionals, students, doctors, and lawyers, a diverse range of people has benefited from her down-to-earth approach.

Beyond her role as a therapist, Greeshma also engages as a speaker and a tarot card reader, offering an extra layer to her holistic approach. As a Lama Fera Grand Master Healer, she brings a human touch to her practice, resonating deeply with her clients.

This book is a reflection of Greeshma's dedication to helping individuals navigate their emotions and relationships. Through its pages, you're invited to discover insights that may inspire transformative growth in your own life.

## GREETINGS

### *Reader*

I feel an incredible feeling of purpose and thankfulness as I set out on this adventure to explore a solid relationship with you in marriage. I'm honoured to provide my knowledge and experiences as a certified counselling psychologist, hypnotherapist, and Indian psychotherapist on the following pages.

My decision to pursue psychotherapy and counselling was not merely a career decision; it was a calling that went right to the core of my being. The stories in families and communities have always captivated me, even as a child growing up amid India's colourful tents. I had no idea that this curiosity would develop into a lifelong quest to comprehend the complexities of the human heart and intellect.

Reflecting on my past, I recall the critical times that moulded my goals. Every experience I had, whether learning about people's capacity to go past emotional obstacles or investigating the transformational potential of reflection, stoked my need to know more about intimacy in interpersonal relationships. These experiences eventually served as the seeds that grew into my career as a psychotherapist.

My experience has been intertwined with my entrepreneurial journey. I penetrated the depths of my inner complexity as a

hypnotist and unlocked pathways to healing and self-discovery. As a psychiatric counsellor, I've had the honour of helping people and couples go through strange feelings while encouraging development and fortitude.

My work is underpinned by a fundamental belief: each meaningful interaction starts with the individual's own understanding. I view marriage and relationships through this prism while examining their intricacies. Our perception of ourselves is inextricably tied to our capacity to negotiate the challenges of love, relationships, and conflict resolution.

In addition to offering helpful advice, my intention in writing this book is to provide a philosophical compass to help navigate the highs and lows of marriage. A recurring topic in these pages is the conviction that close ties are the foundation of sound relationships.

Relationships woven throughout my life create a story that sums up not only my career path but also my core identity. In my work as an Indian psychotherapist, hypnotist, and counselling psychologist, I focus primarily on interpersonal connections spanning a range of emotions and levels of self-awareness in my relationship study.

Relationships were more than just interpersonal growth as Indian culture became more sophisticated; they were canvases on which the tapestry of life was unveiled.

The depth of the relationships inside the family, between generations, and within the community left a lasting impression on me. These early experiences spark a curiosity that eventually develops into a committed effort to comprehend the intricacy of interpersonal interactions.

Moments of transformation are what life does to us. Mine was no different—these moments, whether it was a buddy overcoming the difficulties of a demanding marriage or the happiness that results from a couple getting back together, ignited my in-depth investigation of mental health therapy and every heartbreak that makes an impact, case by case, success by success.

During my path of self-discovery, I understood that my relationships reflected the changes I was going through. It became evident to me as I got to know myself—the complexity of my desires, anxieties, and vulnerabilities—and the significant influence it had on my interactions with other people that our capacity to process and internalise emotions is what fosters healthy connections with other people.

As a therapist, my attitude about relationships is moulded by actual experiences rather than pure fantasy. My understanding of this philosophy's mosaic of self-discovery first came from the happy times, the disappointment shadows, and the resilience that came out of the furnace of suffering. It taught me that we open the door to deeper, more meaningful communication with our partners by releasing the layers of solids within ourselves.

For me, empathy is the link that binds my professional career to my personal experience. It's the capacity to empathise with people's problems and challenges when looking for relationship advice. In addition to offering therapeutic assistance, my objective is to accompany the journey, understanding that the path

Next, each chapter will be read aloud by my network of relationships, bringing you through a gamut of beautiful feelings and offering insights drawn from both personal and professional

rhythms and experiences. We weave our connections together through a complicated dance of self-discovery, love, and resiliency.

As an Indian psychotherapist, hypnotist, and counselling psychologist, it is crucial to disclose the philosophical foundation upon which my work as chapters delving into intricate matrimonial connections rests. This foundation results from professional development, self-evaluation, and firm confidence in the transforming potential of self-understanding in relational contexts. It is more than just a collection of ideas.

My perspective is based on the idea that our strong sense of self is closely related to the calibre of our interactions. In particular, partnerships reflect the people involved rather than separate entities in the sacredness of marriage.

It's a relationship between two recognisable entities that negotiate a wide range of complicated feelings, goals, and vulnerabilities.

One must embark on an inside trip to fully comprehend the dynamics of a relationship. Reflection turns into a compass that helps us navigate the complex web of our own emotions, desires, and concerns. We can penetrate the layers of our identity and comprehend the intricacies of our partner's inner world only by being self-aware.

We view our ideas via the prism of our interpersonal connections. Every moment of intimacy, every shared happiness, and every handled disagreement weave together to form the fabric of our people's connection and unity. Seeing the well-being of each member as extending to the health of the marriage is a critical component of nurturing a relationship.

The recognition and acceptance of vulnerability is a fundamental tenet of my ideology. I support having the guts to be vulnerable in

a culture where staticism is frequently linked to strength. Genuine relationships are based on vulnerability, which enables people to communicate their hopes, concerns, and truths and builds a level of understanding that goes beyond simple touch.

As a hypnotist, I have witnessed firsthand the enormous benefits of tapping into the subconscious to promote all-encompassing healing. The mind, the storehouse of memories, ideas, and feelings, significantly influences how our relationships function. By establishing these pools, people can pinpoint the underlying expressions and patterns that impact their relationships and pave the path for profound change.

The foundation of my healing process is empathy. We can close the gap between differing viewpoints and develop a sympathetic comprehension of our partner's experiences by cultivating empathy. By demonstrating empathy, we establish a secure environment for candid dialogue and provide the groundwork for enduring and satisfying bonds.

I hope to convey philosophy, as well as knowledge, on every page of this book. This philosophy views relationships as a never-ending journey toward self-awareness and mutual understanding. I hope these chapters will provide further insight and inspiration for your relational exploration journey.

Drawing my invitation into the canvas of my path and faith, I feel obliged to commission this investigation of the intricate dance of connections in marriage. I genuinely desire to share my roots with others through my philosophy, which is my passion.

I'll discover that we are all on the exact search for purpose when I delve into the complexity of relationships. We can go together through the tiny landscapes of love, friendship, and self-discovery



on every page and every chapter. My words invite me to go with them as we explore the depths of the human heart and mind, not merely a set of rules.

My foray into the fields of counselling psychology and mental health wasn't isolated. It was moulded by individual experiences, life-changing events, and a sincere wish to improve the well-being of single people and married couples. This book is a passion project that reflects his awareness of the complexities of human connections and, in many respects, is an extension of his beginnings.

The idea that connections are the foundation of our existence lies at the heart of my beliefs. They are intricately woven into the very fabric of who we are, not something that exists outside us. My motivation for becoming a psychotherapist stems from my realisation that our well-being is significantly impacted by the calibre of our relationships, with our perception of ourselves in these interactions serving as the foundation for this impact.

Imagine me as a travel companion and a writer as you turn these pages. You're not alone as we navigate a land of emotion, resilience, and self of the cohabitation of the sight that defines the terrain, whether you're looking for insights to strengthen your relationships, overcoming obstacles, or simply exploring the depths of your psyche.

Consider this book as a haven of safety, a place where empathy and compassion coexist with intimacy. As we continue to have deep talks about everyday human experiences of love, growth, and communication, I sincerely hope that you will find helpful ideas and a sense of connection in these pages.

Your struggles, victories, and experiences all play a crucial role in the tale we have created. While you review the chapters, I encourage you to consider your journey. Take in the information, express your opinions, and think about how the insights offered relate to your own story. Your contributions are valuable and enhance the overall tapestry we create together.

I'm thankful for the chance to share in your journey and am looking forward to the times of reflection, connection, sharing, and understanding that lie ahead.

**I give a hearty greeting,**

**Greeshma Nataraj,**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Being a writer needs to be very considerate and a task of patience. Writing a suitable book was a dream of mine, which I have tried to fulfil with this beautiful piece you will read.

I came up with the idea from the experience I had in my professional life. Over 21 years as a psychologist counsellor, I saw many instances that I discussed in this book. In today's time, there is no value in relationships. Every day we read about a mother killing a child, a husband raping a wife, and a father sleeping with his daughter.

The pretext towards relationships is changing. Nobody has patience. Our lives have become like reels on Instagram. We want to know the entire story in one second without understanding the concept.

Writing this small piece with all the incidents I see, hear and experience around me didn't come easy. Multiple breakdowns, a roller coaster of emotions and all the horrible stories came rushing down to me. "I thought I did" has a deep meaning when you read ahead, but I resonated a lot with this title, as I wrote because I thought and I finally did it.

The character's name in the story ahead is fictitious. The story is from my experience with clients as a relationship therapist who faced similar life challenges.

I want to extend my special thanks to Tanya, Nataraj(my husband) and Akash; without their help, it would have been impossible to write this book. They help me a lot throughout the writing process. I would also like to express my gratitude to my family and friends, who supported me every step.

## PREFACE

India, a land spun from sun-drenched plains and moonlit bazaars, is a country where spices dance in the air and laughter erupts like monsoon rain. This is where our story begins, not in the grand pronouncements of history but under the gentle sway of a mango tree, its leaves whispering secrets to the wind.

In the diverse thread of relationships that weave through our lives, Indians, by nature, embody a spirit of friendliness, hospitality, and respect for others. As we embark on this journey, let's steer clear of political landscapes; here, we are navigating the intricate landscapes of human emotions, understanding, and the quest for connection.

In a world of confusion and uncertainties, we often hesitate to confide in others. The fear of judgment from friends and foes leaves us pondering: who is the guiding light in our quest for understanding? Where do we open our hearts without the looming threat of condemnation? It's a problem many face, leading us to bottle up our emotions or seek solace in the vast ocean of online self-help resources.

India, a land of diverse beliefs and values, continues to grapple with misconceptions surrounding mental health. The stigma attached to seeking professional help persists, leaving individuals to navigate the tumultuous sea of emotional distress alone.

The alchemy that transforms love into enduring connection lies at the heart of our exploration. How do the recesses of our minds shape the delicate dance of intimacy? Can the profound complexities of our thoughts hold the key to deciphering the intricacies of marriage?

In a society where one in ten associates mental health with being labelled as "MAD," the need for open conversations becomes paramount. We witness a cascade of emotions, from overthinking about mental asylums to the desperate search for solutions in self-help literature. But do we realise specialists are at our disposal, ready to guide us systematically through our struggles?

The human brain, a marvel of intricate functioning, holds the key to understanding the emotional intricacies within the framework of marriage. Yet, cultural differences shape our perspectives. While Western societies prioritise mental health as an essential component of well-being, India is at a crossroads, navigating societal expectations and economic demands.

In a world where mental health is still a misunderstood concept, we often find ourselves confused about whether to seek the counsel of a psychologist or a psychiatrist. The lack of awareness fuels the cycle of silence, perpetuating the notion that mental health difficulties are better left untouched.

The following pages delve into the diverse roles of mental health providers, offering insights into the functions of psychologists, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, counsellors, and coaches. It's an invitation to unravel the complexities of relationships, explore the therapeutic interventions psychologists provide, and understand when medication might be a necessary part of the journey.

As we journey through the chapters, we confront the reality that many individuals only use a fraction of their brain's capacity. Our thoughts, often left on autopilot, wield power to shape our behaviour, sometimes leading to anger, worry, or depression. Depression, particularly among the youth, has become a pressing concern, pushing some towards drugs or even thoughts of suicide.

In a landscape of emotional imbalance, psychologists become invaluable guides. They offer techniques to navigate emotional turbulence, enhance communication skills, and lay the groundwork for healthy relationships. The therapeutic process becomes a safe space for exploring concerns, gaining insights, and developing practical strategies for addressing emotional imbalances within marriage or relationships.

Amidst these intricacies, the question of prioritising mental health in India emerges. With stressors ranging from societal expectations to economic pressures, mental health awareness becomes crucial for the population's overall well-being. India's cultural emphasis on familial and societal bonds necessitates focusing on mental health to strengthen these connections.

In a world where our lives are governed by our nurturing environment and the love we receive in our formative years, the pillars of understanding, trust, patience, space, and respect become the foundation of a thriving marriage. This book aims to unravel the mysteries of the human mind, the dance of emotions, and the delicate threads that bind two souls in matrimony.

But this is not a map offering preordained routes and infallible answers. We'll delve into the shadows, not to condemn, but to understand.

Is it true, as our grandmothers whisper, that love chooses us as much as we choose it? And if so, what forces guide its hand? Is its destiny written in the stars or a constellation of choices we make, conscious and unconscious, that illuminates the path toward another heart?

And what of marriage, that strong ties of two souls? Can it stand firm amidst the whirlwinds of expectations, societal pressures, and the inevitable storms that life throws our way? Or is it a fragile orchid wilting under the harsh glare of reality?

We'll meet people along the way; their stories etched with tears and laughter, triumphs and losses. Each voice has a unique melody, adding its harmony to the symphony of love and understanding. We'll hear from the young couple embarking on their shared journey, their eyes wide with hope and trepidation. We'll sit with the seasoned veterans, their hands woven with the threads of time, their eyes reflecting the wisdom gleaned from years of laughter and compromise.

And what of ourselves amidst this chorus of voices? Where do we find our rhythm in this grand orchestra of human connection? This book invites us to turn the lens inward to explore the landscapes of our minds and hearts. Perhaps the answers we seek lie not in distant stars or whispered prophecies but within the quiet chambers of our being.

This is not a self-help manual offering cookie-cutter solutions or rigid formulas for happiness. It's a mirror, a space to confront our vulnerabilities, fears, and hidden desires. It's a call to embrace the complexities of who we are, the light and the shadows, for it is in this acceptance that genuine connection with ourselves and others begins to blossom.



Join me on this beneath the shade of the ancient mango tree, where the whispers of love mingle with the scent of spices and the rhythm of life, exploring the depths of the human psyche, where questions outnumber answers, and the journey promises revelations beyond the surface. The canvas of marriage awaits, inviting you to paint your colours, embracing imperfections, and understanding that, in matters of the heart, there is seldom a one-size-fits-all solution. Let the journey commence, and may it be as mysterious and enigmatic as the labyrinth of the human mind.



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# 1

## LOVE ACROSS AGES

What is the idea of love for you? Is it the classic saga of Raj and Simran from DDLJ or the on-again-off-again dance of emotions between Rachel and Ross from Friends?

In today's world, relationships are facing a storm, turbulent and unpredictable. They're becoming increasingly fragile, shattering like delicate glass, leaving us wondering where love is in this chaos.

We all carry unique perceptions of love, shaped by the stories we've seen, the experiences we've had, and the expectations we've built.

Love, that timeless enigma, has captivated hearts and minds since the dawn of humanity. It isn't the property of today's generation. It's been ever since Shiva and Parwati mirrored the enduring essence of true love.

LOVE is exploring a profound emotion that resides within us from the beginning - BIRTH. It has layers of sentiment that give access to the heart of everyone with whom we interact or even give a glance.

That's the beginning of a ship called RELATIONSHIP.

It isn't something that we learn. From the moment we come into this world, love surrounds us. It's the warmth of a mother's embrace and the soothing lullabies that cradle us to sleep. Love, in its simplest form, is our first and most enduring connection.

Our rich Indian culture teaches us about love, relationships, and respect in some or the other ways. It's the relationship and love between siblings, the joy of playing with friends, and our respect for our elders. Love and relationships aren't just words; they are feelings we express through our actions, traditions, and daily interactions. They go both hand in hand.

Remember those grand gestures? The love letters penned under flickering candlelight, the whispered promises carried by the wind, the serenades sung beneath balconies? In today's world of instant gratification and fleeting connections, where love is parsed through algorithms and measured in likes, it's easy to wonder if those stories are mere relics of a bygone era.

Love might not be about sweeping you off your feet anymore, but it's still out there, whispering in unexpected places. Like the shared grin with a stranger over a spilt ice cream cone or how your best friend can tell you're having a bad day just by looking at you.

Think of love like a superhero with chameleon powers. It blends in, sometimes hidden in ordinary moments, like helping your grandma cross the street or laughing so hard you snort milk out your nose with your siblings. It's not always fireworks and butterflies, but it's warm and fuzzy in a way that makes your heart dance happily.

But sometimes, we get so caught up in the latest trends and perfect online profiles that we miss the real deal right before us. We

compare our messy, real-life relationships to the filtered fairy tales on our screens, and suddenly, everything feels...meh.

In the midst of this turmoil, Can love still happen?

Love isn't bound by age, relationship status, or marital history. It's a dynamic emotion that can manifest anywhere in our lives. It doesn't matter if you're in a relationship, married, or even a widow, and love remains a possibility.

Patience is a rare virtue, respect is a dwindling currency, and love is a fleeting emotion, changing with every passing moment. Some argue that love is an endangered species, while others reminisce about a time when love thrived in the bonds of matrimony. Is this our reality, or are we merely chasing after a mirage of what once was?

A couple walked into my office seeking couples counselling (story unveiled in next chapter), a journey that revealed the intricacies of love in our modern times. People fall in love at different paces – some at first sight, others over days, weeks, or even months.

Some people feel attracted to someone else while in a relationship, and some people fall in love even after they are married; mind here, it's not necessary in love.

We may be attracted to someone's beauty or admire their nature and characteristics. But as for our societal culture, we suppress among us

We internalise these emotions, silently pondering them. This pattern has persisted through generations. If someone expresses these feelings openly, society often responds with judgment. The person, whether a man or a woman, may face disrespect, be thrown out of the house, or be labelled as involved in an extramarital affair.

The repercussions extend to family members, especially kids and partners.

Many others become entangled in these relationships. Some offer advice, some condemn, and sadly, some even lose their lives. But amidst the societal judgments and the heat of such situations, the more profound question remains: What does a person truly go through, and why does this happen?

Challenges are always there in life, like love is always around us. We admire the beauty. Sometimes, we like the nature of the person, some essential characteristics.

We have our kids, we are grown up, but we still love it when Shah Rukh Khan opens both his arms and says that dialogue, I love you. We still fall for it.

The dimple on Amir Khan's face is still there. So, is that wrong? Are we the bad person?

Now, even though they are grown up, we are also grown up, but still, that crush is there. Crushes can happen to anyone at any point of time in life.

As we get older in any relationship, our understanding of love deepens, and our bond strengthens. It changes as time goes by, but at its heart, it stays the same.

In relationships, we learn to adapt, blending our traditional values with the changes in the modern world. It's like a wise guide that accompanies us through the journey of life.

For each person on this earth, relationships are like a family treasure passed down through generations. They're the stories our grandparents tell, the customs we follow, and the values that shape



who we are. Relationships are like a chest full of feelings that make our lives richer.

As we navigate the different phases of life, Relationship love evolves and adapts. It's a continuous process of learning and growing, passing on the legacy of love from one generation to the next. Our elders share their wisdom, and the younger generation brings fresh perspectives, creating a harmonious cycle of love in relationships.

Psychology research shows love and relationships are crucial for mental and emotional well-being. From when we're little to when we're old, having passion and relationships around us contributes to our resilience, happiness, and belonging. Understanding that love and relationships are timeless allows us to appreciate their positive impact on our life satisfaction.

Remember those pair of comfy jeans which you love? They've been around forever and seen trends come and go, but they still make you feel good, inside and out. Love, like those trusty jeans, has some universal threads that hold firm no matter the fashion season.

That elusive butterfly we chase through gardens of hope and disappointment. It flits across cultures and centuries, whispering its secrets in different languages, yet somehow, its essence remains reliably the same. Despite the changing canvas of time, specific threads bind our relationships across generations, weaving a tapestry of shared human experience.

**Thread #1:** Connection Cravings: Humans are pack animals, remember? We crave that feeling of belonging, like a warm hug on a cold day. Whether it's cave paintings of hand-holding couples or endless late-night texts, that need for connection never goes out of style.

**Thread #2:** Care Crew: From grandma knitting mittens to partners making sure you take medicine, showing you care is love's secret weapon. It whispers in acts of service, gentle words, and that extra slice of pizza you know they saved for you. It's the language of "I get you," spoken without a single word.

**Thread #3:** Vulnerability Tango: Let's face it, love means opening your heart like a treasure chest, hoping it won't get plundered. From knights declaring their love to sharing your deepest fears, this willingness to be seen, warts and all, is the bridge to genuine trust and intimacy. It's a risky dance, but the reward is a connection more profound than the Mariana Trench.

**Thread #4:** Communication Cha-Cha: From hieroglyphics whispering "you rock" to emojis exploding with laughter, communication is the bridge that connects hearts. It's not just words; it's listening with your eyes, understanding what's unsaid, and learning each other's secret love languages (hinGreeshma: cheesy memes might be one!).

**Thread #5:** Commitment Marathon: Love isn't a sprint; it's a marathon with hills, potholes, and maybe even a banana peel. But the key is sticking together, hand in hand, through thick and thin. It's about weathering storms, celebrating victories, and reminding each other, "Hey, we're in this together, and that's pretty awesome."

## 2

### IS LOVE ENOUGH?

Counselling or therapies wasn't something that Alex and Sarah were much familiar with. They had come with different kinds of thoughts in their minds. Sarah had seen other movies where the therapist works like magic fixing the worst, and she was keen to try it.

On the other hand, Alex was ready to give in anything to get a chance from Sarah that made them visit Greeshma.

As they entered the room, they were nervous and uncomfortable about what to expect next. At the threshold, they were staring at the room around, and it was well-maintained with a cosy and welcoming feel.

On the right-hand corner was an elegant shelf with all the awards kept carefully at a distance while their clean, shiny surface was enough to grab the attention of anyone who entered the room. The walls had an ivory colour paint that was calming and subtle. It gave them an immediate sense of hope and optimism, soothing their nervous trail of thoughts.

There was a faint sense of lavender aroma that suddenly made Sarah recall all their happy moments together, and she quickly shook her head, trying to control them while taking a step forward.

Some relaxing music was playing in the background, giving a sense of hope to Alex, who turned his face to glance at Sarah, who seemed lost in deep thoughts.

In the centre, Greeshma was busy talking on the phone when she saw them enter while listening to the call. She was staring at their expression, which she had seen countless times earlier with every new couple entering the room.

She could quickly feel their underlying discomfort, nervousness and uncertainty about what to expect next. Taking up the role of a good host, she offered them a warm handshake, disconnecting the call.

In an attempt to break the ice, she immediately complimented the couple, who took a glance at each other, suddenly smiling at each other. Alex wasn't sure about discussing their issues with a third person, but the welcoming feel of the room and the warm personality of Greeshma put him at ease.

Greeshma gestured towards the couch with a warm and inviting smile. "Make yourselves comfortable. Coffee or tea?" Greeshma took a chair, sitting face to face with them while they carefully took their seats. Sarah consciously made sure that there was some distance between them.

Sarah smiles faintly, accepting a steaming mug of mint tea. Alex opts for coffee, his hands clutching the mug too tightly.

Greeshma waited in silence, waiting for them to speak first. They looked towards each other with their nervousness evident, whispering about who would take the first turn to talk.

Greeshma noticed their gestures when they entered her room and decided to break the confusion.

Greeshma said while leaning forward, sporting a warm smile. "I know coming here can be daunting, but I want to assure you that this is a safe space to talk openly and honestly about whatever's weighing on you." Sarah nodded, taking a deep breath, "Thank you, Greeshma. It's... well, it's complicated."

Greeshma listened intently to every word as her eyebrows furrowed slightly to show concern as she said, "That's okay. Take your time. I'm glad you took the step to come in today. Let's start by getting to know each other a bit. How did you two meet?"

At the mention of their meeting, Sarah chuckled while her eyes sparkled with some fond memories. "Oh, it's a bit of a cliché, really. High school sweethearts."

Alex nodded with a reminiscent smile on her lips, "Yeah, I was a few years older, but we clicked."

Greeshma carefully observed their body language, feeling a subtle warmth between the couple. "High school sweethearts, a classic beginning." Sarah replied while leaning back with a gentle smile.

Greeshma: Which activity do you both enjoy doing together which brought you together?

Sarah smiles with her face lighting up, "We love hiking. It's our little escape. We used to bunk our classes and go for hikes and have those long conversations."

Alex nodded while his eyes reflected tranquillity like nature. "Yeah, nature has a way of calming things down."

Greeshma noted their connection with nature and leaned forward to listen with more interest. Hiking was a shared escape between them. Her gaze shifted between them, thinking about the option of nature therapy. "Now, let's talk about the journey you're on together. What prompted you to seek counseling?"

Sarah: "Life, you know, it throws you curveballs. We've been married for 15 years, and... things haven't been the same lately." She said with a flicker of sadness in her eyes."

Alex nodded in return; however, his eyes were fixed on the swirling patterns in his coffee.

Greeshma saw it and nodded understandingly. She said, "I see. Can you tell me more about what's changed?"

Sarah: "It's a feeling, really like a distance. He used to be so present, always sharing his day and making me laugh. I felt like the luckiest person on this earth, having him aside. It's been 15 years, and I never felt our honeymoon phase ever disappear. Now, it feels like everything just changed overnight. He's... withdrawn. He works late, avoids eye contact, and sometimes, I find him on his phone, typing away in the dark. She said the last few lines with a tremor in her voice.

Greeshma leaned back with thoughtful eyes. "Those sound like significant changes, Sarah. And understandably, they're causing you concern."

Sarah: "Yes. And then there are these... things. Dates circled on the calendar, expensive receipts for hotels and restaurants I've

never seen, a single earring I don't recognise hidden in his drawer." She said with her voice cracking in the end

Greeshma turned to Alex, who was avoiding eye contact, fidgeting with his hands. "Alex, Sarah has shared some of her concerns about the changes in your relationship. Would you like to add your perspective?"

Alex cleared his throat and began speaking in a low voice. "Uh... yeah, doc. You see, things haven't been easy lately. Work pressure's been insane, and I guess...." He trailed off, trying to avoid Sarah's gaze.

Greeshma maintained a calm, neutral tone, "Alex, it's important to be honest in this space. Can you elaborate on what you mean by 'things haven't been easy'?"

Alex hesitated and took a few glances briefly before he looked away. "It's just... we haven't connected like we used to. We barely talk, intimacy feels forced, and sometimes, I feel lost." He said with a hint of vulnerability. Greeshma nodded empathetically. "Losing that connection can be incredibly isolating, Alex. And Sarah mentioned finding some discrepancies in your schedule and finances. Can you shed some light on that?"

Alex tensed up and avoided meeting eyes with both Sarah and Greeshma. "Those... those were just business trips. And some dinners with clients."

Greeshma raised an eyebrow slightly and said with a calm voice. "Alex, Sarah found receipts for hotels and restaurants that don't align with your typical business travel."

Sarah's voice trembled. "And the earring, Alex. Where did it come from?"

Alex's shame over it was evident in his posture, and his shoulders slumped. "Look, I... I made a mistake," he said while avoiding eye contact, glancing to the other side.

Greeshma leaned forward and started speaking with a gentle voice. "It's okay to acknowledge that, Alex. Mistakes happen. What's important now is understanding why you made them and taking responsibility for your actions."

Alex finally met Sarah's gaze and eyes filled with regret. "Sarah, I'm so sorry. I... I felt disconnected, lonely, and I... I acted out impulsively. It was never meant to hurt you."

Sarah's suppressed tears began to well up. "But it did, Alex. It shattered our trust. I'm confused, hurt, and... I don't know what to think anymore. Is it my fault? Did I do something wrong?"

Greeshma reached out and offered a comforting tissue to her. "It's natural to question yourself in situations like this, Sarah. But please remember, infidelity is never a reflection of the betrayed partner's worth. It's a symptom of something deeper within the relationship."

Sarah: "Deeper? But how? We built something so strong together. We have a beautiful home, two loving kids, and we share the same dreams." She wiped away a tear when she ended speaking. Greeshma nodded slowly. "Those are all wonderful things, Sarah. But sometimes, even the strongest foundations can develop cracks." She leaned forward, speaking, "Perhaps beneath the surface, unmet needs, unspoken frustrations, or a gradual loss of connection have been simmering."

Sarah's eyes widened. "Are you saying... maybe it's not just about another woman?"



Greeshma: "I'm saying that understanding the root cause is crucial before assigning blame. And that often, infidelity is a cry for help, a desperate attempt to fill a void within the relationship."

Sarah looked thoughtful after hearing what Greeshma said. She took a deep breath and continued. "That's... a lot to process. But you're right. It doesn't feel like Alex is happy, either. He seems lost, disconnected."

With an encouraging smile, Greeshma continued, "There's strength in recognising that, Sarah. And there's hope, too. If you're both willing to explore the underlying issues with an open heart and a commitment to healing, there's a chance to rebuild trust and connection."

Sarah's eyes had a hope of glimmer in them. "Rebuild? Even after this?" Greeshma nodded gently to Sarah. "Reconciliation is possible, Sarah. But it's a journey, not a destination. It requires immense courage, honesty, and a willingness to forgive. And most importantly, it requires communication, open and honest communication with Alex. I'll help you through this journey to untangle your thought process and stand with you in what you both decide.

Alex nodded resolutely. "I understand. I owe Sarah the truth, and I'm ready to face the consequences." Sarah said, "This you should remember before you did all this!"

Alex took over, saying, "Sarah, I know what I did can never be fixed, but can..."

Sarah suddenly interrupted, "Would you have accepted me if I had done this?" The statement echoed in the entire room, showing her anger and frustration.

The frustration in Sarah's statement was so evident that Alex could feel the shiver and fear flowing through his veins.

There was a sudden and complete silence in the room. Greeshma got up from the seat, hugged Sarah and smiled encouragingly towards her. "Sarah, it's your choice whether you're willing to listen and rebuild. This won't be easy, but with honesty and communication, there's a chance to rebuild trust and reconnect."

Sarah took a deep breath. "I'm scared, Greeshma. But I'm also willing to try. For Alex, for us, and maybe even for myself."

Greeshma smiled warmly. "That's the first step, Sarah. The willingness to confront the challenges is the foundation of healing. And in this journey, you won't be alone. We'll work together. Thank you for acknowledging that. Now, I want to introduce a technique that might help us explore these emotions more intensely. I practice hypnotherapy, and I have made my own program, FACTS (face, accept, commit, transform for success), and with your consent, we can use it to delve into your subconscious thoughts and feelings. It's a tool that can aid in understanding and healing your inner child."

Sarah looked confused and asked, "What is Hypnotherapy? How does that work? Is it the way shown in television or movies? How do FACTS and hypnotherapy go together?"

Greeshma gave a subtle smile, continuing, "No! I know where it is coming from. I know most people associate hypnotism with a negative aspect. Think of it as a guided meditation to explore your subconscious, the hidden parts of your mind that influence your behaviour and emotions. Think of watching a captivating movie; you're engrossed yet fully aware. Similarly, here, you'll be relaxed, focused, and in control."

Alex was curious: "Movies? How's that relevant?"

Greeshma asked, "Tell me the last movie you watched together where you both laughed, jumped, and even shed a tear."

Sarah answered, "Recently, we watched *12th Fail*. It was about a real-life couple who went the extra mile to support each other through thick and thin. We loved it so much that Sarah couldn't stop crying."

Sarah became emotional, saying, "She stood by him through failures and setbacks. Their bond was just incredible."

Alex said, "It made me realise how, sometimes, we prioritise our anxieties over understanding each other's dreams. Shraddha championed Manoj's UPSC goal while facing her insecurities."

Sarah said, "And how he, in turn, supported her decision to return to work later. It was a true partnership, not a sacrifice."

Greeshma was content with her explanation, "Exactly! Hypnotherapy can help us tap into that inner strength, that willingness to go the extra mile for someone we love. Remember, like Manoj and Shraddha, it's okay to be vulnerable to express our fears and needs. Communication and trust are the bridge, not competition."

Sarah seemed relaxed, "It makes sense."

Greeshma said, "Yeah. Now that's hypnotherapy. You get so engrossed in the storyline that the ads popping up don't bother you. You eagerly await more seasons because you're so glued to the narrative. That's a form of hypnotism—your attention is so focused that the outside world fades away."

Sarah accepted, saying, "Okay, I'm curious! What do we do?"

Alex was on the same page, "Yeah, it's not as mysterious as I thought."

Greeshma was happy, and she said, "I'm glad it resonates with you both. I'll guide you through visualisations and positive affirmations while comfortably seated. Remember, the focus is on self-exploration, not mind control. If you have any more questions or concerns, feel free to ask."

Alex quickly countered, "No, I want to get it right for her...."

Sarah and Alex looked at each other for a while before Greeshma interrupted the silence.

Greeshma broke the silence. "That's wonderful, Alex. Seeing your support for Sarah's journey is admirable. Please fill out this concern form so we can start our journey together."

Both filled out their forms as Sarah confirmed some information with Alex.

Greeshma continued, "Now before we delve into the FACTS program and inner child healing, I'd like to understand both of your backgrounds better. Sometimes, our childhood experiences can leave hidden imprints on our adult relationships. Whether we recognise it or not, it just sits in our subconscious and keeps writing our present scenarios."

Turning to Alex, she asked, "Could you tell me about your family dynamics growing up, Alex? Were your parents open and encouraging when you expressed your opinions? Did you feel free to explore your interests and have fun?"

Alex took a deep breath with a sense of hesitancy. "Umm...My childhood was...structured. I was the eldest, and all my siblings were sisters. I had to set an example and be a big brother."

Greeshma nodded compassionately, imagining the situation. "That sounds like a significant responsibility for a young boy. Were you allowed to have fun, engage in playful activities, and express yourself freely?"

Alex leaned back and tried to reflect on those words. "Well, all my siblings were sisters. We belonged to a middle-class family, and getting a job was the topmost priority."

Greeshma nodded with empathy. "Sounds like you had to grow up fast, Alex. How about expressing yourself and your opinions?"

Alex smirked faintly, "Hmmm... Not exactly. It was all school, cricket practice, extra classes - building a future, you know?"

Greeshma said compassionately, "Did your parents ever misunderstand you or your needs? Did you feel like you were losing your childhood trying to meet the expectations?"

Alex closed his eyes briefly, and his eyes faintly flickered, expressing his vulnerability. "Yeah, sometimes. They saw this perfect path for me, and anything else was...off-key. They didn't allow me for birthday parties, playing in the rain, all those small joys that make you a kid. I buried myself in books, exams, anything to prove I was on the right track, even if it felt like a tightrope walk."

Greeshma understood his situation and asked, "And your sisters, Alex? Did they ever feel you were missing out, carrying a load they couldn't share?"

A slight confusion emerged on Alex's face. He said, "They'd catch me sometimes, staring out the window, wishing I could join their silly games. They'd pull me in and try to make me laugh,

but... it was hard. Responsibility felt like a heavy cloak, always draped over my shoulders."

Greeshma acknowledged the piece of information he shared, "Sounds like you carried a lot, Alex, even before your shoulders were wide enough. And how do you think this dance you learned in childhood has shaped your approach to love, your understanding of what it means to connect truly?"

Alex was hesitant and searched for the right words to continue. "I guess it made me serious, dependable. Always there to hold things together, be the rock. But maybe it also made me... afraid to let go, to be vulnerable, just to let someone see me for who I am, not just the responsible brother, the good son. Maybe I built walls instead of bridges, thinking that was what love was, what it meant to protect."

Greeshma smiled with understanding the words he just said, "We all build walls sometimes, Alex. But sometimes, the most beautiful gardens bloom when we learn to let the sunlight in, to trust that true connection grows in shared vulnerability, not hidden burdens. And that's where Sarah comes in, with her own melody, story of expectations and unspoken needs. Are you ready to hear it, Alex?"

Alex took a deep breath after sharing some serious details and nodded a 'yes'. Greeshma was further intrigued, "That's a valuable insight. Now, Sarah, do you mind sharing a bit about your childhood? How were your early years?"

Sarah smiled, seemingly remembering her happy childhood days, saying, "I grew up in a close-knit family. We didn't have much, but there was always laughter and warmth at home. My parents

emphasised the importance of family bonds, and we cherished simple joys.”

Greeshma replied warmly, “That sounds lovely. Were you encouraged to express your thoughts and feelings?”

Sarah nodded enthusiastically, “Oh, yes! My parents were all about open communication. They weren't just interested in the A+ report cards; and they wanted to hear about the first heart-wrenching crush, the tears after falling off my bike, and the silly poems I scribbled in notebooks. Everything mattered, and expressing it freely made me feel like I had this invisible shield of their understanding around me.”

Greeshma smiled warmly after listening, “That sounds sweet, Sarah. Like growing up in a sun-drenched meadow, with space for every bloom to open up. Were you encouraged to be independent as well?”

Sarah grinned, hearing it, “You bet! I have this amazing little brother, Rohan. We were partners in crime, always up to some mischief. Building pillow forts, creating secret languages, giggling until our sides hurt – our childhood was a whirlwind of shared secrets and endless adventures.”

A genuine smile spread across Alex's Face, “Wow, that's so different from my world. Mine was more like navigating a narrow mountain path, always focused on the next peak, the next milestone.”

Greeshma noticed a shift in their expressions and said, “ But Sarah, how did your parents react when you faced challenges or setbacks?”

Sarah thought briefly before saying, “Of course, there were storms. A failed audition, a falling out with a best friend, and the sting of disappointment when I didn't make the school sports team. But they were always there to pick me up. They taught us that mistakes were just bumps in the road, and the important thing was to learn from them and keep moving forward. It made me this little bouncing ball – always ready to face whatever came my way.”

Greeshma appreciated hearing it. “That's a valuable lesson, Sarah. Now, as we delve into hypnotherapy, understanding these aspects will be crucial. It's not about changing who you are, but uncovering layers that might need healing.”

Alex replied, “ I'm willing to try it if it helps us.”

Greeshma was satisfied with his answer, “Great. Let's start with a simple relaxation exercise, one at a time. Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and focus on releasing tension. As you relax, I'll guide you through exploring your emotions surrounding the affair.”

There was a few minutes of relaxation between them.

Greeshma began, “Now, I want you to imagine a safe space to express your feelings without judgment. Picture yourselves in this space, and let the emotions surface. Sarah, what are you experiencing in this safe space?”

Sarah said, “I feel a mix of pain and vulnerability, but there's also a desire for understanding.”

Greeshma replied, “Thank you for sharing. Alex, what emotions are emerging for you in this safe space?”

Alex quickly said, “I regret and a deep longing to make things right. I didn't realise the impact of my actions until now.”



Greeshma understood, "Good. As we progress, we'll work on rebuilding trust and finding healthier ways to communicate. Hypnotherapy is just one tool among many that we'll use to navigate this journey together. Remember, it's a process, and with commitment and openness, there's potential for healing and growth.

## **Session:2**

Greeshma welcomed Sarah and Alex, "I'm glad to see both of you again. In our last session, we began exploring your emotions around childhood and introduced hypnotherapy as a tool to delve deeper. How have things been since our last meeting?"

Sarah said "It's been a mix of emotions, Dr. Some days are harder than others. I've been trying to understand, but the pain is still there."

Alex said "I've been more aware of the impact of my actions. It's not easy, but I'm committed to making amends."

Greeshma cleared her throat gently, breaking the uncomfortable tension. "Sarah," he began, "before we dive deeper, is it okay for Alex to share more details about what happened?"

Sarah swallowed hard, her gaze fixed on the swirling pattern of the rug. "If it helps us understand."

Alex met her eyes, his own filled with raw shame. "I met her at a conference," he rasped. "She was... everything I felt like I was missing. Funny, intelligent, someone who actually seemed to listen."

He winced as Sarah closed her eyes, a pained sigh escaping her lips.

"It started with just talking," Alex continued, voice barely a whisper. "Lunch breaks, late-night calls... it felt like a world away from our everyday, a secret escape."

His confession hung in the air, a bitter truth twisting like a knife in Sarah's heart.

"The hotel room, the restaurants... they were just escapes too," Alex added, his voice choked with guilt. "Stupid attempts to recapture that initial spark, that excitement I forgot we even had."

Sarah opened her eyes, a flicker of anger replacing the despair. "And what about me, Alex? Did you ever think about what this would do to me, to us?"

"Every day," he choked out, tears finally spilling down his cheeks. "Sarah, you're... everything I ever wanted. You're my best friend, my confidante, the mother of my kids. I never meant to lose you."

Greeshma reached for a box of tissues, offering them to Sarah first. "Taking responsibility is crucial, Alex," he said gently. "But Sarah needs more than just words. What are you willing to do to rebuild the trust you broke?"

Alex looked at Sarah, his eyes pleading. "Anything. Everything. I'll go to therapy, I'll do whatever it takes to show you how much I regret my actions, how much I want us back."

Sarah stared at him, the weight of his betrayal pressing down on her. Could she forgive him? Could she rebuild what he so recklessly destroyed?

Greeshma leaned forward, sensing the turmoil within her and said, "This is a marathon, Sarah, not a sprint. Don't rush into decisions. Take your time to process everything, to understand your own anger, hurt, and maybe even your own needs."

She turned to Alex. "And you, Alex, need to be patient. Give Sarah the space she needs, offer unwavering support, and show her, through consistent actions, that you're truly committed to change. **You don't have to be compelling and submissive. You can take a stand if you believe it will benefit the present and the future.** "

Greeshma listened intently as the young man poured his heart out in the session, "So, it's not just about this recent... incident with your wife,." She was cautious in choosing her words carefully, "It feels like this sense of responsibility, almost like a burden, has been weighing on you for a long time?"

Alex nodded, a weary sigh escaping his lips. "Ever since I was a kid, Doc. Being the eldest with all those sisters, I was their rock, their big brother. College felt like an extension of that, always looking after everyone, sacrificing my own fun."

"And even now, with a stable job and a loving wife, that feeling persists?"

"Exactly," Alex said, running a hand through his hair. "It's like I just don't know how to live for myself. Everything feels like a duty, a burden to shoulder. Even taking a break feels like I'm letting someone down."

Greeshma leaned back, her eyes thoughtful. "Would you say this need to be in control, to be responsible for everything, might have played a role in your recent actions?"

Alex's gaze dropped to his lap. "Maybe," he mumbled, shame evident in his voice. "I felt like I was failing her, failing to create the perfect life I thought I had to provide. The pressure... it just built up, and I..." he trailed off, unable to finish the sentence.

Greeshma offered a comforting smile. "It's okay, Alex. Suppressing emotions, especially ones like fear and insecurity, can have unintended consequences. But the good news is, you're here now, ready to talk, to understand."

"But what's the point?" Alex's voice cracked. "Can you ever forgive yourself when you hurt the one person who truly loves you?"

"Forgiveness, Alex, is a complex journey," Greeshma explained. "It's not always about condoning the action, but understanding the reasons behind it, taking responsibility, and most importantly, learning from it."

She paused, letting her words sink in. "The path to healing starts with honesty, both with yourself and your wife. Talking about your childhood, this overwhelming sense of responsibility, it's crucial for her to understand what led you here."

Alex looked up, a flicker of hope igniting in his eyes. "You think... Do you think there's a chance we can rebuild?"

"Rebuilding trust takes time and effort," Greeshma replied gently. "But if you're both willing to commit to communication, to understanding each other's needs, to therapy if needed, then yes, Alex, there's always a chance. Remember, even the tallest trees bend in the wind, sometimes just enough to weather the storm and emerge stronger."

Greeshma expressed her gratitude, "Thank you both for your openness. Before we proceed with FACT therapy as a tool to level deeper, it's important for you to know that, Whatever you are going through is connected to your inner child healing, because Alex you have grown under unhealthy, childhood and there was no scope for you to enjoy your adolescence age where the initial level of interaction happens with teenager friend circles. You were

always under the pressure of family and the belief instilled in you was that you have 4 sisters and you should be concerned about their future and their wellbeing so you were never allowed to shape your feelings and emotions. For you it was always family, financial burden, sisters marriage, money lenders. You grew up with all these insecurities which did not allow you to explore your life as a guy and you kept suppressing your emotions and feelings and made certain patterns which became your traits of life. I hope I made you clear with my words. Any questions?"

Sarah & Alex nodded together. Greeshma asked, "You want some water?"

Alex replied "Yes, please." He drinks water at a slow pace and calms down more.

Greeshma continued, "Now if you allow me, I will start with the healing session."

Alex & Sarah replied in unison, " Yes, we are ready!!"

Greeshma said, "Starting with you Alex, What I need you to do is make yourself comfortable. You might want to lie back, so that your neck is supported, uncross your ankles."

Alex said, "Yeah."

Greeshma began saying, "Alex, Let's start with deep breathing. Focus on your breathing 10, 9,8, 7, 6, 5, 4,3,2, 1..... she said in a slow and soothing voice. There you are feeling your eyelids getting heavy and dropped. Imagine you are in a staircase where you are walking from your 38 years to 30 years. Don't worry I am there with you. Even Sarah is there. Let's go a little further forward and you are 28, further getting down floor after floor in an empty

passage. Now, you are 16, going ahead you are 6 years old. Can you see something there Alex?"

Closing his eyes, he has drowned back in time mentally.

Alex said, "Yes, I am in front of my house."

Greeshma inquired, "What is there? Is there a door of wood or metal, or anything which you see?"

Alex replied, "Oh yes! There is a shoe stand and the door is grilled with a wooden main door."

Greeshma said, "Ok, I want you to open the room, Alex and keep your leg inside the house. Now, carefully close the grill and the main door. Slowly, get into your hall. Can you describe what is happening?"

Alex gave in detail, "I'm in the house by myself."

Greeshma further asked, "What are you doing?"

Alex said, "I have been asked to look after my young sisters while my parents are not at home."

Greeshma asked, "How old are you?"

Alex replied a bit confused, "I think I am six."

Greeshma said, "You said you were by yourself, but your sisters are there. What does that mean?"

Alex said, "As an elder brother, I have been asked to take care of them, protect them and ensure they are safe."

Greeshma inquired in detail, "You can see and hear what you hear then. What are you seeing, feeling and experiencing at six years old?"

Alex said, "I am watching after my sisters and wondering when my mom will return."

Greeshma quickly asked, "Why are your parents not with you?"

Alex replied, "They have attended an event organised by a close relative."

Greeshma said, "Okay, Alex, tell me more about this scene. You're six years old, alone in the house with your sisters. What are you doing to keep them occupied? Are you playing games, reading stories, or just keeping an eye on them?"

Alex continued, "I'm trying to build a fort with blankets and pillows in the living room. My sisters, Anna and Emily, are helping, but they keep getting distracted and giggling. I keep telling them we must be quiet because Mom and Dad might return soon, but they don't understand."

Greeshma questioned further, "You say you're worried about your Mom and Dad coming back. Is there a reason for that? Did they say when they'd be back, or are you just nervous about being alone in charge?"

Alex said, "They said they'd be back before lunchtime, but it's already afternoon, and my stomach is ruminating. I'm worried they've gotten lost or something terrible happened. My imagination starts running wild, picturing them stuck in traffic, arguing with each other, or even worse."

Greeshma asked, "And how do those worries make you feel? Are you scared, anxious, or maybe even a little angry?"

Alex said, "A mix of all those things. My heart is pounding like a drum, and my hands are clammy. I want to cry, but I must be

strong for my sisters. I try to distract myself by building the fort faster, but the images of them alone and hurt keep flickering."

Greeshma said soothingly, "Okay, Alex, you're back at that moment, six years old, watching your sisters. Can you tell me what happens next?"

Alex's eyes closed, and with a hesitant voice, he continued speaking, "My sister, she's reaching for the cookie jar... it crashes to the floor. Glass everywhere. She screams, blood on her hand. I rush over, frozen with fear. Mom and Dad come in, faces pale. They look at me, at the mess, at her crying..."

Greeshma was gentle and firm. "Stop right there, Alex. Remember, you're six. You're scared. What do you say to your parents?"

Alex's voice choked as he said, "I... I'm sorry. It's my fault. I wasn't watching."

Greeshma: But you were just a little boy. Imagine now, you're back in that moment. But this time, instead of apologising, you run to your parents. You hug them, sobbing. You tell them you were scared, worried they wouldn't come back. You didn't say it's your fault, but you tell them you love them."

Tears welled up in Alex's eyes. "I... I do love them. I missed them so much."

Greeshma said, "That's right, Alex. Now, imagine your parents holding you, their love warm and reassuring. They don't blame you. They understand. They see a scared little boy who does his best."



Alex's voice trembled as he spoke, "They... they forgive me? They forgive me? Mom and Dad.... You forgive me?" he said with a shivering voice and suddenly burst into tears.

Greeshma said in a soothing tone, "Absolutely. They love you, Alex. Now, let's switch roles. Imagine you're your mother. You see your daughter hurt, blood on her hand. What's your first instinct?"

Alex gasped "Oh no! My baby! I rush to her, hold her, comfort her. I will take her to the doctor to ensure she's okay."

Greeshma asked, "And your other child, Alex? What do you feel when you see him scared and blaming himself?"

Alex's voice softened as he said, "My poor boy. He's just a child trying to be strong. I'd hold him too, tell him it's okay. I'd explain that accidents happen; it's not his fault."

Greeshma said, "That's right, Alex. You see now, as a mother, you wouldn't blame your child for an accident. You'd comfort him, protect him. And you know why? Because you love him. You want him to be happy, to feel safe."

Alex sniffled and said, "I... I want to be happy."

Greeshma said, " Now, back in the moment, you can tell your mom. What would it be?"

Alex whispered, "I understand you, Mom. I know everything and forgive you."

Greeshma said, "You deserve to be happy, Alex. You deserve to be loved and cared for, just like your sisters. You can be responsible and care for others, but you don't have to carry the

world's weight on your shoulders. You're not Atlas, Alex. You're allowed to be human, make mistakes, and need help."

Alex's voice gained strength as he said, "I... I can be both. Responsible and happy?"

Greeshma said with conviction, "Absolutely. You can be a loving, caring brother, a responsible son, and still take care of your own needs. You can say "no" sometimes. You can ask for help. You can be human and vulnerable and still be strong."

Alex's eyes flickered, "I... I do this?" Greeshma said, "You already are, Alex. You're taking the first steps right now. Remember, you're capable, you're human, and you deserve to be happy. Repeat that to yourself every day."

Alex reflected a newfound confidence. "I am capable. I am human. I deserve to be happy."

Greeshma said carefully, "Alex, I am getting you to your present age, so slowly, as I count from 10 to 1, gradually try to walk on the same passage and come out. At the clap of my hand, you open your eyes slowly and breathe normally.

10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1,0.."

She claps, and Alex opens his eyes, breathing heavily, which gets normal in a few minutes.

Greeshma asked in a comforting tone, "How are you feeling? Do you need some water to drink or a coffee?" You can go and freshen up if you want.

Alex stands up and goes into the washroom to ease himself. He slowly splashes water on his face, and staring at the water droplets in the mirror feels fresh.

He comes back and sits on his chair, looking refreshed. There, Sarah is looking at him. She is quiet, but her face reflects that she is full of emotions. There is a slight relief that she finally has some answers to her questions.

She suddenly has out her hand for Alex, who immediately takes it, assuring them they must rebuild their life with another chance and lots of patience. It feels like they are communicating in silence, sparking a moment of trust between them.

Greeshma stared at them, carefully analysing their moment of trust. She can read those emotions, feeling hope is alive between them. She feels confident now that nothing comes between the couple who are willing to try to know each other honestly after a turmoil that threatens to change their life.

Greeshma continued, "Excellent, Alex. You've done fantastic work today."

A smile broke through Alex's face as he continued, "Thank you, Greeshma. I feel lighter... free."

Greeshma smiled, "You are, Alex. You are. Spread that light, that freedom, in your life. You've got this."

### **Session: 3**

Greeshma welcomed Sarah and Alex back to her office. They looked more relaxed and comfortable than before. However, some knots were still left to open. She could sense it when Alex and Sarah looked a little bit nervous on the steps further.

Greeshma: "Hello, Sarah and Alex, it's good to see you back. "One of the most challenging parts of these sessions is to continue and not leave it midway. I am glad that you both are doing it."

Alex initiated, "It feels good to be back. After the previous session, I did feel good and empowered about myself. It felt that I had been able to articulate many of my feelings and give reason to them rather than being confused over it."

Greeshma said, "I am happy to know it. It feels like we are on the right path. What about you, Sarah?"

Sarah replied, "Of course, I feel a good change. But I still feel that I was taken for granted in this situation, which has been hurting me."

Alex glanced down at his fingers.

Greeshma: "It's good that you can point out and say what has been hurting you for a long time. But, there is a particular reason for everything. We need to focus on that to get you answers." Sarah nodded.

Greeshma leaned back in her chair, her gaze soft yet penetrating as she met Alex's eyes. "Last time, Alex, we began to uncover the roots of your actions. Today, I want us to get deeper into the events that led you astray."

Alex took a deep breath, his body tense with the weight of confession. "It's Sarah. The reason is that my actions feel like a betrayal even to myself."

Greeshma nodded a silent encouragement. "Tell me about Sarah, about your life before the incident."

Alex's voice softened as he painted a picture of their early days. "Things were...simple. We worked, shared the financial burden, and built a life together brick by brick. She was strong, ambitious, everything I wasn't back then. It felt as if I got a much-needed support that I didn't feel while growing up."

His smile waned as he reached the turning point. "Then the babies came. Sarah chose to be a stay-at-home mom, a beautiful decision. But with it came a shift. My parents got older needing more support. My career soared, demanding longer hours and more responsibility. Suddenly, I was back in that familiar place – carrying everyone's burdens on my shoulders."

Greeshma's eyes glinted with understanding. "You felt that familiar pressure, the weight of expectation, just like in your childhood?"

Alex nodded, a tear rolling down his cheek. "Exactly. I overworked and neglected Sarah, and our connection withered. The resentment grew like a slow poison. Then... then I met her."

The pain in his voice was palpable. "It was a moment of weakness, a search for connection, validation, for anything but the loneliness I felt. Looking back, it was like running into the arms of the very past I fought so hard to escape."

Greeshma reached out, a hand of comfort on his arm. "You're not alone, Alex. Many fall prey to these patterns, these shadows from the past. What matters now is the light, the path to healing."

Her gaze held his, unwavering. "So, let's talk about Sarah. About your regrets and your desire to rebuild. Do you believe there's a chance, or is the trust shattered beyond repair?"

Alex looked down, the fight flickering in his eyes. "I love her, Greeshma. I truly do. But I also know I haven't loved myself well enough. How can I offer true love to her if I'm still drowning in my guilt and insecurity?"

Greeshma smiled, a flicker of hope blooming in her eyes. "That's the first step, Alex. Self-forgiveness, self-acceptance. It's a long

journey, but you can take one step at a time. And who knows, maybe along the way, you'll rebuild a bridge of trust, stronger than before, built on honesty, communication, and love for both yourself and Sarah. Sarah and Alex, let me break down your situations and how you both came to the crossroads of your relationship journey. When you met your wife, you had just begun to explore yourself. Still, then, due to society's pressure, you have to get into marriage, and immediately, you have the responsibility to have children as it was emotional pressure from your parents as they were getting old. From these incidents, you start feeling lonely, rejected, non-lovable, and non-valuable. Then you start doubting yourself, and you start thinking that you are just a man capable of taking responsibility for everyone and not enjoying your own life. From there, you made it your life pattern where you started feeling that no one values you, and you have to take responsibility to feel loved and appreciated. When you get done with all this, you explode wherein you start feeling for the most loved person of your life, who is supposed to share your life with you, whom you loved, you were dedicated, and with whom you were meant to find your happiness were equally unable to comprehend it. You knew you were wrong, and feeling guilty, you still could not understand your feelings. Your subconscious mind became a rebel, and It took you in a direction where you get that instant feeling that you were wanted and the required value was given to you. Your mind knew you were wrong, but something deeper pulled you on that path. It was a way you were trying to explore those suppressed feelings and sides of your personality. I hope I made you clear with my words. Any questions?"

The session ended with a fragile hope hanging in the air. Alex walked out with a weight still present and a spark of newfound purpose. His journey was far from over, but within him, a seed of

healing had been planted, watered by his courage and Greeshma's gentle guidance. The road ahead would be bumpy, but with each step, Alex had the chance to rewrite his story, to finally shed the burdens of the past and embrace the future, more strong and wiser than before

#### **Session: 4**

Greeshma smiled and said, "Welcome back. I'm glad to see both of you here again. It's been two weeks since our last session. How have things been?"

Sarah said, "It's been a bit of a rollercoaster. Dr. days are better, but there are still moments of scars. Which I am not able to let go."

Alex agreed, "Yeah, we're trying to implement what we discussed, but it's not always smooth."

Greeshma replied, "That's understandable. It takes time to implement changes, and setbacks are a natural part of the process. Today, I'd like to focus on your progress since our last hypnotherapy session. How has that experience influenced your interactions and perspectives?"

Sarah said, "We've tried talking, but it often ends in arguments. It's like a wall between us."

Alex continued, "I know I need to communicate better, but every time I try, she's not listening. She is still in that stoic state."

Greeshma addressed their doubts, "Communication breakdowns are common in situations like these. It's essential to create a space where both of you feel heard and understood. Before we move into hypnotherapy, let's set some ground rules for communication.

Each person can speak without interruption, and the other person will actively listen."

Sarah said, "Okay, we can try that." Alex agreed with her.

Greeshma looked towards Sarah, "Sarah, take a deep breath. I know this journey is painful, but it's essential to understand that healing takes time. You've been through thick and thin with Alex, made him the centre of your life, and the scars run deep. It's natural for them to bleed, for the hurt to resurface. But pushing it down, hiding behind defensiveness, won't make it disappear or be less hurtful. As for your final decision, It's entirely yours to take. But remember, Not every story has to have a happy ending. Not every end is the end of the journey. It can be the beginning of a new journey, too."

Sarah sat on a couch, holding a tissue to her eyes, tears streaming down her face. Greeshma consoled, "You need to accept what's happened. Don't avoid it, but accept the reality you're facing – that's the first step towards healing. And that doesn't mean throwing yourself back into the fire, Sarah. It means choosing to rebuild, brick by painful brick, with a clear commitment to give it another chance. You haven't made any mistakes, and you deserve the space to heal without guilt or blame."

Sarah sniffled and said, "But how can I forget, Greeshma? Every little thing triggers me and throws me back to those dark moments. The memories flash, the pain is raw... how can I move forward with that?"

Greeshma said, "You won't forget, Sarah. Those memories will always be there, echoes of the past. But with the help of FACT therapy, you can learn to control them and to choose what power they hold over you. It's like this – remember when you were little,



maybe in school? Did you have a subject you hated, a teacher who humiliated you?

Sarah said with hesitation, "Yes... math. I was never good at it and still get a shiver remembering Mrs Thompson made me stand in front of the class for not memorising the eight times table. It was embarrassing and made me feel hurt."

Greeshma agreed, "Exactly! But today, Sarah, you see those memories differently. You laugh, maybe even smile at those "old days." You know Silence and smiles always have a meaning if you go beyond words to understand them. You've grown and learned from them. You wouldn't dream of punishing your kids for struggling with maths. You know them, you guide them, you make it fun.

Tears welled up in Sarah's eyes. But... but this isn't maths, Greeshma. This is my heart, my life...and so much more."

Greeshma added, "And it's precious, Sarah. That's why forgiveness becomes your tool. It doesn't erase the past, but it mutes its sting. It allows you to choose – to walk ahead with scars that no longer bleed but tell a story of resilience."

Greeshma continued, "This journey, Sarah, is about finding your strength, about rediscovering the woman you are beyond the hurt. It's about choosing love, not for Alex, but for yourself. You deserve a happy ending with yourself before anyone, and forgiving yourself for finding reasons in you for his actions and for sulking that pain for so long. That will be the key which will open you to the door of happiness and make way for sunshine in your life. To clap hands, two hands are required; I feel it was just not his actions; it was his triggered reaction from his childhood, which happened when you got busy with your household and family responsibilities,

which he always appreciated and loved for your decision. Still, he cannot convey his emotional baggage, suppressing him and making him lose his trust in life. Emotions damn just came breaking down, and that made his childhood memories back, gushing him to think he was just an ATM for his family. You came into his life as a breeze, but later, as responsibilities piled up, the direction of the breeze changed back to his childhood. There, a question came: "Am I worthy enough to be loved unconditionally?."

Hearing Greeshma's words, Sarah recollected her life like a short film and felt choked up, thinking, "How I became so insensitive without even realizing it. I was always proud of my upbringing and nurturing. I never felt I could go wrong with the person I loved the most. I always took pride in telling the world that I knew my husband. I always felt like we are two bodies in one soul."

Greeshma offered her water and gave her a hug of encouragement, saying, "Don't feel bad Sarah; you are genuinely a brave soul who knows how to handle the situation with dignity. Mistakes are a part of life. Very few individuals realize their mistakes and take steps to rewrite their scripts. You both decided to work on your relationship, not just listen to noise outside and come to a conclusion."

Greeshma said, "Sarah, you and Alex have been two different individuals in a relationship. A storm threatened to harm your union. We are working on that, but no matter your decision, I want you to focus on yourself first. Cherish the person in you, and do some activities you are passionate about. It will help you find yourself momentarily lost in this storm distressing you. An empty mind is a devil's workshop, and you must take a stand to support yourself emotionally and financially. Because somewhere, all your

unconveyed burdens and dependency have made Alex out in search of his existence.

Take a deep breath, Sarah. Let the tears flow. Let them cleanse your soul. It's not a sign of weakness; it's a sign that you are a human with feelings. Then, pick yourself up, dust off the pain, and walk towards that sunrise. You've got this, Sarah. I believe in you."

She continued, "Remember, Sarah, your healing journey is unique and personal. Embrace the ups and downs that are bound to be a part of your life, the moments of doubt and the bursts of hope. Lean on your support system, seek professional help if needed, and never be afraid to reach out for a hand to hold. You are strong, resilient, and worthy of love and happiness, and you deserve a future filled with sunshine."

### **Session: 5**

Greeshma welcomed the couple, "Welcome back. It's good to see both of you again. It's been a few weeks since our last session. How have things been?"

Sarah replied, "It's been challenging, Dr., but I think we've been making some progress. Alex: Yeah, there's a bit more understanding between us, but it's still a work in progress."

Greeshma shared, "I appreciate your honesty. Progress, no matter how small, is a positive step. In our last session, we explored FACT therapy to understand the present moment. How did that experience impact your relationship?"

Sarah said, "It was intense, but it helped us confront some of the underlying issues. I think we're both more aware of our feelings."

Greeshma appreciated, "Great, It's positive that you're gaining insights. Today, I'd like to introduce another exercise to enhance

your connection. This involves building a shared vision for your future. Imagine a place or scenario where both of you feel happy, connected, and fulfilled. What does that look like for each of you? Sarah, what particularly drew you to Alex?"

Sarah hesitated. "It was hard to explain... maybe his eyes? Like pools of laughter hidden under dark lashes. And he smelled good, like old books and cinnamon."

Greeshma replied thoughtfully, "Hmm, fascinating. Alex, what about you? What stood out about Sarah's first encounter?"

Alex blushed at the question. "Her laughter. It was like wind chimes – light and playful but with a hidden depth. And she wasn't afraid to disagree with me, not even about that obscure sci-fi movie."

Greeshma leaned forward to speak, "And how did those initial things, the eyes, the laugh, the cinnamon scent, make you feel, each of you?"

Sarah began gazing at Alex, "Safe. Like I could tell him anything, even the embarrassing bits."

Alex met her gaze, "Seen. Understood. Like I finally found someone who spoke my language, even the made-up words."

Greeshma commented, "Interesting metaphors. Now, delve deeper. Did these feelings remind you of anything from your past experiences? Perhaps a time you felt similarly safe or seen?"

Tears welled up in Sarah's eyes. "My grandpa... He always had that cinnamon smell, telling stories around a crackling fire. I never felt judged by him."

Alex's voice became husky as he said, "My sister, Laura. We used to invent whole worlds and speak in gibberish, just the two of us. She was the only one who truly got me."

Greeshma nodded slowly. "And maybe, in each other, you found a piece of what you were missing? A connection that echoed those past safe spaces?"

Sarah and Alex silently locked their eyes with an unspoken confirmation hanging in the air.

Greeshma added, "Of course, love's not just about echoes. Were there other qualities that captivated you? Sarah, what surprised you about Alex?"

Sarah said with a sparkle in her eyes "His vulnerability. He once confessed his fear of heights, then climbed a Ferris wheel to hold my hand at the top."

Alex smiled back and replied immediately "Sarah's passion. She volunteers at the animal shelter, cries at sad movies, and talks to plants like old friends. It's infectious."

Greeshma: "Beautiful details. So, it seems your initial spark was fueled by familiar comfort and surprising discoveries. And how did these feelings evolve?"

Sarah shared, "We didn't rush. Long walks, late-night talks, sharing secrets whispered under starry skies. It felt like coming home every time.

Alex added, "And even the fights, the disagreements, they felt different. Safe spaces to learn, grow, and be challenged without losing that fundamental understanding."

Greeshma smiled, “Sounds like you built a strong foundation, brick by shared laughter, cinnamon scents, and whispered secrets. Remember, love is a journey, not a destination. Keep nurturing those echoes, keep discovering each other, and that spark will continue to illuminate your way.”

### **Session:6**

Greeshma smiled warmly at them. “Sarah, Alex, welcome back. I'm glad we can continue our journey together. Since our last session, we've explored your emotions and dipped our toes into the fascinating world of hypnotherapy. Today, I'd love to hear how things have been for you both.”

Sarah sighed, “It's been a rollercoaster, Greeshma. More openness, yes, but those old tensions still lurk around corners. Like shadows, we can't quite outrun.”

Alex nodded in confirmation, “I agree. We're taking baby steps, but sometimes we walk on eggshells. Trust is a fragile thing, easily shattered.”

Greeshma added, “Rebuilding trust is a delicate dance, requiring patience and unwavering commitment from both of you. I appreciate your willingness to put in the effort. Now, let's delve a bit deeper. Remember our last session, where we unlocked your subconscious thoughts through the FACT tool? Have those insights shed any new light on your understanding of each other?”

Sarah shared, “It was a revelation, Greeshma, like a window into a hidden room. I saw a path forward, but it was a narrow one, demanding complete dedication from both of us.”

Alex downcasted his eyes, “The visualisation... it hit me hard. Seeing the consequences of my actions laid bare like that. I want to fix things, Sarah, but I know it won't happen overnight.”

Greeshma said, “These are significant realisations you've both made. It's encouraging that you're acknowledging the shadows and seeking ways to step into the light. Remember, the journey of healing is rarely linear. There will be bumps; there will be setbacks. But with each honest conversation, each shared vulnerability; you chip away at the walls that separate you.”

Tears started welling up in Sarah's eyes. “It's hard, Greeshma. Letting go of the hurt and facing the unknown. But your words... They give me hope.”

Alex immediately reached for Sarah's hand as she said “Me too. I'm scared, but I'm also determined. We'll walk this path together, Sarah, one step at a time.”

Greeshma beamed, “And in those moments of fear, remember the strength you found within yourselves during hypnosis. Remember the light you saw at the end of that hidden path. That's the flame you need to keep burning, the compass that will guide you home to each other.”

Sarah sat across from Alex, her hands tightly clasped in her lap. Tears had dried on her cheeks, leaving mascara streaks like war paint. Silence hung heavy in the room, punctuated only by the soft ticking of the clock on the wall.

Greeshma said with a sense of satisfaction, “As we conclude today's session, reflect on your progress. Sarah, Alex, where do you see yourselves moving forward?”

Sarah replied "I want to believe we can have a fresh start. If we keep working on this, we may rebuild what was broken."

Alex continued, "I'm dedicated to this, Dr. I want to strengthen our marriage."

Greeshma said, "I will stand beside what you choose. Are you Sure of your decision?"

Alex stepped out of my office, the setting sun casting an orange glow on his face. There was a hint of determination in his eyes, a whisper of hope that perhaps, just perhaps, he could finally learn to live for himself and for the woman he loved without the invisible shackles of a burdensome past.

The story of Alex is just one example of how unprocessed childhood experiences can manifest in our adult relationships. By exploring his childhood responsibilities and the resulting sense of burden, we can delve deeper into his motivations and the path to potential healing.

Remember to keep the conversation honest, and vulnerable and offer glimpses of hope and the possibility of personal growth, even amidst the challenges of infidelity and rebuilding trust.

Meeting after three months with Alex & Sarah and seeing them walking hand in hand at a local market wasn't unusual in my profession, but walking them to know how things have been was something I couldn't move ahead.

Greeshma, "Hi Sarah, Hi Alex, glad to see you both." Sarah replied, "Hey, Greeshma, it's been great to see you too."

Greeshma asked softly, "How have you two been since our eight intense sessions? I can see some vibrations and frequency changes in you. I'm glad you seem happy." Greeshma hugged them.



Sarah said, “Thanks a lot to you, Greeshma. I never thought I could have a happy ending. We are so grateful for those life-changing, intense sessions you took. It just changed the perspective of how we looked at our relationship subconsciously. You did it so gracefully without hurting our sentiments.”

Greeshma replied, “Thanks to you both for not deciding the conclusions and considering taking therapy as an option. But Sarah, it’s a bold move.”

Sarah added, “You are right, Doc. I have acknowledged my faults, and realising how I neglected Alex's emotional needs amidst family responsibilities, I've come to see that I, too, became a pillar of support for him.

Through your sessions, we've uncovered the missteps in our relationship, understanding where we faltered as a couple. That's why, despite the prevalent trend of opting for separation without comprehending the trustworthy source of conflicts, I'm choosing to take a stand for my marriage. In these sessions, you've illuminated the root causes of our relationship chaos. How you guided us to examine our reflections before pointing fingers at our partners made me reassess myself. This self-reflection has prompted me to decide to stand by my marriage. Your insights have been invaluable in helping us navigate the complexities of our relationship, and for that, I am genuinely grateful.

It got so overwhelming for me at some point. Friends, family, relatives, and lawyers just came to give their opinions, and I never considered walking on someone's opinion and questioning my presence later. So, I took your unbiased professional help and did what my inner voice screamed. People believe that raising a kid as a single mom won't be easy, and then there are people saying that

forgetting what has been done to my marriage won't be a cakewalk either. I agree both directions are not an easy ride. I have been a mom. I have kept my kids in my womb for 42 weeks, and I can feed them by being a daily vendor or whatever I have to do. That is not a dealbreaker for me to raise kids. But I want to break the stereotype that two people compromise on marriage because of external pressure. I gave us a second chance because I believe in myself. We both are humans, and we deserve a second chance, Doc..”

Alex suddenly interrupted, “Sorry to interrupt Sarah, but I need to say this: I never felt that connected Doc, Doc. Waking up daily to my wife feels like having my best friend aside, who makes me happy just by being aside. I think I don't need anything if she is walking by my side.”

Alex lovingly kissed Sarah's forehead.

Sarah blushed, “I may not be able to put it better, Doc. It was just..... **I thought & I did...** “

Love is one of the few things in life that can create intense pleasure or pain. You don't have any rules — you're just thrilled to be in the same room with someone you love. You feel lucky to have the opportunity to make them happy. No matter what they do or what they say, you are fascinated with the idea of being with them, longing for someone.

In the dance of relationships, we find ourselves not just entwined with another person but also unravelling the mysteries within us. It's like a journey, a quest into the realms of our own emotions and experiences. Some step into relationships to explore the profound beauty of connection, finding in the other person a mirror reflecting their spirit.

Yet, in this intricate tapestry of emotions, there's more than meets the eye. Attraction in a relationship is not merely skin-deep; it's about a person's spiritual nature, understanding of the world, and the kaleidoscope of feelings they bring to the table. Relationships, it turns out, are generous lovers of our emotional intelligence, examining every nook and cranny of our psyche, our economy, and our professional paradigm. It's like an unwritten agreement that says, "Love me, not just for who I am, but for everything that makes me."

However, the script isn't always smooth. In the intimate dance, partners may inadvertently step on old wounds, leaving behind quick remarks that sting like criticisms.

Feelings of betrayal can creep in, causing a delicate shiver of emotions. When you feel neglected and withdrawn, they might not understand, leading to anger and withdrawal. It's like a boomerang of hurt, swinging back and forth, tearing at the fabric of connection.

Many couples, standing at the edge of divorce, voice their weariness. Tired of feeling criticised and neglected, they seek an escape. Some manage to sever the ties, a freedom sought, but soon realise that the process begins anew. The essence of the problem isn't addressed. Instead, they find themselves running from present issues, seeking solace in the perceived injustices of the past.

Humans, inherently social beings, navigate the varying sizes of social circles. Whether loners or part of a close-knit family, we develop relationships. Yet, within these connections lies a challenge – understanding not just the dynamics between each other but comprehending ourselves. Some embark on this quest,

delving into the depths of self-awareness, while others continue the cycle, oblivious to the root of the problem.

And so, the story unfolds, leaving us to ponder the complexities of relationships and the untapped potential within ourselves. The journey continues a dance that intertwines love, understanding, and the pursuit of self-discovery. As the curtain falls, the stage is set for introspection, and the mysteries of the heart remain, waiting to be unravelled by those willing to explore.

### 3

## SEA-SAW IN RELATIONSHIPS

Love, that kaleidoscope of emotions, dances across generations, defying the changing tides of society. From ancient love poems carved on stone to stolen glances lit by phone screens, the essence remains the same: a yearning for connection, a desire to be seen and understood. Yet, amidst its enduring melody, we sometimes find ourselves stumbling, bewildered by the cracks appearing in our relationships. We blame, yearn, and question – "Why don't they understand me?"

But here's the thing: love, that crazy, beautiful, ever-changing thing, isn't just some trendy fad. It's woven into the fabric of human existence, whispering its secrets across cultures and centuries. Whether handwritten love letters under flickering candles or late-night selfies with silly faces, the core of love remains the same – a yearning for connection, a desire to be seen and understood, warts and all.

So, why does it feel like relationships crumble faster than a sandcastle in a hurricane? Why do we blame others for not getting us, for not meeting the expectations we built in our heads like towering sandcastles?

In the intricate world of relationships, there's more to the story than finding someone to hang out with. It's like a journey of self-discovery, where you get to know yourself better through the experiences of being with someone else. It's not just about liking someone's looks; it's about connecting on a deeper level—understanding their thoughts, feelings, and everything that makes them who they are.

Sometimes, though, relationships get tricky. Your partner might say something that hits a nerve, bringing up old stuff you'd rather forget. And suddenly, you feel criticised and hurt. It's like a weird cycle where you both get angry and withdraw, and you feel stuck in a never-ending loop.

I've seen many couples almost calling it quits because they're tired of feeling criticised and neglected. Some even go for the big "D" word—divorce. And guess what? Some remarry, only to find themselves in the same loop again. It's like hitting replay on the same old song.

Here's the thing: we're all social creatures. Even if you like some alone time, you've got your family, close friends, and maybe some work buddies. These are the people you build connections with, shaping your life story along the way.

But when it comes to relationships, it's not just about the other person. It's about you, too.

Before we cast aspersions, let's turn the mirror inward. Often, the first crack lies within ourselves, hidden beneath layers of self-doubt and unmet expectations. We chase dreams fueled by comparisons, our eyes glued to the highlight reels of others' lives. We yearn for a love that mirrors our airbrushed versions, neglecting the beautiful, complex masterpiece that is our being.

Think of it like building a sandcastle. We layer on expectations, desires, and demands, hoping someone will be drawn to the intricate facade. But when the tide of reality washes over, revealing the shaky foundation beneath, it all crumbles. We become like those sandcastles, beautiful on the outside but built on shaky ground. We expect others to validate us to fill the cracks in our self-esteem, and when they can't (or won't), we feel hurt, lost, and misunderstood.

It's about understanding who you are, what makes you tick, and what makes you laugh until you snort milk out your nose. It's about embracing your flaws, quirks, and weird fascination with collecting bottle caps – everything that makes you who you are.

We always say we know ourselves, do we?

There is a blind spot we are sometimes not aware of ourselves. People who lack awareness often exhibit certain traits without knowing or realising it. It's like you are driving in a severely chilled climate where everything is covered with fog.

1. **Traits of Overconfidence:** This is the most frequently observed trait and is found very commonly in human beings. It is an inflated sense of self-worth not seconded with skills to support it. These people often assume that they know everything and that they have all the knowledge and are superior to others. They always feel they are correct and their behaviour is not intentional; they are unaware of this pattern.

2. **Phobia AND Feedback:** As they lack self-awareness, they find it difficult to receive feedback. They feel like they have been attacked and might get agitated in such a situation. I had a client who had good knowledge of a particular subject but lacked self-awareness. Whenever anyone tried to give her any suggestions or feedback, she

would immediately get defensive and land into arguments and used to walk away from the discussion, thinking that we were trying to fix her or not agreeing with her. I had to once sit with her and give her a proper session, making her understand. I explained to her that her trait was coming from childhood and gave her closure for this trait with a FACTS session. It was a painful process for her, but in that session, as she was taken back to her childhood, her wounds were still fresh, and while going through this session, she got the ointment to heal her wounds—making her move to one step of gaining better self-awareness.

3. Unconstructed Bridge of Empathy: Like an island adrift in an ocean of emotions, individuals with low empathy struggle to connect with the feelings of others. Leading to unnecessary conflicts, arguments, and misunderstandings, inflicting wounds they cannot see in their relationship. These people cannot accommodate other people's emotions, and a lack of empathy can lead to aggressive behaviour. We are teaching them to have inappropriate behaviour towards their close ones also.

4. Silence: The Worst Betrayal Language: we all speak with some or the other verbal language. Generally, if you ask people how many languages we speak, they will give us the answers Hindi, English, Punjabi, etc; some extra knowledgeable will say we talk with verbal and sign language. But actually, there is one more language called body language. Body language speaks louder than words. People who lack self-awareness often overlook the messages their body language sends out. They may, at times, avoid eye contact, or they do conversations with crossed arms or closed arms, creating an impression of self-defence or disinterest in the topic of conversation. Sometimes, they might not mean in this manner, but people can misinterpret their gestures as rude and indifferent. Hence, it is



essential to be aware of body language and its impact on meaningful conversations and relationships. They lead to effective communication in nonverbal cues without spoken words.

5. **Falling in the Ripples of Marsh:** People who are unaware of them always land under challenging situations, taking their actions and words as how they will impact others. Their unintentional behaviour lands them in the negative books of others, as it can cause repercussions around them. This does affect their relationship, whether personal or professional. Because they do not understand what is wrong or they are lacking, they might take their behaviour for granted. Hence, it becomes more critical that we know ourselves. Our actions can create or destroy opposites or even ourselves, so it becomes crucial to develop self-awareness in today's age. This is the best way to navigate any relationship, nurture, and understand it.

6. **Cyclone of Emotions:** If we don't understand ourselves, there can be chances of misleading some emotions and handling the emotional or mental crisis. We can have chances of misinterpreting our own emotions, leaving us looking confused and lost in front of the world. Hence, it becomes crucial that we understand our feelings for personal growth before causing us to look incapable or hindered in our lives. At times, people fail to understand their feelings, causing anxiety, stress, or anger. Even a simple hurt can say it out as they are depressed without actually understanding the impact or effect of the word depression. As a speaker, many think that I'm very confident on the topics I prefer to talk but sometimes the crowd where I'm delivering the lecture makes me also an emotional jerk. So everyone goes through this: our palms sweat, throats dry, and words get stuck. These are emotions, and we should understand and work on this.

7. **Struggle for self-acceptance:** When we talk about self-awareness, we are talking about our self-acceptance— that I witnessed in many of my clients. I have seen them lacking this quality. Understanding self and accepting our strengths and weaknesses is the first step of self-awareness. Many focus either on their negative aspects, unwilling to correct them due to certain beliefs or mindsets, or some focus only on positive aspects, not at all ready to look into their flaws. We all are a package with right and wrong, strengths and weaknesses. I don't say that we are always critical, but we do have essential minds that sometimes bring that also into use. Not always be critical or always be self-defensive, try to acknowledge drawbacks and positive aspects too. That's not to demean you or put your value low.

8. **Anchors Dragging Us Down:** This is a very crucial point. It is like carrying a massive baggage on your mind and leading to an emotional breakdown, causing mental illness. It is an emotional burden that most people have, leading to scars, with certain wear and tear in relationships. We should understand our emotions and how they affect us and our surroundings. Clinging to grudges will put you under the burden of negatively impacting your relationships, and your inner peace will also deteriorate. Grudges are nothing but hindrances in your personal growth. So much is written and talked about this one topic. Clinging to your worst past grievances will only limit your happiness and fulfilment of your dreams, obstructing your creations. So, better forgive and forget it is a complex process. If you don't forgive, you cannot forget, and you cannot create. So, forgiving the past and forgetting is the best option to be self-aware.

9. **Our Favourite: The Comfort Zone:** This is another crucial trait I have seen in my clients. They are unwilling to change despite

knowing they must overcome certain habits and adjust; they still choose to be in their comfort zone. Sometimes, such stubbornness can cause the end of a relationship, and at times, the damage is irreparable. "Change" words brings a little stress to our forehead lines. Still, if we can understand ourselves, it is not difficult to improve on this trait. But the only thing is the stubborn mindset and ego don't allow few people to take this step. Change is uncomfortable, but sometimes, we need to be open to change and learn, as it is part of the growth of our journey of any relationship and a step towards gaining self-awareness.

This self-discovery journey isn't about becoming a selfish hermit crab, shutting everyone out. It's about knowing your worth, owning your unique light, and radiating it like a disco ball in a room full of darkness. When you love yourself, truly love yourself, you stop chasing validation and start attracting genuine connections. They become like butterflies drawn to your vibrant garden, not because you're perfect, but because you're authentic, open, and full of life.

But not everyone can walk in a beautiful garden; Some pluck flowers, and some litter with dirt here and there.

Leaving us with the silent wonder of "What went wrong?"

The truth is, breakups are rarely one big plot twist. Sometimes, it's like two puzzle pieces that don't quite fit. We grow in different directions, chasing other dreams, and even the strongest bonds can stretch thin. It's like trying to wear shoes that used to fit but now feel like clown size. You can squeeze in, but it's uncomfortable, and you're better off finding a new pair.

Other times, the spark fizzles out. It's not a bad thing, just like a candle eventually burning down. Maybe the butterflies have flown away, replaced by comfy sweatpants and shared Netflix accounts.

It's not fireworks, but it's still a warm fire, and sometimes that's enough.

But then some leave like bad roommates, leaving the mess behind and taking the good stuff. They're the ones who use our trust like a free gym membership, only to disappear when the workout gets tough. They throw promises around like confetti, only to vanish when the party's over. These breakups leave us feeling used and confused, like we were just props in their play.

So, how do we avoid becoming those sandcastles precariously balanced on the shore?

This journey of self-discovery is about recognising our worth, not through the hollow applause of others but through the quiet hum of contentment within. It's about knowing that even when the storms rage and the path seems unclear, we have an anchor in self-love, a compass to guide us back to our centre.

And when we stand rooted in this self-awareness, radiating our authentic selves, the right connections happen organically. They're not built on mirage-chasing and borrowed validation but on mutual respect, genuine understanding, and shared laughter. These connections become havens of acceptance, where our mosaic, cracks and all are tolerated but cherished.

Love, in all its messy glory, leaves scars and sprinkles glitter in equal measure. Yes, hearts will still stray, promises will break, and departures will sting. But when we've built a strong foundation of self-love, these departures, though painful, can become chapters closed, not doors slammed shut. We learn from the experience, dust ourselves off, and continue our journey, knowing that no matter what storms life throws, we have our own oasis within, ready to welcome us back with open arms.

## 4

### WHY RELATIONSHIPS SHORT-LIVED

In the grand orchestra of human connection, the most potent instruments often lie hidden beneath the surface. The subconscious mind, a silent conductor, orchestrates the melodies of our thoughts, emotions, and memories, shaping how we interact with the world and, most importantly, with each other. Understanding the intricate workings of this conductor is critical to composing a harmonious relationship, one that resonates with joy, understanding, and mutual growth.

One of the conductor's most profound abilities is to echo the past into the present. Our experiences, bathed in the light of joy, trauma, or simply unmet needs, leave indelible imprints on the subconscious. These imprints, though often subconscious, influence our perceptions of ourselves and others, shaping the dynamics of our relationships. Recognising these echoes, like whispers from a forgotten song, can provide invaluable insights into our patterns and behaviours. Were we taught to express vulnerability or bury it deep? Does our need for control stem from an experience of powerlessness? By deciphering these echoes, we

gain the power to break free from their hold and write a new melody for our relationships.

The intricate tapestry of our beliefs and conditioning further orchestrates the conductor's symphony. From our earliest years, we absorb messages about love, worthiness, and how relationships function. These deeply held convictions become the invisible threads woven into our perspectives, influencing how we communicate, resolve conflict, and express affection. Examining these beliefs, challenging those that no longer serve us, and consciously choosing new narratives is crucial for composing a harmonious relationship. Replacing narratives of inadequacy with self-compassion or fear of vulnerability with openness can transform the dynamics of our interactions, inviting deeper connection and genuine intimacy.

Beyond individual echoes and beliefs, the conductor's score is also influenced by the cultural symphony surrounding us. In India, with its rich tapestry of traditions and customs, societal expectations and family dynamics add another layer to the complexity of relationships.

Understanding the cultural threads woven into our subconscious and how they intersect with our desires is vital for navigating these complexities. Open communication, empathy, and a willingness to bridge cultural gaps are crucial in creating a harmonious melody of love and understanding.

At the heart of any flourishing relationship lies the fundamental chord of mutual respect and appreciation. Recognising and celebrating each other's unique talents, strengths, and contributions is the foundation upon which a resilient and fulfilling partnership is built. This appreciation manifests in gestures of

kindness, active listening, and genuine support. It fosters a sense of security and trust, where both partners feel valued for who they are, flaws and all. This shared appreciation acts as a catalyst for open communication, as individuals feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings without judgement. It deepens emotional intimacy, creating a space where vulnerabilities can be shared and connections flourish.

In the inevitable moments of discord and dissonance, the foundation of mutual appreciation acts as a stabilising force. It encourages constructive conflict resolution and compromise, as both partners are invested in finding solutions honouring each other's needs and perspectives. This shared commitment to understanding and empathy fosters resilience, allowing couples to weather the storms of life together, their bond strengthened by the shared melody of respect and appreciation.

Beyond words, appreciation takes root in the fertile ground of action. Small acts of kindness, heartfelt expressions of gratitude, and active participation in each other's lives nourish the symphony of connection. Sharing daily routines, celebrating milestones, and offering support during challenges become the notes that build a crescendo of love and commitment. This reciprocal appreciation extends beyond the individual, enriching the overall well-being of the relationship and fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.

Ultimately, the essence of a flourishing relationship lies in the conscious effort to cultivate this symphony of appreciation. It is a commitment to continuous learning and growth, both individually and as a couple. It is choosing to listen to the whispers of the past, not with fear, but with understanding and a willingness to rewrite the melody. It is embracing the power of our beliefs, not as shackles but as instruments to be wielded with intentionality. And it is

standing hand-in-hand, conducting the symphony of love, respect, and appreciation, creating a masterpiece of connection that resonates through the years.

This journey of self-discovery and intentional relationship-building is particularly crucial in today's fast-paced world, where external pressures and distractions can easily disrupt the delicate harmony of our connections. Amidst the whirlwind of schedules, technological demands, and societal expectations, prioritising open and honest communication becomes an essential instrument. Taking the time for meaningful conversations, actively listening to each other's needs, and expressing emotions openly strengthens the bond of understanding and intimacy.

Furthermore, adaptability and flexibility become valuable allies in navigating the complexities of modern relationships. Embracing change, welcoming growth, and adjusting to life's inevitable transitions together builds resilience and strengthens the foundation of the partnership.

Recognising the need for balance, individually and as a couple, is vital. This may involve setting healthy boundaries to protect personal space and well-being, finding shared activities that bring joy and relaxation, and nurturing individual passions alongside the relationship's growth. Intentional living, woven into the fabric of the partnership, is another key contributor to resilience. Setting shared goals, engaging in regular self-reflection, and proactively addressing challenges before they blossom into discord become instrumental in navigating the complexities of modern life.

In today's world, where the traditional script of marriage is constantly evolving, seeking external support can be a powerful instrument in the symphony of a relationship. Therapy and



counselling, once viewed with stigma, are increasingly embraced as invaluable resources for fostering communication, managing conflict, and nurturing personal and relational growth. These collaborative spaces offer couples a haven to explore hidden dynamics, develop practical communication skills, and learn to navigate challenges with empathy and understanding. Utilising such resources not only strengthens the individual pillars of the relationship but also enhances the overall harmony of the symphony.

Ultimately, the success of a modern relationship rests on a harmonious blend of intentional effort, effective communication, adaptability, and a shared commitment to growth. While external factors may shift and change, the enduring strength of a partnership lies in the human capacity for connection, resilience, and the continuous pursuit of a fulfilling union. It is by embracing the complexities, weaving individual melodies into a shared symphony, and conducting the orchestra of love with intentionality that modern couples can create a masterpiece of connection that withstands the test of time.

However, the journey beyond the initial symphony holds its challenges and opportunities. In India, where marriages often navigate between personal desires and family expectations, fostering healthy boundaries and open communication becomes paramount. Learning to express individual needs and aspirations while honouring familial traditions and values lays the foundation for a relationship that respects individual identities and thrives on shared understanding. Additionally, navigating cultural differences within partnerships, whether across regions or religions, requires a deliberate effort to bridge the gap through empathy, acceptance, and a willingness to learn from each other's

perspectives. Embracing the richness of cultural diversity can enrich the symphony of the relationship, adding new notes and dimensions to the melody of love.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the journey is not always linear. There will be moments of dissonance when the familiar chords falter, and discordant notes threaten to overwhelm the melody. These challenges, though unwelcome, can be opportunities for growth and strengthening the bond. Engaging in open and honest conversations about the dissonance, acknowledging each other's pain points, and seeking resolutions that honour both perspectives can not only repair the broken notes but also deepen the understanding and trust within the relationship. Remember, even the most beautiful symphonies contain moments of silence and minor chords, adding depth and texture to the overall composition.

Cultivating a spirit of celebration and gratitude adds a joyful rhythm to the symphony of the relationship. Taking time to celebrate milestones, both big and small, expressing appreciation for each other's contributions, and cherishing the shared moments of joy strengthens the foundation of love and connection. These celebrations weave golden threads into the tapestry of the relationship, reminding us of the beauty and strength we create together.

The modern relationship is a complex and ever-evolving masterpiece. By understanding the intricate workings of the conductor within, cultivating the power of two through intentional effort and communication, and embracing the challenges and opportunities along the way, we can create a symphony of love that resonates with joy, resilience, and enduring connection. Remember, dear reader, the music of your relationship is unique and ever-changing. Embrace the complexities, conduct the

orchestra of your connection with intentionality, and celebrate the beautiful melody you create together, note by precious note. The power to compose a flourishing relationship lies within you, waiting to be unleashed. So, conduct with passion, listen with empathy, and celebrate the harmony you create together.

## 5

### ARE YOU READY?

So, you're thinking about taking the plunge? Marriage, a captivating and daunting word, can evoke whispered dreams and anxious butterflies in equal measure. But before you exchange vows and embark on this shared adventure, it's crucial to ask yourself a potent question: am I truly ready for the profound responsibilities of marriage?

This quest for readiness isn't a simple checklist or a magical deadline. It's a personal odyssey, a journey into the depths of your being. It's about understanding who you are, what you value, and where you yearn to be. It's about peeling back the layers of self-deception and embracing your authentic self, both the radiant parts and those still under construction.

#### **The Compass of Self-Awareness:**

This journey begins with introspection by holding a mirror to your soul. It's about asking honest questions – what are my life goals? What kind of partner do I seek? What are my emotional triggers, and how do I manage them? Can I acknowledge my limitations

and work towards growth? Can I celebrate another's successes without feeling diminished?

The answers won't always be comfortable, but facing them head-on is the first step to building a healthy foundation for any relationship, especially marriage. Remember, true partnership thrives on authenticity and self-acceptance.

### **Mastering the Art of Emotional Intelligence:**

Relationships are woven with delicate threads of joy, frustration, and everything. Navigating these complexities requires emotional intelligence, that elusive skill of understanding and managing your own emotions while empathising with those of your partner.

Can you listen without judgment? Can you express your needs assertively? Can you forgive honestly and communicate effectively, even when disagreements arise? These are the cornerstones of emotional intelligence, and honing them strengthens your relationship muscles, preparing you for the inevitable bumps on the marital road.

### **Embracing the Dance of Commitment:**

Marriage isn't just a romantic dream; it's a commitment, a shared promise to weather life's storms together. It's about recognising that compromises and sacrifices are inevitable, that your partner's needs deserve equal consideration, and that growth often blossoms from stepping outside your comfort zone.

Are you ready to put another's happiness on par with your own? Can you envision nurturing a shared dream, even when individual desires differ? Can you commit to being a rock, a confidante, and a cheerleader all rolled into one?

This isn't about losing yourself; it's about expanding your definition of "self" to encompass a "we."

It's about understanding that genuine commitment strengthens, not diminishes, your individual journey.

Beyond self-awareness and emotional intelligence, several key threads contribute to the fabric of a strong and ready partnership:

- **Effective Communication Skills:** The ability to express thoughts and feelings openly and listen empathetically to your partner is crucial.
- **Shared Values:** Aligning values and life goals with your partner provides a solid foundation for shared responsibility.
- **Conflict Resolution Skills:** Having constructive ways to address conflicts and differences indicates readiness for the ups and downs of married life.
- **Understanding Sacrifice:** Realizing the sacrifices and compromises involved in a relationship is a sign of maturity.
- **Long-Term Perspective:** Seeing the relationship as a lifelong journey and being prepared for its evolution over time is a crucial indicator.
- **Embracing Vulnerability:** Feeling comfortable being emotionally vulnerable with your partner signifies readiness for intimacy and connection.
- **Respect and Support:** A genuine desire to respect and support your partner's individuality and growth is crucial for a successful marriage.

**Building a solid foundation for marriage involves open and honest communication on crucial topics.**

Consider discussing:

### **Values and Goals:**

- **Communication Styles:** Understanding each other's preferred ways to communicate, resolve conflicts, and express emotions.
- **Values and Beliefs:** Exploring core values, religious beliefs, and life philosophies to ensure alignment and mutual understanding.
- **Life Goals:** Sharing and discussing individual aspirations, career goals, and long-term plans for compatibility.

### **Priorities and Responsibilities:**

- **Family Planning:** Discussing desires for children, parenting styles, and roles in childcare.
- **Financial Matters:** Being transparent about financial habits, attitudes towards money, and creating a plan for managing joint finances.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Clarifying expectations regarding household chores, career responsibilities, and other shared duties.

### **Relationship and Well-being:**

- **Intimacy and Affection:** Discussing physical intimacy, emotional needs, and ways to maintain connection and affection.
- **Past Experiences:** Sharing relevant aspects of personal histories, including past relationships, family dynamics, and any significant life events.

- **Conflict Resolution:** Talking about how you both handle disagreements and find resolutions, establishing a healthy approach to conflict.

- **Personal Boundaries:** Defining and discussing individual boundaries and respecting each other's need for personal space and autonomy.

Support and Growth:

- **Social Connections:** Discuss relationships with friends and family and how you envision integrating social lives.

- **Coping Strategies:** Discuss stress management techniques, coping mechanisms, and how you can support each other during challenging times.

- **Health and Wellness:** Addressing individual health habits, discussing priorities in maintaining physical and mental well-being, and how to support each other.

- **Quality Time:** Establishing expectations for spending quality time together and balancing individual and shared activities.

- **Counselling and Support:** Agreeing on the importance of seeking professional help and discussing openness to couples counselling or therapy.

The thrill of a blossoming romance can fill the world with rose-tinted possibilities. But before you get swept away in the whirlwind of love, it's crucial to ask the most critical question: is this partner someone I want to embark on the lifelong journey of marriage with?



This isn't about finding a perfect match, for such a creature exists only in fairytales. It's about compatibility, a safe net woven from shared values, effective communication, and a deep emotional connection. It's about understanding that a successful marriage rests on mutual respect, unshakable trust, and the ability to navigate life's challenges hand-in-hand.

Let's examine some of these vital threads of the safe net, each one offering a glimpse into the intricate dance of a healthy marriage:

### **Thread: How Compatibility of Values Matter**

- Do we share similar core values and life principles?
- Are our long-term goals and aspirations aligned?

### **Thread: Explore conversational chemistry**

- How effectively do we communicate and resolve conflicts?
- Do we feel comfortable expressing our thoughts and feelings to each other?

### **Thread: Connection Beyond Words**

- Is there a strong emotional bond and mutual understanding?
- Do we support each other emotionally through various life situations?

### **Thread: Respect and Trust**

- Do we genuinely respect and trust each other?
- How well do we handle each other's vulnerabilities and insecurities?

### **Thread: Thriving Through Challenges**

- How do we navigate challenges and obstacles as a team?

- Are we resilient in facing difficulties together?

### **Thread: How Quality of Friendship Matter**

- Beyond romance, do we have a strong friendship?
- Can we enjoy each other's company in various aspects of life?

### **Thread: Blossoming Individual Paths**

- Are we supportive of each other's personal growth and self-improvement?
- Can we pursue our individual goals while maintaining a healthy relationship?

### **Thread: Navigating Disagreements Together**

- How do we handle disagreements and conflicts?
- Are we able to find compromise and solutions together?

### **Thread: Intimacy and Connection**

- Is there a satisfying level of physical and emotional intimacy?
- How do we nurture and maintain a deep connection?

### **Thread: Understanding Family Dynamics**

- How do we feel about each other's families, and how will we navigate family relationships?
- Are we on the same page regarding potential future family planning?

### **Thread: Financial Compatibility**

- How do we approach financial matters, and are we financially compatible?

- Are there shared financial goals and strategies in place?

**Thread: Bonding Over Shared Interests**

- Do we have common interests and hobbies that bring us joy?
- How do we balance shared activities with individual pursuits?

**Thread: Adaptable and Flexible Partnership**

- How well do we adapt to changes and unexpected circumstances?
- Are we flexible in accommodating each other's needs and preferences?

**Thread: Journey of Lifelong Commitment**

- Can we envision a lifelong commitment to each other?
- Do we feel a sense of security and stability in the relationship?

## 6

### YOU BEFORE YOU

Reflecting on these guiding threads, engaging in open, honest conversations, and allowing your relationship to unfold organically are the keys to unlocking a fulfilling marriage. Remember, there's no pre-set timer on love; the duration of your courtship is a dance unique to you and your partner.

Focus on the quality of time you spend together, on the depth of your conversations, and on your ability to navigate life's sunshine and storms as a team. Shared experiences, unwavering support, and a willingness to grow together are far more valuable than a ticking clock.

Compatibility, trust, and effective communication – these are the pillars that hold a strong marriage aloft, not a specific number of days or months. Some couples may find their rhythm early on, while others may need a more extended melody to understand each other's heartbeats truly.

Instead of chasing a predetermined timeframe, embrace the journey. Be intentional about the moments you share, celebrate

your differences, and nurture the open communication that allows your love to blossom.

Ultimately, the decision to marry is a sacred one, whispered not by a calendar but by your hearts. When you look into your partner's eyes and see a reflection of your deepest dreams, a shared vision for the future, and an unwavering commitment to growth, you'll know – the time is right.

So, dear reader, hold onto hope, listen to your intuition, and let your love unfold at its own pace. The journey towards a lasting, fulfilling marriage is paved not by a set timeline but by the unwavering strength of your bond, the depth of your understanding, and the shared commitment to building a future where love and laughter dance hand in hand.

Take a deep breath, hold onto your partner's hand, and step into the timeless love waltz. Your story, unique and beautiful, awaits.

In a strong marriage, appreciation is like a special glue that holds two people together. This understanding sets the stage for mutual respect and deep comprehension of one another. It's about recognising and cherishing each partner's unique qualities, forming the bedrock of a solid relationship.

When both partners feel valued, a comforting sense of emotional security envelops their bond. This mutual appreciation becomes the source of genuine communication, creating a safe space where thoughts and feelings can be shared without judgment. In moments of difficulty, this foundation of mutual value acts as a steadying force, encouraging constructive problem-solving and compromise.

Beyond words, valuing each other extends into actions and gestures.—it's about showing your partner that you care through actions. Little things like saying "thank you," making kind

gestures, and taking an active interest in their life can make a big difference.

In today's fast-paced world, the strength of marriage stands as proof of the enduring power of human connection. Regardless of external pressures, the essence of a strong marriage lies in intentional efforts, core values, and heartfelt communication. Couples navigating modern challenges successfully prioritise open and honest conversations, deep emotional connections, adaptability, and purposeful living.

In the intricate dance of marriage, the choice to walk hand-in-hand or follow separate paths rests ultimately with the two souls woven together. While whispers of advice may swirl from family, friends, or even the echoes of society, the decision whispers loudest from within the hearts and minds of the couple.

They've climbed mountaintop joys and navigated valleys of hardship, their shared history written with laughter, tears, and the quiet understanding that only comes from two lives brushing against each other, day after day. They know the secret maps of each other's hearts, the places to tread softly and the bridges built by forgiveness.

To truly hear these whispers, we must step away from the external storm and into the quiet chambers of introspection. What whispers forgiveness in the dead of night? Can trust rise from the ashes of betrayal? Can the bridges, once shattered by hurt, be rebuilt with the mortar of understanding? These are questions only you and your partner, the architects of your shared universe, can answer.

The choice to mend bridges, forgive trespasses, or walk separate paths is deeply personal, etched with the stories of our unique

experiences, dreams, and fears. To trust that within them lies the power to grow, evolve, and seek their version of happiness.

External advice, like a gentle breeze, can offer perspective and comfort, but the sails of the decision are filled by the winds of each individual's soul. Both voices deserve to be heard and respected, and then make decisions. To deny this autonomy is to deny the very essence of who we are – beings capable of crafting our destinies.

This is not to dismiss the importance of support and guidance. Sometimes, a therapist acts as a mapmaker, offering a fresh perspective on the tangled paths of a relationship. Sometimes, friends hold lanterns, illuminating the road ahead when shadows fall. But ultimately, the journey is theirs to embark upon, hand in hand or alone.

Forgiveness, they say, is not for the other person but for yourself, a release from the chains of bitterness. Can you find it within your heart to let go of the weight of past hurts, to see your partner not as a villain but as a fellow traveller who stumbled on the path? Can you rebuild trust, brick by painstaking brick, on the foundation of understanding and a shared commitment to change?

If the whispers answer with a cautious yes, then embark on the arduous journey of rebuilding. Seek the gentle guidance of a therapist or a mapmaker who can help you navigate the tangled paths of communication and rediscover the hidden paths of empathy. Forgive yourselves, forgive each other, and step onto the bridge, hand in hand, with hope as your lantern.

But sometimes, the whispers tell a different story. Sometimes, the bridges lie in splintered ruins, impossible to reconstruct. Sometimes, the hurt goes beyond mending; the trust is shattered

beyond repair. To stay in such a broken space is to risk losing yourselves, your individual stories fading into the echoes of a loveless union.

Letting go, then, becomes an act of immense courage, a painful acceptance that some journeys must be walked alone. It is not a failure, but a recognition that sometimes, love's melody must end, allowing new songs to be written on the blank pages of your individual tomorrows.

Divorce, like a storm-tossed leaf cast adrift, may seem like an ending. But remember, dear reader, it is but a bend in the river of life. Marriage was a beautiful chapter, but many more await writing. You are not adrift; you are the captain of your own ship, navigating the currents of change with strength and grace.

Perhaps a partner makes the journey smoother, but life can be navigated solo, too. Find your own anchors – your passions, dreams, and loved ones. Reconnect with your inner compass, find your source of strength, and chart your course. With time, the storm clouds will clear, and the sun will again illuminate your path, leading you to new shores where joy and fulfilment await.

There are no easy answers in the labyrinth of love. Each path, shared or solitary, is paved with challenges and victories. The important thing is to listen to the whispers within, to honour your truth, and to choose the path that leads you, not to what society dictates, but to your version of happiness.

The decision to traverse the path of divorce is a poignant and personal journey that requires grace and compassion. Approaching divorce with kindness rather than bitterness can lead to a healing experience. Honest conversations about the reasons for divorce, seeking professional help, prioritising children's well-



being, and taking care of mental health are crucial aspects of this journey.

Yet, even in the face of divorce, it's essential to recognise that life doesn't end. Marriage is a part of life, not its entirety. But let's challenge that notion. Life is a journey filled with complexities, and having a partner can make navigating its path easier. This might seem contradictory, but it underscores the importance of companionship in our life's journey.

So, dear reader, embrace the complexity of love and relationships. There are no black-and-white answers, only the dance of two souls seeking their rhythm. Ask yourself the hard questions: Is forgiveness possible? Can the bridges be rebuilt? Or is it time to gently let go, with gratitude for the journey shared?

Remember, divorce is not a cataclysmic ending but a bend in the river of life. Marriage is a beautiful chapter, but not the only one. Perhaps a partner makes the journey beautiful, smoother and full of joyful rides. Find your own peace, your own happiness, whether in the shared laughter of a mended relationship or the quiet strength of your own path.

The journey to your happiness begins with you recognising your own incredible worth and choosing to become the best version of yourself. Your mind and heart hold immense power, shaping your world and guiding your steps. Take time to understand your mental and psychological strength, for it can truly shape your experience – build you up or tear you down.

You are the architect of your happiness, the maker of your beliefs and the captain of your success. Celebrate your uniqueness, and embrace the journey of becoming the most wonderful you. It's okay

to be different, to be vulnerable, to be you. That, in itself, is a beautiful beginning.

And finally, dear reader, what whispers in your heart? What map guides your soul? Listen closely, for within those whispers lie the answers you seek.

Life is not a race but a journey. Take your time, and trust that within you lies the strength and wisdom to navigate the labyrinth of love, no matter the path you choose.

Ultimately, the power to choose, forgive, heal, and love again lies within you. And that is the most beautiful truth of all.

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## **What is FACT THERAPY?**

In the diverse landscape of life, we often find ourselves caught up in the twists and turns of our thoughts, fears, and challenges. As a therapist, my journey has been about unraveling these complexities and offering a pathway for individuals to navigate through the maze of their own minds.

I've been known as a different kind of therapist, driven by a desire to bring peace and satisfaction to those seeking help. Clients have shared their relief after just a few sessions, expressing newfound courage to face life's hurdles. They describe me as someone who understands and is resilient, qualities I use to guide them on their unique journeys.

At the heart of my approach is the belief that people tend to avoid confronting fears, sidestep life's challenges, and doubt their own capabilities. While everyone seeks success and peace, the journey often gets blurred by challenges, misunderstandings, and judgments.

In my commitment to assisting individuals, I aimed for simplicity – a therapy that anyone could connect with easily and see quick results. Hence, the birth of FACTS, a term familiar to us all, bridging everyday language with therapeutic practices.

I steered clear of technical language, recognizing that therapy should be accessible to people of all ages. My focus has always been on helping clients understand that thoughts hold immense power; they shape our reality. Like the genie in Alibaba's lamp, our minds can fulfill our wishes when used wisely.

FACTS, encompassing Face, Accept, Commit, Transform, and Succeed, aligns with the basic premise that thoughts shape behaviors. The program guides individuals in finding closure to

unwanted thoughts through acceptance, commitment, and the transformative process of redirecting these thoughts toward success.

This program isn't just a result of theoretical studies; it's shaped by understanding real struggles faced by diverse clients. Today, I'm fortunate to extend the reach of FACTS globally, assisting individuals on their journey toward self-discovery and transformation.

As you embark on this exploration within the pages of this book, may you find insights, inspiration, and a pathway to your own unique transformation. Remember, within the pages of FACTS, your thoughts hold the key to unveiling the extraordinary potential within you.

### **Testimonial # 1 by Sera Saji**

I cannot express enough gratitude for the incredible experience I've had with Greeshma ma'am. From the moment I walked into her office, I felt a sense of warmth and genuine care. She is an outstanding professional who combines expertise with empathy. She was also successful in creating a safe and non-judgmental space that encourages open communication.

The sessions with her have been transformative, helping me navigate through challenges and gain valuable insights. She also demonstrates a sincere commitment to her clients' well-being, and it's evident that she genuinely cares about her clients' progress.

I highly recommend her to anyone seeking a skilled and compassionate therapist. Thank you ma'am, for making a positive impact on my journey towards personal growth and well-being.

### **Testimonial # 2 by Pooja Nair**

I feel really blessed to have met Greeshma ma'am at a very crucial juncture of my personal life. When I first met ma'am, life wasn't as joyful as I expected it to be, but ma'am gave me the much needed hope, optimism and clarity to help me navigate through that tricky phase. What I really love about ma'am is her approach towards her clients. She did not look at me as just another client, instead, she deeply connected and bonded with me to understand my core issues and what was troubling me. That's one aspect that differentiates ma'am from other therapists. Ma'am is truly dedicated in ensuring her clients find a way out, no matter what and her optimism is contagious. After taking her sessions, I can now confidently and joyfully state that I'm experiencing a lot of relief, optimism and stability. I'm managing to see the beauty, joy and wonders of life which I was previously missing out on. I truly

thank Greeshma ma'am from the bottom of my heart for what she has been doing for me, and I'm sure she's doing the same for all her clients. If anyone is in need of help, support or assistance in life, kindly do not hesitate in reaching out to Greeshma ma'am. I can assure you that you'll not be disappointed.

### **Testimonial # 3 by Sudeep Unnikrishnan**

I have nothing but gratitude to ma'am for the extraordinary effort she takes in helping her clients. Greeshma ma'am is very patient in listening to her clients, and very accurate with her diagnosis of what is causing the issue. I've never met a counsellor who is so invested in the emotional and psychological well-being of their client. For most counsellors, there is a clear boundary between them and the client. For Greeshma ma'am, the moment you step into her clinic, you become an extended part of her family and she goes to great depths in solving, curing and healing your problems. I am so impressed and with ma'am's ability to deal with a variety of issues and that too in a calm and composed manner. For ma'am, this profession is not just a means of livelihood, it's her passion, it's her mission, and her life purpose to create a better harmonious society. I wish ma'am all the success, joy and prosperity in her career and may she continue to touch people's lives with her god-gifted talents and skills.

### **Testimonial # 4 by Aliya Liya**

I was drowned, burned, bruised, wounded, carried away and lost when i met Greeshma two years back. From that women to what i am today, she helped me dive into layers of my soul. She helped me understand my core problems and identify what were the things that pulled me back. She helped me to understand and love myself, as i was a person whi carried too much self hate. I had forgotten

that i can smile from my heart and i no longer need to pretend. Now i smile from inside, do a lot of inner work for happiness, value myself and care for myself. From that person who was locked with trauma, pain, addiction, hate, sleepless nights, grief, anger, loneliness, mood swings, to what i am today, she is the one. She helped to breathe into this new version of myself. She helped me to bring myself back, give that version a closure and peace. As she always said me, 'Be the Better I, Tomorrow'

### **Testimonial # 5 by Hari Warriar**

I got to know about Greeshma's excellent counselling services through a cursory google search, where her establishment had garnered consistent highly rated reviews over a period of time. I emailed her office and got very prompt replies and without much back and forth emails, got confirmation for the timing for counseling session (I am based out of India). Sincere thanks to the office lady in charge for the speedy correspondence.

I did couple counselling and found Greeshma to be a remarkably empathetic and kind individual who radiates positive energy and enthusiasm in every word she says. Always cheerful, attentive and with remarkable facility for reading expression and faces, she is an excellent counselling resource as per my experience. Her recommendations were all intuitive and to the point and quite effective for us. Her personal touch and kindness stand out and we would love to keep in touch with her as we go on with our lives.

Both of us wholly recommend her services and we wish all the very best on her endeavors, which is bringing much needed attention to the malaise of relationship and personal troubles, by providing ears to those who remain silent in the face of difficulties for lack of a good active listener.

### **Testimonial # 6 by Rohit C Ravindran**

Hands down, one of the best counsellor/therapist in whole of Kerala. Counseling never worked for me in the past and I had been to at least 4-5 therapists before I visited Greeshma ma'am. Visiting her the first time made me realise why counseling never worked for me before. Truth be told, i was looking forward to the next session as I finished my first visit. Unlike most counseling centers u see, her sessions are not really bound by a window of 1 hour, which I thought was quite important. She has a warm personality and was really friendly, while at the same time very professional. Also, the place, I think does justice to its name, counseling cafe, you won't feel like you're at a counseling center, but gives an atmosphere of a cafe, rather. Big salute to Greeshma ma'am and Nandini ma'am, for all the help.