

Friendship Is Deeper Than Love

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There are three types of relationships in a man's life. There are relationships of the intellect, which cannot be very deep. The relationship between a teacher and a student is this type of relationship. There are relationships of love, which are deeper than the intellect. The relationships between a mother and child, between brothers, between husband and wife are these types of relationships: they arise from the heart. Then there are even deeper relationships that arise from the navel. I call the relationships that arise from the navel 'friendships'. They go deeper than love. Love can end: friendship never ends. Tomorrow we may hate the people we love today — but someone who is a friend can never become an enemy. If he becomes an enemy, then there was no friendship in the first place. The relationships of friendship are of the navel. They are relationships of deeper and unknown realms.

This is why the Buddha did not tell people to love each other. He talked about friendship. He said that there should be friends in your life. Somebody even asked the Buddha, "Why do you not call it love?" And he replied, "Friendship is a much deeper thing than love. Love can end, friendship never ends."

Love binds, friendship gives freedom. Love can enslave somebody. It can possess, it can become a master. Friendship does not become someone's master, it does not hold anyone back. It does not imprison, it frees. Love becomes a bondage because the lovers insist that the other should not love anyone else but them.

Friendship has no such insistence. One man can have thousands of friends, millions of friends, because friendship is a vast, very deep experience. It arises from the deepest centre of life. That is why friendship ultimately becomes the greatest way to take you towards the divine. Someone who is a friend to all will sooner or later reach to the divine because his relationships are happening with everyone's navel centre. One day, he is bound to be connected to the navel centre of the universe.

One's relationships in life should not be merely intellectual, they should not be only heartfelt — they should be deeper, they should be of the navel. The Inner Journey, courtesy: Osho International Foundation, www.osho.com