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What makes a couple drift apart?

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When you go from 'growing old together' to 'growing away from each other'

A friend and I met after many years and talked about the intervening years and our experiences.

My friend shared his personal dilemmas, and in so doing, talked about his relationship with someone he considered significant, his spouse.

As a couple, they had been married for many years and he reminisced about their early years together. In the early years of married life, he was curious about how she had spent her day and she equally about how his day had gone.

Yet in the years that lapsed, both he and his spouse had drifted apart.

In my wanting to help, I asked him what several persons have said when they find little to share with those they were once close to. "Have you taken each other for granted?" I asked.

What he shared with me was very revealing. "In the early years of our marriage, when we shared, we were curious; yet now, the sharing is often not out of curiosity, but we tend to interrogate one another, seize any opportunity to find fault," he said.

"What was also missing," he said, "was care. Care, which came from empathy has been replaced by a sense of duty or obligation. This raises anger in both of us. Commitment or being committed to one another is absent, and in its place there is tolerating one another."

As we parted, I recalled the words of a song in the film *My Fair Lady*, where Professor Higgins sings, 'I have got accustomed to her face.' My friend's sharing echoed these words yet mournfully 'we have got accustomed to each other' that there is neither novelty nor newness any more in our relationship.

Sadly, what can blossom into 'growing old together' is replaced by 'growing apart from each other.'

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