
THE TEACHER/STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

Q: The relationship between spiritual teacher and student is a very unusual relationship – different to any other relationship in the world. Can you say something about the relationship as you see it?

Linda: It's the most intimate relationship you can have with another human being. It is in some ways more intimate than a relationship with a partner, which I suppose is a radical thing to say, and can be very threatening to people's partners, because they like to think that they are the closest person to their partner. In some ways they are, but your relationship with your teacher is in a lot of ways more intimate because your teacher, if they are doing their job, is completely exposing you, whereas usually in a partnership/marriage people do not expose themselves completely. They usually keep something hidden – and in many relationships there are a lot of things that are hidden. That's why it's so confronting being with an enlightened teacher, because they're going to completely expose you if you stay with them. In a teacher/student relationship it's just not possible to hide. When some people start to realize that, that's when they leave. It's just too confronting for them. It forces them to confront themselves. In a marriage there are usually two egos involved. In a teacher/student relationship there's only one – if the teacher is enlightened.

I know with my teacher I felt a love that was different to anything I had ever felt before. It was strange at first. It felt like an incredibly intimate relationship, but it was different to the love I felt for my partner and my children. It was really a love for the absolute, or the impersonal, but my mind just couldn't grasp it. Some people would call it an attachment, but now I can see that it was the attachment that *broke all my attachments* – and all that was left was love. People are so fearful of giving up their attachments, but if they knew what it leads to they would do it willingly.

It's a huge responsibility for a teacher to take on and there is a lot of trust involved, but really the teacher is teaching the student to be responsible for themselves. Sometimes I warn people that if they are going to get into this deeply, it's going to change everything in their life - just being around an enlightened teacher is going to deeply affect you.

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