

Soul Connections: Shining A Light On The Dark Places – An Excerpt From “Grounded Spirituality”

[BY JEFF BROWN](#)

Woundmates – An excerpt from “[Grounded Spirituality](#)”

The following dialogue is an excerpt from a fictitious stream of conversation between myself – “JB” – and a questioner named Michael – “M” – in my new book, “Grounded Spirituality.” “JB” reflects myself at this stage of my development. “M” is based on a tapestry of various ungrounded spiritual seekers I have encountered, and is also a direct reflection of who I was at prior stages of my journey. I have taken the liberty of engaging “M” in a deepening dialogue, one that invites us to cover a broad range of material over a series of regular sessions.

M: What do you think of “twin flames”? Let me share an example from my past, that I still wonder about to this day. A woman named Rhonda – she went by the spiritual name “Shakti.” And shakti-force she was. She was a spitfire. I met her when I was living in the Bay Area. She was part of the TM community I was in.

We never had a commitment, but we connected often. Lots of deep eye-gazing, sitting together in silence, tantric explorations. Our lovemaking was explosive. We didn’t have much emotional dialogue. We were both at a stage where we found that distracting. It was better to just “be here now” together.

But, at some point, I began – well, we began – to get into all

manner of conflict. Mostly petty bickering, like whose meditation cushion should be closest to the window, and whether we should leave some clothes at each other's place, and my feeling encroached upon when she wanted to stay over after sex.

Our wounds began to flare up – but we were not willing, and I suppose not yet able, to confront them. Then we broke up in a volatile shouting match on Highway One, near Bodega. I ended up storming out of her VW van and hitching back to San Fran.

Anyway, I often think of her and wondered if we were twin flames. There was this powerful charge between us. And if we were twin flames – were we right to end it, or should we have done the work together? I sometimes wonder what my life would be like if I took that path.

JB: First of all, “twin flames” is one of the most dangerous, delusional terms in the spiritual world. It has little solid ground, and often attracts New Cagers with very poor boundaries, who desperately want to believe that their unhealthy relationship is soul-sponsored.

Maybe it is, but that doesn't mean it is healthy or sustainable. The moment someone says they are in a “twin flame” relationship, I suggest that they buy a fire extinguisher and a burn kit. Because they are going to need them.

What we need now are terms that reflect soul connections that are centered, grounded, sustainable, mature, balanced. I have provided some of those terms in my Enrealment Love Relationship Map: soulmates, solemates, wholemates. We need many more.

With respect to you and Rhonda, err, I mean Shakti, you've made it clear that you weren't ready to do the work. That means you were there to get other needs met, but not to go all the way into conscious relating.

And even if you do have that intention, and feel open to a lasting partnership with another, it still remains to be seen whether you are truly meant to be together for the long haul. Just because a couple has a strong energetic charge, and issues are provoked, doesn't mean that the connection will actually serve the bigger picture.

I think of this as the distinction between the purpose-filled relationships that are meant to remain together over time – and the less healthy or toxic version: woundmates.

M: What's the diff? Isn't it part of the conscious path – to transform our woundmates into soulmates. Isn't that the work we are here to do?

JB: Not necessarily. True, it can be difficult to distinguish a soul-mate from a wound-mate because powerful connections excavate the unresolved emotional material that each of us holds. The stronger the connection, the stronger the light shining on those dark places.

Some woundmates truly do contain the seeds of our soulular expansion. And yes, in some cases, woundmates do become soulmates, particularly if there is a real willingness in each person to do the work to convert the wounds and issues into the seeds of transformation.

But not all woundmates carry the potential of becoming soulmates. Sometimes they are toxic connections masquerading as something more heightened. Sometimes they are destructive battlegrounds with very little possibility for expansion. Sometimes they are just trouble. It's an important distinction.

As for you and Shakti, it's hard to say because neither of you were at a place where you wanted to explore your triggers and heal in unison. We want to go where we grow. If they don't help you glow, then let them go.

M: I'm still confused by these distinctions. Are you saying that any connection holds the possibility of soulmating, if there is mutual willingness to work through the stuff? Is that enough?

JB: No, it's not always enough. One of the issues I have with the burgeoning conscious relationship movement is that it often implies that if we provoke each other's triggers, that it is an indication to stay together. This is not always true.

Again, I appreciate the value of not turning away from paths and people just because it becomes uncomfortable. We cannot only remain in situations when they feel good, because there may be essential lessons to learn in the heart of the discomfort.

At the same time, the idea that all trigger-laden connections carry a seed of transformation is unhealthy and is not always true – even when there is willingness to do the work. There is a meaningful difference between difficult situations that are fodder for expansion, and those where the discomfort is a signal to walk away.

This is as true for love relationships as friendships. Sometimes the shadow emerges because we have something to work through. Sometimes it emerges because we are simply not where we belong.

For example, we often pick partners that reflect our unresolved issues with our parents. At times, this is fuel for expansion, particularly when both partners choose to consciously work through the material and grow together. But other times, it's an absolutely impossible dream, because the same characteristics that made the parent-child dynamic impossible are still present. The idea that we can shift ourselves or the other to finally make those dynamics function healthily is simply untrue.

Sometimes, our best chance for a healthy love relationship is to pick someone unlike the impossible parent. The therapeutic movement has to be careful to not make the assumption that every trigger-filled relationship is worthy of our time. Just because stuff comes up to work with, doesn't mean that it's worth our while. Stuff will arise in healthier connections too, but that material carries a seed of hope. It burgeons with possibility.

M: So there has to be a certain element that suggests there is enough hope there, or a sense that they are truly fundamental to our life's journey, to justify going on?

JB: Absolutely. And let's never under-value the significance of willingness to do the work. Perhaps the most important question you can ask a potential love partner relates to their relationship with the shadow – their own, and the shadow that emerges in the relationship itself. That is: "How much work are you willing to do on yourself and the relationship when the shit hits the fan? Are you willing to go as deep as we have to go to work it through, or are you only interested in a breezy, low-maintenance relationship?"

Few people ever talk about this during the romantic phase, because they are not envisioning the challenges to come. But it is an essential inquiry. I have known many people who were shocked to watch their "great love" walk out the door when the connection required personal accountability and therapeutic

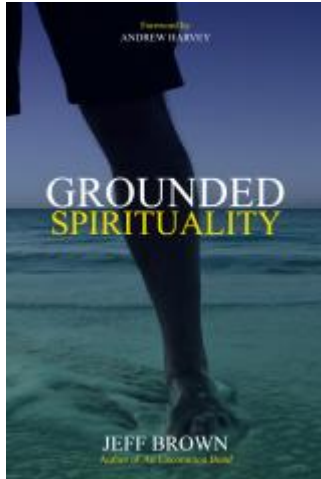
work-through.

Some of us will brave the journey; others will flee the fire. Some of us will do the work to transform our stories into the light at their source; others will run away with their “tales” between their legs, only to find out later that their tales go with them everywhere they go. If you can determine someone’s willingness at the beginning, you can save yourself a lot of trouble later.

M: That’s a tough one. People often hide their shadows, or they don’t even realize them, until they are tested. Like me and Hannah. We have been tested in ways I would have never predicted.

JB: It appears that you have passed. Congratulations. You get an “A” in relational willingness this lifetime.

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Jeff is the author of [Soulshaping: A Journey of Self-Creation](#) , [Ascending with Both Feet on the Ground: Words to Awaken your Heart](#) , [An Uncommon Bond](#) , and his newest book, [Grounded Spirituality](#).

#WOUNDMATES

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