

## How To Explain This?

There then came two amazing weeks in my life when I fell in love and got married again: *unfortunately, not to the same woman!*

This seems especially shocking (both to me and the people around me) because, since I had moved in with my new partner a few years ago now, my life had become more stable and materially more comfortable than it had been for years. And, also, very importantly, my new relationship was relaxed, companionable and easy and I was grateful for that. The trouble was I had begun to have more and more times when I felt very lonely and inexplicably sad. I wanted more intimacy, more sharing of the inner life, more of something that felt rather indefinable: I guess I wanted more from my relationship. But I did not think I would ever get that. How could I? It had not happened in 40 odd years, why should it now? I remember one occasion when I was in the bath and I said to myself that yes, I really did want a more complete relationship and I would even be prepared to forgo my comfortable life-style for it. I think now that Somebody, or Something, was listening to me when I said this and took what I said more seriously than I could have imagined!

Anyway, I felt had no alternative but to just get on with my ordinary life. After awhile, it seemed to become the most natural thing in the world for my partner and me to get...married! After all, we had been living together for awhile now as man and wife, in many ways, and it looked as if my partner and her children would be made very happy if we got married. I always had a feeling of gratitude for the help my partner had given me at the Schoolhouse and, indeed, was still giving me now and I wanted her to be happy. I have to say that, because of my first divorce, marriage now really meant very little to me: it just seemed a formality with very little of the significance I had once thought it had. At that time I could see no reason to get married but I could see no reason not to, either! After all, we were both getting on a bit...we enjoyed all the things that married people enjoyed: holidays together etc...in fact, it looked more and more as if we would be spending our old age together and what was so bad about that? We had nothing to argue about and, clearly, we seemed to get on better than most couples we knew. My

partner obviously wanted it very much... So, a date was set for the marriage – August the next year! Would you believe it but just a fortnight before the date set for this wedding, I was overtaken by outer events and inner feelings that I would not have believed possible-certainly not to *me!*

I slowly turn the pages of memory to see how this momentous “thing” happened to me...

*Is This The “Love Of My Life” - really?!*

I guess it all began with some inexplicable feelings in me which, I see now, I was too quick to dismiss. For example, one of the most puzzling at the time concerned two children in my school who were the daughters of one of the school’s classroom helpers. As they walked out of assembly some days, both of them, for some unfathomable reason, looked at me, in what seemed, to be an unusually striking way. Both held my gaze far longer than was normal and both seemed to be linked to me in a way that I just could not explain. It was as if we were *recognising* each other in some more intimate way...I was intrigued and, in the end, just had to dismiss it as totally incomprehensible. I could not forget it, however, because it kept happening and much, much later, I guess it was to make some sort of sense!

Their mother worked in my classroom for a year helping our partially deaf child cope with the curriculum in a main stream school. In the light of what was to happen later, I want to say here that I honestly do not remember having any physical feelings towards her for any of this time. She seemed to me to be a quiet, conscientious lady who worked hard and unfussily in the classroom and these were just the qualities that I liked. Thankfully, once the work was set she did not bother me too much: she just got on with the job in hand and this allowed me to be busy with the other 20 odd who were my responsibility. The only time I did have some odd feelings to do with her at this time was when I saw her waiting at the end of the day for her daughters to come out of school – especially if she was with her husband. Then I found my attention held on her: she seemed so much less than herself and, worse, she seemed, to me, to be defeated in some way. I did not then know that her marriage was coming to an end; that things were very bad between them and soon he was to suddenly leave her and his two daughters and go to work abroad with the idea that this would be a permanent separation with divorce to

follow. I only got to know all this after their divorce. At the time I just found myself feeling surprisingly protective towards her. I did not act on these feelings at all because at that time I hardly knew her. The only time we really spoke was when I was out on the playground supervising the children playing. She seemed then to have a quiet thoughtfulness that I liked and I soon saw that she was a person with a lot more depth than I realised at first. Our conversations gradually got more interesting and it was obvious that we had some interests in common, especially psychology and literature. When her husband left and I got to know about this we had another common interest and, I suppose, a shared sympathy, too. Anyway, without giving it much thought, I offered not just sympathy but also friendship “on the end of the phone” or even “for a walk” if she ever felt the need for company or “a sympathetic ear”.

Suddenly events were then to move at a life-changing pace...

To my complete and utter surprise there came a day when she did need this and, almost before I knew it, I was sitting in my car outside my school waiting to meet her! We had agreed to go for a walk and a “chat”...

When she arrived, I was knocked for six! This beautiful woman appeared in a smart white dress, with shiny black hair and a slightly-flushed, pretty face and intelligent, shining eyes which looked right into me! The tension in the air was unexpectedly and, at first, confusedly, exciting. I drove nervously to our walk, trying to make conversation. I could not remember feeling like this before: yes, I was excited but also there was this strange energy suddenly in the day! It was a gorgeous day, too: hot, sunny and high summer. Soon, we were surrounded by cornfields and leafy-green trees; there was birdsong in the air and, my God, I wanted to kiss her! I even felt a bit dizzy: why, I was getting married to someone else in a couple of weeks, I was her boss and I was much older than she was – 18 years, in fact. None of this seemed to matter one bit!

About half way through the walk our hands touched each other and it seemed the most natural thing in the world for our fingers to search for each other and soon I was gripping her warm, small, soft hands in mine: a physical journey had begun which was to transform my life and give it feelings I had never before experienced. All grasping, or the urgency of selfish satisfaction, had, for the first time in my life,

completely left me. Then when *that* moment came I was truly transported to another world: a world of giving, love, and even transcendence...

I lay quietly. The birds were still singing, seemingly oblivious to the enormity of what had just happened to me...The sky was as wide and expansive as my whole being felt. I looked at my new partner. She was now sitting up, looking across the fields with this look in her eyes of loving contentment. I knew now without a doubt that not only had I experienced something truly special with her but- wonder of wonders - she had also felt it! I felt we were joined now in some incredibly special way and, whatever was to happen this would always be the most important thing...This afternoon was a highlight of my entire life. Afterwards, it was as if there was this “force” between us as strong as the strongest magnetic force there is.

Every day I could hardly wait to see her. In my 40 odd years I had not been celibate but I had never experienced anything near to this. I could not believe how ungrasping, how unselfish it all seemed now, so much so that I never wanted it to end and I would just want to delay it and delay it and delay it...And - miracle of miracles - I did! Everything else went from my mind as I was now living in a world that was now different from any I had so far known.

The reality of what was happening in other areas of my life was nowhere near as important as this new relationship: within a very short time I was prepared to sacrifice everything for it, including my job, my reputation and just about everything you could think of. The immediate problem before me was my fast approaching marriage and now it was so imminent (in days!) that I could not dismiss it from my mind, however much I might want to. Night times were the worst. I would wake up with my pillows and bedding running with sweat; it was so bad that my wife-to-be was taking them to be cleaned every couple of days. At first, she thought I was going through some pre-marriage “nerves” and did not take too much notice. To my eternal shame, I could not take control here AND I did not do any testing about my situation either!! I simply cannot believe this now--- perhaps I thought the testing would say that I should give up my new relationship and I knew I could not do that. What, not even for God? No, I do not think so.