

Soul Curry

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A letter to a husband



Life was happy for Gitanjali Prasad when her husband was alive. Here, she writes about the lessons learnt during their life together

I can't write a novel, my life has been too happy, I once confided to you, Alok, my husband and soul mate, foolishly tempting fate. "Write happy stories", you exhorted. But of course, I knew that happy stories don't make for riveting reading.

On the very last day of March, two years ago, the Gods decided to set that right. Without so much as a bye, you just walked out of this world into the next. And I, who learnt so much from you in all our years together, realised that the greatest, most profound lessons lay ahead. So though I had benefited from your introducing me to yoga and meditation, and felt a huge swathe of energy being released by your curbing my propensity to re-live and actions that I saw in hindsight as not being the perfect response. And though, I had learnt from you not to keep score, 'Neki kar, dariya mey daal,' and not to bother overmuch about recognition or reward, the real lessons were to be learnt not from your being by my side and celebrating success and commiserating failures, but by your walking on and leaving me alone to discover strengths, skills and abilities I had to develop to survive.

Earlier, life was a picnic. No matter what went wrong, somehow with you by my side, every day seemed bathed in sunshine. Now, even the greatest news is tinged with just a hint of sorrow. Because, you are not there to share it.

But through all of this there is a better understanding of some of life's deepest lessons. To truly understand how ridiculous it is to worry. I can see how concerned friends and family are that everything in my life is so uncertain. And yet, I now realise that it always was, it always must be. Two years ago, my rock-solid, perfect life disappeared just as if someone touched a soap bubble with all the force of a fingertip. So rather than hanker after sureties, perhaps it makes more sense to become comfortable with the idea of living with uncertainty. It's not what happens to us that is important, but how we react to it. Grief and joy, finally they all lie within.

And I know, now, Alok, how very wise you were. You always admired my energy, my ability to make whatever I wanted, happen. I thought I was lucky but you gave me infinitely more credit for having a vision and then putting in the slog required to make that vision reality. But I now realise that it was you who really had the key. I was happy because I had fashioned my life in just the way I wanted. You were actually happy with whatever life dished out. It's something I am working on now. But I can see you grinning at my attempts to do this. It is not an easy lesson for your wife to learn!

If I were given the choice, the chance to have my old life back, would I take it? Like a shot! Ah, how truly happy I was and how blessed I felt in the carefree days of being blissful wife and mother. But of course, it's when you plumb the depths of despair, when you live with pain and grief, that you do get a new and valuable insight into what life and living are all about.

What I miss most is not being able to share any of this with you. But none of us are here forever, and one day in the near or far future we shall have the most fascinating conversation of our lives. Till then, Alok!