

Avoiding mediocre relationships

Sometimes people want to have a relationship so badly that they'll settle for a mediocre one. My parents did this and went through many years of unhappiness with one another before finally going their separate ways (and for you Freuds out there, yes, seeing and hearing their plentiful arguments probably did help inspire me to go for a monastic-style relationship with the divine).

Making insincere long-term commitments to a mediocre relationship just to please others or fulfill an expectation or desire can possibly hold you back on your greater spiritual journey, because:

- Mediocre relationships can keep you from growing past the level where you and your companion meet intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. As Henry David Thoreau said, "The man who goes alone can start today; but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready." If you and your partner have a deep soul level connection, then you'll be able to give each other the space to grow individually as you also continue to grow together.
- Your companion may not support your spiritual efforts. Some spouses may even feel jealous if you start paying more attention to God or spirit than to them.
- Relationships can consume a lot of precious time and energy. A good relationship or marriage can give greater value to your time and efforts, but a mediocre one may leave you in the end feeling the burden of unfulfilled dreams and wasted years of useless activities and meaningless arguments and banter.
- You can't really be too spontaneous and carefree when someone else is depending on you to always be exactly who and how you have always been. While steadiness is a great quality to develop, at some point you may be spiritually guided to make some dramatic changes in how you approach and relate to life.

Don't Forget

You need to be your own guide as to whether having a close relationship or marriage is best for you.

Adding spirituality to your relationships with devotional love

Devotional love is like a magical elixir that soothes and sweetens your heart and soul. Devotional love brings many good qualities, including contentment, gratitude, enthusiasm, service, humility, sacrifice, and a willingness to grow. Devotional love keeps you focused more on divine and great qualities than on limited circumstances. Devotional love brings touches of spirituality into all of your relationships, as it helps you to see the best in yourself and your loved ones. Here are three equations to consider regarding the importance of devotional and worldly love:

- Devotional love plus worldly love = great.
- Devotional love without worldly love = still great.
- Worldly love without devotional love = not so great.

Spiritual tips for making romance work

Consider

If you want to spiritualize your romantic relationship, approach your relationship with spiritual awareness. See God in your companion, as you love and worship each other in your hearts and souls. Give each other space to grow, and be supportive of each other's greatest dreams and aspirations.

People today are much more individualized and self-focused than their forefathers were. Carbon-copy, cookie-cutter families of the 20th century are no longer the norm. The media explosion and a lot of cultural shifts in recent decades have created some very self-focused generations who are not necessarily prepared for the sacrifices necessary to maintain a long-term monogamous marriage.

As conscious spiritually focused beings, you and your partner need to communicate enough to know what your true feelings, hopes, and commitments are. Regardless of whether you have a legal piece of paper or not, you need to explore and create a powerful, supportive relationship that works for both partners and has room for expansion and a commitment to continued positive communications and mutual respect regardless of where life's twists and turns may lead.

Contemplation and self-inquiry can help you stop replaying the same scenarios over and over again in the ongoing situations of your life. Have you noticed how certain relationship patterns can keep arising with different people until you figure out what inside yourself is creating or allowing those events to arise? For example, you may be very generous with others and feel betrayed when they don't reciprocate as you think they should. The spiritual guidance from this kind of situation may be to stop giving more than you're comfortable giving or to keep giving enthusiastically but without having so many expectations about what should be given in return. This lesson can help you to give more freely and experience less disappointment in the future.

By staying centered in your soul connection through spiritual practice and awareness, you and your partner can help one another step-by-step, healing old wounds and exploring new realizations as you move alone and together toward the eternal, absolute oneness of pure spirit. Anchored in higher understanding and purity of feeling, you grow together with love, care, and the highest mutual respect.