

FORGING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

I am still exhausted with the intermittent power cuts at night which leave me sleepless. I was stoically putting off installing a battery for alternative power supply, but now I've finally decided to go for it. My eyes were so bad and I couldn't write yesterday. So that's why I skipped yesterday☺

I was somehow thinking about relationships. How do we negotiate relationships in life? Do we need good role models to follow so that we can forge strong and meaningful relationships in kinship and in friendship circles? I think yes.

Very often as I get older am so thankful for my father who has taught so many valuable lessons so effortlessly and in an offhand way. Even I can recognize myself becoming more like my father as I mature. Have to be☺

My father was an extremely friendly person. Till he was alive we went to CSI church and there always was this veiled hostility between CSI folks and Pentecostals. But even then every month almost all the Pentecostal pastors in Kumbakonam used to come home and speak for hours with my father. As we were children we were not interested in their conversation. Now I wonder how daddy managed to have such a wonderful relationship with everyone with such a vast variety of people. Last month when I went to a shop in Kumbakonam, the shop owner stood up seeing me and welcomed me inside. The reason, is he knew my father and that respect was shown because I was his daughter.

Now analysing his relationships, he never condemned anyone, he never controlled anyone and he was very very honest. He never flattered anyone. I think that is why people came to him very often. They wanted to hear the truth. I think this is what made him a good friend to everyone.

We always had dogs at home, from the time we were little kids. When I was a child I loved to hold Daffy(a cute black Pomeranian) in my lap, but it always wriggled out and promptly went and lay down on the dhoti between my father's legs even though daddy never used to pet the dog the way I did. I used to be so irritated. Once I asked him why Daffy goes to him and does not sit on my lap. I still remember what daddy said. He said, "you want to hold the dog by force. See I never drag her to me and so she comes to me. Stop bothering her and she will come to you." That was really true. I have often thought about the wisdom of those words.

I have also later extended it to relationships. It still working amazingly. That is one best secret of the rich relationships I treasure.

When we let go a person and if they really love us they will come back to us. When we hold them by force they will just see ways of wriggling and escaping out of our love clutches.

This works for relationship between friends, spouses, children ... Only when we feel insecure in relationships, we try to hold them to us by force or by some control or authority.

Mostly the dominant person in a relationship decides on everything all the time totally disregarding the likes of the other. This somehow blunts the love in the relationship.

Everyone should learn to respect other person's choice and desire. In a country like India when we want to help the poor we thrust our choice upon them. I was also like that until one incident changed me. There is a very old lady who brings buttermilk everyday to the university. Out of pity I gave her a worn saree though she never asked for one. Yet poverty was written across her. When I gave the saree she asked me whether it was new, I said no and point blank she said she never wears used sarees and refused to take that. And she did not ask me to buy a new one also.

At that moment I did not feel so good. My benevolent ego had burst. But later I thought it was good she told me what was in her heart. Why should she wear an old saree because she was poor? Later I got her a beautiful cotton saree, something which I would have selected for me. She was overjoyed. Till then she had never asked for any favour. She had a quiet dignity amidst such poverty. But from then on she asks me to get some fruit for her and also started sharing her story with me.

The lesson here is to value people according to their needs even if it bruises your ego and even if you are in a better position than them.

This is how Jesus treated everyone. He treated everyone with dignity. He stretched forth and touched a leper. He did not belittle or dismiss the Samaritan woman as oh-she-is-a-country –woman-with –five-husbands, but had a very intelligent conversation with her, Martha, Mary and Lazarus were so very important to Jesus. Neither did Jesus condemn the rich and powerful who came to Him. In His conversation to the Pharisee Nicodemus(John3), Jesus spoke on the most important truth. We all know the verse, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whomsoever believes on Him shall not perish but has everlasting life."It was part of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. Jesus was surprised at the faith of the Roman centurion, a foreigner. Jesus loved and treated everyone with dignity and respect. Be it a leper or a prostitute or a Pharisee or a Roman centurion or a normal family or a blind beggar... Jesus made each one feel special and loved.

Though He knew His own disciples will desert Him at the time of His Passion, Jesus after His resurrection comes searching for them. He doesn't condemn and abandon them. As soon as He came alive He told to inform especially Peter, the one who refuted Him, that He's alive. Not only that He went in search of Peter who'd gone fishing and cooked breakfast for Him. Isn't Jesus the Perfect Role Model to learn forging strong and meaningful relationships? Let us look to Jesus and learn from Him.