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 Personal Growth/Spirituality

“Everything you need to create healthy, fulfilling relationships, using ancient wisdom, beautiful stories, tools, and exercises. This book is a must read ...”

—Arielle Ford, Author of *Wabi Sabi Love* and *The Soulmate Secret*

“In the Lotus of the Heart is a profound and inspiring lesson in healing our love, lives, and ourselves by using ancient spiritual wisdom. I recommend it wholeheartedly.”

**—Brenda Wade, PhD
 Author of *Love Lessons* and *99 Things You Wish You Knew Before Falling in Love***

We highly recommend this book to anyone seeking more fulfilling, enlightened relationships.”

**—Drs. Evelyn and Paul Moschetta
 Marriage counselors and authors of *The Marriage Spirit* and *Are You Roommates or Soul Mates?***

IN THE LOTUS OF THE HEART

The Essence of Relationships Shubhrajī

Vedanta teacher Shubhrajī was moved to write *In the Lotus of the Heart: The Essence of Relationships* because, “People everywhere talk to me about the same relationship issues. Many feel lonely; often they’re cut off from loved ones because of seemingly unresolvable conflicts or communication problems, or they suffer in stale, loveless, or even abusive relationships. As a species, we’re wired to reach out, connect, and relate to others, but we seek love or try to solve relationship problems using the same strategies that created the problems in the first place. Once we realize that our outer conflicts reflect our inner states, we can move toward greater integration internally and more loving, fulfilling relationships with others.”

Accessible and practical, *In the Lotus of the Heart* illuminates how to connect more deeply with our beloveds, parents, children, and friends and shows how relationships are a vital tool for neutralizing the effects of past conditioning. Using examples readers can identify with, the author guides us toward harmonious relations with others that we all long for. Simple exercises at the conclusion of each chapter provide practice opportunities that anyone can benefit from.



Shubhrajī is a contemporary Vedanta teacher with an international following and began her spiritual work at age fourteen as a disciple of the renowned Vedanta master H. H. Swami Chinmayananda. Originally from India, Shubhrajī took an early interest in the ancient nondualistic philosophy of Vedanta.

Now based in Woodstock, New York, she teaches and travels throughout the United States, Asia, and Europe. Using Sanskrit texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads, she conducts programs for both Eastern and Western audiences in various centers and institutions, including the Harvard Business School, London Business School, St. John’s College, and the Ross Institute. She also offers weekend intensives that include yoga asanas. *In the Lotus of the Heart* is her first book. For more information, please visit www.inthelotusoftheheart.com.



Shubhraj: Expanded Bio

Shubhraj is a contemporary Vedanta teacher with an international following who began her spiritual work at age fourteen as a disciple of the renowned Vedanta master H. H. Swami Chinmayananda. Originally from India, Shubhraj took an early interest in the ancient nondualistic philosophy of Vedanta.

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Although she lectures on topics ranging from spiritual unfoldment, meditation in daily life, and the essence of divine love to managing the mind and the secret to success, the subject of greatest interest among her students worldwide is relationships. "People everywhere talk to me about the same relationship issues. Many feel lonely; often they're cut off from loved ones because of seemingly unresolvable conflicts or communication problems, or they suffer in stale, loveless, or even abusive relationships. As a species, we're wired to reach out, connect, and relate to others, but we seek love or try to solve relationship problems using the same strategies that created the problems in the first place. Once we realize that our outer conflicts reflect our inner states, we can move toward greater integration internally and more loving, fulfilling relationships with others."

Shubhrajī's first book, *In the Lotus of the Heart: The Essence of Relationships* (September 2014), addresses these issues with stunning clarity.



To schedule a talk, program, or book-signing event with Shubhrajī, please contact her at [lotus @ inthelotusoftheheart.com](mailto:lotus@inthelotusoftheheart.com).

For additional information about Shubhrajī, please visit:
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Shubhraj

How I Came to Teach Vedanta

At the age of eight, I lost my father and instantly my belief in God was shaken. By fourteen I was an atheist and a rebellious teenager. Although I continued to take part in religious ceremonies in my hometown of Lucknow, India, my heart wasn't in them. I felt lonely and angry, sure that God had let me down.

During a family vacation in Bangalore, my eldest sister insisted I go with her to visit a monk she had recently met named Swami Chinmayananda. Reluctantly I agreed and went to his residence expecting to meet someone serious and boring. Instead, I encountered a smiling, six-foot-tall man with a vibrant personality, and immediately I was drawn to him.

The next evening I found myself amidst a crowd of ten thousand people listening raptly to his discourse on a chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, a popular Vedantic text. I could understand only about half the lecture; however, his definition of the word *sin* caught my attention. In a booming voice, Swamiji defined sin as an angle of deviation between what we know and what we do. "There is no such thing as a sinner," he added. "Sin is simply an error of judgment. When we change, our whole world changes." His words had a profound impact on me.

Infused with a new sense of hope, I continued attending the talks and began to develop a relationship with Swamiji, who treated me like a loving father. He indicated that we have the freedom to choose how we respond to situations and the power to overcome our destiny by facing it in its entirety. Feeling suddenly connected to the totality of the universe and able to invoke inner strength, peace, and courage by drawing on that mysterious power, I started to meditate every day, chant verses of scripture in Sanskrit, and delve deeply into books on Vedanta. The teachings anchored me and instilled in me a feeling of joy independent of outside circumstances.

Following the lecture series, my mother invited Swamiji to stay at our home in Lucknow and offer a series of public talks. Subsequently, during my vacations I traveled with him and a group of devotees, assisting him with a variety of tasks. We then forged a teacher-disciple relationship—a hallmark of the Vedanta tradition—in which he became my guru and guided me in different aspects of my life.

After several years, I started my own advertising business. When negative situations arose at work, I would go back to the Vedanta teachings. Even if I had lost my composure, I could then work out the issues with cheerfulness positive interactions. Eventually I noticed my personality had changed radically. I was calmer and lived in the spirit that even the most difficult problems could be resolved because the answers are within us.

By then I had fully integrated Vedanta into my busy life. Feeling energized by spiritual education I decided to devote my energy to various projects within Swamiji's organization, known as Chinmaya Mission. At the time, this mission consisted of over two hundred centers worldwide involving schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and clinics, as well as rural development projects for villagers in India. Within eleven years of meeting my teacher, I had dedicated myself to spiritual work in the Vedanta tradition.

In 1993, shortly before Swamiji left his body I came to the United States. After spending a few years working and pursuing my spiritual practice, I moved to Woodstock, New York, and devoted myself full time to sharing the wisdom of Vedanta. My goal was always to give people practical tools to use in meeting their daily challenges. Now, as I continue this work worldwide, I am grateful for the opportunity to present this timeless teaching so individuals can draw on the love, strength, and resilience already present within them.

For additional information, or to book Shubhraj, please contact [lotus @ inthelotusoftheheart.com](mailto:lotus@inthelotusoftheheart.com).



Shubhraj

Q & A's

1. There are so many relationship books available today. How is your book different?

In the Lotus of the Heart is about discovering the roots of relationships—the essence of relationships—and what they are made of. It shows the reader how to uncover and reconnect with their own inner being and invites them to redesign their thinking, which quickly brings about an external shift.

Caught up, as we are, in the intricate web of life, we have forgotten that our primary relationship in life is with ourselves. We mistakenly give more importance to fostering healthy relationships with others and struggling to manage them—aspects addressed by most other relationship books. My book, on the other hand, brings one's relationship with oneself into the limelight and shows how attending to this connection brings about healthier and more meaningful interpersonal relationships.

2. Please explain the title of your book. What does the lotus flower symbolize in terms of human relationships?

The lotus flower grows in muddy water yet exhibits an inherent beauty and purity. Just as the budding lotus is nourished by the mud it grows from, our journeys in life are fueled by our limitations and challenges; but once we realize that our outer conflicts reflect our inner states, we can reach beyond them by recognizing our inherent wholeness. In doing so, our core values become clearer, deeper dimensions of our personality begin to bloom, and we experience greater harmony in our relationships.

3. Why, in your opinion, do we struggle so much with relationships of all sorts—with family, lovers, friends, colleagues, neighbors, even sales clerks? How can your book help readers resolve these struggles?

Each individual is endowed with unique gifts and abilities. But unfortunately, due to the demands of our lifestyles, over time people forget about their talents or become unable to harness them. The resulting disconnect between our inner lives and our awareness of them allows inner conflicts to creep into our relationships with others no matter how important they may be to us.

In the Lotus of the Heart invites the reader to start looking within for answers. It also demonstrates how to change our thinking in ways that contribute to a more peaceful emotional body. An emotional body that is at ease sets the foundation for establishing healthy relationships.

4. What is Vedanta, and how can it help people improve their interactions with others?

Vedanta is the universal philosophy revealed by the ancient Himalayan masters, before 1200 BCE, who meditated on the question “Who Am I?” It gives us an understanding of our true nature and connects us to our essence, the source of joy. Through teachings on service, love, and knowledge, it awakens a vision of the “one reality,” which transcends race, creed, class, gender, and nationality. Hallmarks of this philosophy are the direct method of self-inquiry and meditation.

In practical terms, Vedanta shows us the distinctions between that which is long lasting or permanent and that which is transient or illusory. The key to joy is to shift our focus to a higher perspective. When we work on our relationships from this angle, they become doorways to a more meaningful life for ourselves and others.

5. Does one need to know the ancient scriptures, Sanskrit, or Vedanta practices to benefit from your book?

Readers need no prior knowledge to read the book and apply the concepts in their lives. The ideas are presented very simply and the concepts are universal. The few Sanskrit words that appear are clearly defined. Also included are day-to-day examples involving people from all walks of life. This book is meant for anyone who is interested in relationship issues.

6. In the context of relationships, how did you implement the teachings of Vedanta in your own life? Give us an example.

Even as a self-absorbed teenager I was drawn to Vedanta, the idea of the oneness of our existence, the benefits of calming the mind through selfless service, and the importance of transcending conflict and being in harmony with life. I was fortunate that my mother was also drawn to these teachings. In fact, while studying Vedanta the first visible change for me involved my relationship with my mother. I noticed we had become closer; I was more tolerant toward her when she gave me suggestions; and I had begun to appreciate the way she balanced the many spheres of her life. Next I discovered I was becoming aware of the needs of *many* people around me.

Then the biggest shift occurred: I became enthusiastic about serving others. Vedanta emphasizes karma yoga—selfless actions toward all—so although I was surprised, it made sense that I’d begun feeling more compassionate toward people and willing to help them.

7. What is the most important lesson you learned from your teacher, Swami Chinmayananda, that has helped you in creating and maintaining relationships?

The most valuable learning I received from my teacher was to view people and situations from every perspective before taking action. Swamiji taught me how to make decisions in the best interests of people concerned and from the highest spiritual point of view.

While observing him over the years, I saw that he established eye contact with each person he talked to and gave them his complete attention no matter what. Also I saw his genuine concern for their well-being and his ability to make them feel special and loved. To him, everyone was a reflection of the one true self.

As his teachings took root in me, I began to realize that each human being is divine and that dealing with people from this perspective eased my ability to create and sustain relationships worldwide. Simply put, approaching each person with love has been the biggest gain in my life!

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