

MEMORIES THAT TIME DOES NOT ERASE

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(I present a few images of my wife Mani, who passed away on January 17th, 2017. I always adored her versatile personality. At the time of our marriage, she hasnâ??t completed her degree. Later, besides caring for our children Neelima and Aditya, she had done her B.Ed., MA, and M.Phil, in English literature. She was an eminent classical singer and a postgraduate in Bharata Natyam, a classical dance form)

It was the happiest memories that haunt us the most. They would never let go of their firm grip on our emotional strings. It would be two years in a monthsâ?? time my wifeâ??s visceral presence buried only to come alive as memories and movements we had lived together. I celebrated them every day. And Iâ??m not prepared to lose them of her for the rest of my life.

Though, I came to grips with the mourning of my wifeâ??s death. Iâ??m surprised to see fewer tears in my eyes but as if to balance a bitter void stumped my body. Iâ??m not sure if I could carry on in the empty house without my wife. I walked in and out not to know how to handle her absence. I wake up with impatience, seeking in empty rooms if my ears could snatch any remnants of her voice. I imagined she would have left behind as a consolation.

Iâ??m prepared, though, to the outcome of my wifeâ??s two-year-long terminal illness: a resultant condition of cancer. But I havenâ??t bargained for the suffering. I havenâ??t prepared for the burden of the everyday heartbreak. And no one speaks about when I would attain a perfect relief.

The rapidity of her transformation was fearful. In two years I saw my wife a strong, learned and shrewd personality. A post-graduate in literature, she was full of charming smiles, gentle nature, carried herself with an attractive persona. Today she has gone into darkness: confused,

withered. The disease had reduced her to a vegetative lifestyle as the metastasis preying in on her vital systems inside. Whatever, I could no longer make out my lovely wife anymore, her laughter, and all her prettiness quietly faded away. Day after day, she has gone down, devoured by millions of the cells of cancer.

A year and a half ago in the last week of December, fragile and resigned to her hospital bed for more than a year and a half, she stared at me with her blank eyes, when I wished her on our 34th wedding anniversary. Both of us were not aware that sheâ??s left with twenty more days to stay awake to breathe.

My wife and I moved a good amount in social circles hearing whispers behind us, â??how sweet-natured couple they are.â??

As soon as we are together as wife and husband, I brought in a strong belief into our alliance. â??I proposed to my wife; letâ??s not make our marriage a static obligation. Letâ??s convert to an active relationship into which we have to infuse intimacy every living minuteâ??. I chanted this as my daily mantra. Our days together, since then, for the next thirty-four years, have sailed smoothly. I positioned my role as, â??itâ??s all in mutual caring,â?? chap from the moment we are in wedlock.

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No sooner she took charge as the eldest daughter-in-law of our house than I realized she is a notch more competent than me in all aspects. I held her superiority as a badge of respect, with no ego overlaps it led to a fusion of a fruitful quest of sorts. I wished my family and our professional lives blessed to support each other.

She quickly carved out an endearing niche for herself in the school my father has been managing. Later when my father passed away, we together launched our best partnership to create one of the best schools in our city. I believed my marriage had been a stepping stone for my personal and social success. Letâ??s call it a communion between two trustworthy souls. Therefore, I madly decided, â??whatever the reason this is the person I want to spend the rest of my life.â??

I had my moments of being egocentric, which never allowed openly acknowledging her creative flashes. The school teaching staffs were quick to notice this bright spark in my wife took a U-turn bypassing me when coming to negotiate any school-related matters. I was too pleased my wife catalyzing all the schoolâ??s various events.

Besides me and for my daughter Neelima and son Aditya she has been the center of the family wellbeing. All of us relaxed in her presence; she was the most caring when we all joined for dinner. She had always put together the best recipes for us. They may seem to be small things, but she perfumed our bonds that we always stayed as mutual admirers. Discord has no place in her manners, and hence arguments kept to a minimum. A willing nod and a smile are enough

from her to do away with any disagreements. For all of us, she made the everyday twinkles of our efforts very pleasant.

Occasionally I indulged in arguments with her. Honestly, I admit, itâ??s my ignorance, my imprudence. Upon which she politely defused the impasse, eventually, I got the results Iâ??m worried about. As a sign the moody, dark clouds didnâ??t exist, the next day, she smilingly served my breakfast. A further surprise she would come attractively attired to the office. One more day would go smoothly: tensions diffused with fewer arguments, less resistance. Her simple approach and her easy way of setting things right had garnered rich academic benefits for our school.

For three decades, itâ??s all about quality of life and finding a balance between family, work and friends. Taking in the smiles of my wife, the love of our children I ardently supported my family. No matter whatever the tough times I have been through.

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I treasured my companionship with my wife as a marvel as a phenomenon. I enjoyed with her a celebration of freedom, privacy, dialogues, and dissent. It formed a strong fabric that has emotionally woven around my family. I see it even today a saving grace in her absence. In many critical situations, she wielded the baton of control. I saw myself hiding as a second fiddle.

Our marriage was like a duet; interestingly, she handled the lyrics and the singing. I, whereas, enjoyed the melody.

Over the years my wife and I forged inbuilt emotional security for one another, and our children included. She went about with constant attention into all niceties that would make our marriage a sum of happiness. For which she accepted all my faults, follies, failures, flaws besides praising my few strong aspects in teaching and language. Whatever my setbacks she worked around it that was her brightness.

One appreciable side, I noticed in her, which has shined all the time. She never openly pointed a figure at me. If there was a situation, she downplayed them in private at home. I gave her exclusive artistic space. It helped her to accommodate her temperamental, spiritual, academic, creative pursuits. We both afforded ourselves a life as easy as a fish swimming in clear waters: smooth, functional and comfortable.

Staying together is one aspect but consciously handling every detail of everyday irritants involved steady hard work. Iâ??m mindful and tiptoed into this department of sorts cautiously. In marriage, every attribute has a potency to hurt. Therefore, I have to care about the likes of my language, my tone, actions, behavior, and intentions. Iâ??m aware I have to tread with a cautious mindset to safeguard our togetherness. It was always on my mind when my wife and my children felt happy I could trust my peace of mind ensured.

All my emotions kept linked to my memories. I have learned how to live with my wifeâ??s death, but Iâ??m not able to adjust with its ensuing solitude. I couldnâ??t detach myself from the delusion that crept into my mind every night telling me where to look for places in my home that reminds me of my wife when she was alive. It got me remarkably shocked wiping away sleep from my eyes night after night. I lost the count of such nights that left me irritable. But, anyway, I have to sleep, gently coaxing myself â??Believe me there would be no escape from these memories.â??

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1. Uncategorized

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