

## **CHAPTER THIRTEEN: HOW TO EXPLAIN...THIS!!**

*2 Unbelievable weeks; Frustrations At School; Loneliness And A Lack Of Creativity; Marriage Plans; A Relationship Like No Other; Odd Incidents; A New Start*

There came two amazing weeks in my life when I fell in love and got married again: unfortunately, not to the same woman! How on earth did this happen?! How can I begin to explain this? Was it then a Subud crisis that turned my life upside down and inside out again? Was it that I allowed myself to be overwhelmed by the “unconscious”, by the “Anima” which was going to play havoc with my life? Or was it that I had some sort of “mid-life crisis” which we hear so much about nowadays and which caused such a shocking upheaval in an otherwise stable life? Or was it simply, as some will, still, no doubt say, a matter of my “just being a man”, having no self-control, unselfishness or nobility and being led by my most basic of instincts – the sexual urge?! Did I, at this point in my life, simply show an appalling lack of “morality”? *Help!* Was Jung’s explanation right here? He had said: “The Self is not limited by our expectations of morality, our concerns are not necessarily its concerns. This amoral, inhuman aspect of the Self is too frequently overlooked by people who talk blithely about finding the Higher Self, or their Guardian Angel. Real encounters with the Self can be terrifying and incomprehensible...Unfortunately, that supposed conscience is nothing more than an internalisation of parents and other voices of authority we have heard throughout our lives. The voice of the Self is something quite different; it has an authority that transcends those personal parental voices. *And its counsel is not for perfection, but for wholeness.*” (Introducing Jung- Robin Robertson p 175 and 181)

First, the facts, as far as I can discern them...It is true that my life was stable at this point and materially more comfortable than it had been for years. Yet, I was growing more and more dissatisfied and discontented as the months and, then, the years went by. Still I put this down mainly to my job, which was now becoming absurd at times in its demands. For example, I had to do what was called a Curriculum Audit in which I had to specify how much time the school spent on the various activities of school life. Sounds easy, huh? In fact, it proved extremely difficult to do this, so, the powers-that-be, got round this by sending us the instruction that we could go up to 110%, I think it was, on the forms-certainly over 100%, anyway. So I wish to inform you all that, as from now, 100% is no longer totality because we have a new number for mathematicians and others to worry about: 110%!!

To be fair, I do not, now, think the job was SOLELY to blame for my low state of mind, although it was “helping” less and less. I had tried to find alternative work as an Analyst and failed. I began to feel I had no alternative but to carry on with the job however bad it got and this I did for some years. Fortunately, I am sure the school did not suffer: results continued to be good all through the school; I got on well with the staff and the community and I continued to enjoy the children as much as ever. But I was also feeling more and more stifled: there were other things I wanted to do with my life but I could not find time to do them. I could see no way out of this. The future looked set to be more of the same until retirement in about 20 years time! Then I would probably be too battered to have any creativity left in me. I remembered a colleague, years ago, saying to me that he had no hopes for the future: it was simply, he said, “a straight road to the grave!” How awful that had sounded at the time; how real it was to me now! I could not see much ahead in my future generally at this time. More of the same applied to just about everything in my life, it seemed.

My relationship was comfortable, companionable and easy and I was grateful for that. I did not have any particular expectations of relationships at that time. The trouble was I had began to have more and more times when I felt very lonely and sad. I wanted more intimacy, more sharing of deeper things, more of something that felt rather indefinable: I wanted more creativity in my relationships, too. 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...

### *I Meet “The Love Of My Life”*

It 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 from “somewhere else”...I was intrigued and, in the end, just had to dismiss it as totally incomprehensible. I could not forget it, however, 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 the 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”. Well, to my 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 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.

*A Doomed Attempt Not To Hurt Anyone: I Go It Alone- Foolishly!*

As it was I was to be given so much from the Inner later that, I am as sure as I can be now, had I tested then I would have been clearly told NOT to go ahead with the wedding. Alas, I did not do this. I tried instead to convince my wife-to-be that the wedding should not go ahead BUT she was so distressed by this and so mindful of the “public humiliation” this would mean for her that I allowed myself to be swayed into it *for her sake*. I see now that this was an incredibly weak and foolish thing to do. And, of course, it did not make things easier later when I was to leave my “wife” anyway. It merely delayed the hurt and the humiliation and it meant I got involved in, at best, a travesty of a “wedding”. I shall never forget the look on my “wife’s” face when, several weeks after the wedding, I told her “there was someone else”: “Oh no,” she sobbed, “It’s too hard, John, it’s too hard for me!” I knew that feeling: I had suffered

exactly the same when my first marriage broke down. I could not bear inflicting this same suffering on someone who simply did not deserve it and (how could I forget?) who had helped me so much. If only I could find a way of avoiding this hurt I would do it...

Afterwards, it got worse as I lied through my teeth in my misguided attempts not to “hurt anyone”. At every available minute I was dashing off to the person whom I now saw as “the love of my life” and, of course, this meant lying to my “wife” or hurting her immeasurably. I was with my “wife” in name only and it had been so since I first met my new partner. And for a long time my new partner did not have an inkling that I was married either! I was spending every available moment with my new partner now. It was both a ridiculous position to be in and a completely unfair one. Eventually, of course, the situation became public knowledge. People who had known me for years simply could not believe what was happening. They had seen me as a conventional, reliable person with too much integrity to get involved in something which looked so “seedy”, immoral and weak in personality as this. “Friends” deserted me and refused to meet my new partner or even have more to do with me than they absolutely had to. My son phoned me from Australia to tell me to “get a grip” and stop being so “stupid”. The general view was that I was a “pathetic, middle-aged man going after a younger woman for all the wrong reasons- for sex and to recapture my long-lost youth”. Many viewed my new partner in a no less unflattering light: she was “obviously after my money and the security it would bring to her and to her two young girls at a time when she was in real need of these things”. I understood what was being said and I was truly worried about it. “Well, she can’t be after your body,” said a brutal friend, “it must be your money!” Rationally, I could see all this and I thought that, probably, if I were in their shoes I would see it in exactly the same ways. But I simply did not have the control that many people seemed to think I had...Whatever the rational might say there was something else at work here which was strong, delightful and, even, transcendent. It would just not be dismissed in the way many people seemed to think it should.

I began to sympathise with those characters in so many films and stories who had their lives turned upside down by feelings like the very ones that we were now experiencing. Sometimes, in spite of all the odds, the readers’ or film-goers’ sympathies are clearly for the lovers and the tensions and conflicts in the story have the audience firmly on the side of the lovers against all the odds and against all the conventions of the society of the time. In real life that does not often seem to be the case! For me, it was too easy to read the situation I was in, in a totally immoral

and unhappy light. The worst of it was I could all too easily agree with the rational arguments about what was going on but my deepest feelings refused to let them have any sort of final control. So, not for the first time in my life I was completely and utterly torn between my rational and my feeling side. I did not really trust either, so I was really up against it! A friend gave me a copy of “The Psychology Of Romantic Love” by Johnson and thus made his position completely clear. It all looked to be a “classic” case of “Anima projection” and I should, without a doubt, take myself off to some remote place “until the projection was withdrawn and I had re-united with my inner woman”! My new partner and I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book but it did not change things one iota for us. I did worry about the idea of this being “a simple case of romantic love” just as I worried about all the other rational explanations that were being given to me. If it was “romantic love”, then time would tell but, of course, only after a lot of destruction and unhappiness all round.

It was true that I experienced lots of wonderful feelings when I was with my new partner but I was sure I was not seeing her as some perfect, faultless woman because even from the beginning I was not blind to what might be considered her not- so- appealing traits! I felt she could be as self-absorbed as I could be; I knew she was untidy, sometimes very disorganised; and she was not too bothered about housework or planning ahead...I could go on!!! None of those things bothered me: I felt that the most important thing I wanted was a relationship where we could each be ourselves as fully as possible and have no pressure from the other to be what we were not. I felt I had long ago given up the illusion that any one person could be perfect and be, and do, everything that any one other person would want! No, I wanted a flesh and blood person who could accept me fully as I was – a clear mixture of qualities, some of which would be far less appealing than others! And I wanted to give the same back. We both felt the same way about this and, of course, later we were to add more details to it: for example, we would not just do what we wanted in the relationship, not if it was hurtful, for example, to the other. We agreed on far more than we disagreed on – about relationships and most else, in fact – so it was easy for us to be together as the people we were – without pretence. We both aimed for a relationship where we would each get to know each other really well and would both be committed to helping the other to achieve what each most wanted in life, whatever that might be! We could be different and we found that we could support each other in those differences where they were important to either one of us. In other words, we both wanted to help each other grow, learn, and share as much as possible of life, in all its aspects.

We also shared an interest in life's possible meaning and purpose, in religion and so on. Of course, we talked about Subud and my partner had her own experience of the latihan (while on holiday in Turkey in a room on her own! See Appendix 2) and she, then, joined the Association. So, we shared that as well and to have a partner who shared my Subud interest was an unexpected bonus for me. There were many times when we seemed to be unnaturally close in an almost psychic way: we sometimes experienced things like one of us saying exactly what the other was about to, or was just thinking about. This happened enough for us to comment on it every so often! The first time this happened was when we lay together and I had this strong image of myself being an American Indian out on the plains. It was so strong that I mentioned it and, to my surprise, my partner pulled out an American "dream catcher" which she had got for me that day!

However, in spite of all this, the pressure on me to end this inspiring, wonderful, happy relationship was enormous. I worried and worried about it. My "wife", I knew, did not deserve what was happening. She obviously cared for me and I was putting her through hell. Many people were shocked at what had happened and were convinced I had got it all wrong and needed saving from myself! And there was a strong inner pressure as well as I felt I was breaking an accepted code of behaviour for our society, no less. There were times when this pressure was so great that I did try to end the relationship! Then I put my new partner through hell. Yet, she stuck with it all and, as I later realised, she, also, had to compromise her "morality" and some of her friendships for our relationship. It turned out that just before we met she had also prayed for a relationship in which there was "true love" and, she said, she would put up with "any hurt for it". Well, that was surely to be tested with me! I was also surprised when it became clear that she had said this at about the same time that I had made my bath-time wish! It was as if we had *both* been listened to!

### *The Strange Consequences Of A "Surrender" That Is Not My Own!*

There were some truly harrowing times for all three of us. The first time I packed my bags and moved out of my wife's home was one of the darkest in my life. I felt enclosed in a darkness that was almost literal! I remember sitting on a wall at the shops near to where I had lived and everything around me seemed to be covered in a shadowy darkness. People kept coming up to me and asking me if I was "alright"...I obviously was not! Then, I had no alternative but to go back to my wife and the feelings lightened for me but were made worse for my new



partner. This happened a second time, later, when I put my new partner through the pain of knowing that I was ending our relationship and going back to my “wife” *again!* This time, though, she received the inner advice that she had to just surrender it all and accept whatever happened because it was all out of her hands. Through her own testing she realised with an absolute surety that there had always been “something else” in our relationship and so it was not her decision as to what should happen next. What happened to me then was scary, to say the least. After announcing my decision not to leave my wife I went home on my own and slept as fitfully as was usual at the time. In the morning I woke up and could not move a muscle or limb!! I felt completely paralysed. For some reason, I put this down to my having made the wrong decision! “Alright!” I said after a long internal battle and in something of a panic, “I will go and live with my new partner!” Immediately the “paralysis” went and I was left relieved and accepting of what I now knew had to be done.

#### *At Last- I Turn To The Inner*

In all of this, what helped me the most IN THE END was to be the usual combination of intuition AND some outer confirmation with – at last! – some testing thrown in.

Often, I would take my misgivings now to the Inner, especially in my Quiet Times, when I asked with all the conviction I could muster, to be “shown” the true and right thing to do. Sometimes I received clear inner guidance. For example, there was one particularly low time, when I was full of confusion and anxiety, and I heard an inner voice say to me: “As a sign that this relationship is right for you both, she (my new partner) will give you a special gift to-night.” Yes, I could accept this as good evidence because there was absolutely no reason for me to receive any sort of present “to-night” and I certainly had not received one for many, many nights previously. And, of course, imagine how I felt when I did receive a truly appropriate gift: a beautiful home- made book of “promises and commitments” that touched my heart greatly. My partner said she had no intention of giving me this gift then- until she saw me and saw how low I looked!

#### *The Only Time In My Career I Receive Such A Letter*

Next, there followed another example of “synchronicity” that seemed a clear answer to my plea for “some outer sign of what I should do now.” It was when I was thinking the time had finally come for me to move out of my wife’s home but I did not know where to go. We were all three of us

going through all sorts of pain and it seemed that some sort of decision was now more than necessary. I, of course, did not want to make it. So, in the end, I asked with all the strength I could muster, for some sort of outer “sign” that would help me make the “right decision”. I had no idea what form that “sign” could take. Amazingly, in my school post that week came a letter addressed to the “Headteacher”, such as I have never had before (in 30 odd years!) or after. It startled me by beginning: “At this time of the year, you may have staff *who are thinking of re-locating...*” and then came the offer of several properties for rent locally! Never had such a letter come into school before and it came just after I had asked for some such sign---Amazing!! Anyway, I rang for a viewing of one of the properties which looked ideal and, as a result, I ended up living just round the corner from my new partner and her daughters.

### *Important Testing*

Still my “wife” did not abandon me. In fact, she visited me in my new home every week and we went for walks together. I think she still felt that I was unwell and would eventually come to my senses. It was while I lived here that I finally got round to doing some testing with a friend. I disguised the questions so that my friend did not know what I was testing about to begin with, by asking things like: “Would it be the right thing for me to do what I am now thinking of...?” I hoped that by doing this I would eliminate the possibility of prejudice in the receiving (I am aware that any sign of such a wishing can influence the testing. I think one has to be really empty and unprejudiced for the receiving to be true and convincing- more about this later). Anyway the result of this testing was clear that it was right for me to live here for “a time” and that it would not be a good idea for me to look to move back in with my wife.

Meanwhile, my new partner was living in “temporary accommodation” until the local council could re-house her and her girls. She stayed there for about a year and we quite enjoyed this time. The “accommodation” was a spacious maisonette above some shops and we particularly enjoyed sitting out on what was the roof of the shops. To us, it was like sitting on the balcony of a holiday apartment! It certainly felt like that to us, anyway. It was warm, too, because it was above a bakery. Alas, I was not allowed to stay overnight here because that would break the terms of the agreement. I did stay occasionally and somehow the “Fraud Squad” got to know of it and we were summoned to “explain ourselves”. We were completely honest about the situation, however, and all was well although, even after being warned of the dangers of staying overnight, I did have a little too much to drink one Christmas and stayed then. Sure

enough, the Fraud Office knew and we were summoned again...! Again complete honesty seemed to be the best policy and fortunately the explanation was accepted and all was well, again. After about a year, there came the time when it was likely that an offer of a permanent home would be given and we both decided that when that happened I would move in with my new partner and her girls and we would live together properly.

### *Mysterious Happenings*

Some time previously, my new partner had filled in a form to say where she would prefer to live, if there was the choice, and she had put the names of some of the local villages at the top of her list. However, I began to feel, at the time for a move drew closer, that this should be changed and that the nearby town would be best for us, being near schools for the girls and easy for me to get to work and my partner would be able to get to places without needing to drive etc. My partner also had a clear idea of where in the town she would most like to live. A week later a letter arrived from the council with an offer of a house---in the very same nearby town (still way down on her list of preferences: she had not, as yet, changed it!) and, unbelievably, just where my partner would choose most to live if we were to live in a town!! So we went to view it and as soon as we drove into the quiet, rather old-fashioned street, we both immediately felt it to be right. Then things got to be a little amusing... We first looked inside the house and said: "It would be perfect if only it had central heating installed". I, because of past experience, felt this particularly! Then, lo and behold, we heard that we would have to wait to move in as the council were "putting new central heating in!" Another time we went for another look and we noticed an old fireplace and a very old-fashioned and, to us, ugly set of lights hanging from the ceiling in the middle of one room. "Oh dear," we thought, "those will have to go!" The next time we went, both had been taken out by the council workmen! We then began looking for other things we wanted changing as a kind of game... "Phew, that ceiling is going to be hard work," I said on another occasion when I noticed all these discoloured tiles on the ceiling. Believe it or not, the tiles were taken down for us and all the ceilings upstairs were artexed!

This then became my *new* home with my *new* family! Once again I found myself having to decorate and furnish an entire house... At last, though, decisions had been made and, hopefully, the agonies of the past months, and more, would settle and life would perhaps, at last, become good for us all. Ever hopeful, huh?