

[Gangaji Radio](#)

A Conversation With Gangaji Series

Host Hillary Larson

Episode 5

A DEEPER LOOK AT LOVE AND INTIMACY

Released on February 20, 2013

[00:05] INTRODUCTION MUSIC

[00:08] HILLARY LARSON, HOST: It's safe to say that there are as many viewpoints about love and intimacy as there are people. Love can be beyond blissful, and in the next moment, it can be unexpectedly painful. It's also safe to say that no one likes to feel hurt or rejected or wrong or overlooked when it comes to relationships. But wonder if we were willing to experience all those things in the name of love itself?

[00:33] GANGAJI: We say we want intimacy, we say we want love, but what are we willing to give for that? What are we willing to face for that? What are we willing to feel for that? Are we willing to hurt? Are we willing to love? Are we willing to be humbled?

[00:47] HILLARY: In the heat of the moment when our human instinct is to protect ourselves and scramble for familiar, or seemingly higher ground, how is it that we can open our hearts and be willing to risk losing the person, or thing, or experience we are longing for. What are we willing to do in the name of being true to ourselves and to love? I'm Hillary Larsen and this is *A Conversation With Gangaji*.

---

[01:15] HILLARY: I'm really happy to be here having this conversation about intimacy, because it's such an innate part of being human and it's the part we seem to run away from as well. But, I know you're not fond of the term being, so I'm just going to use it that one time. But, I think, that that experience you had twenty years ago, over twenty years ago now, when you met your teacher Papaji, that basically, when your ego collapsed and you, you saw the truth of who you are and who we all are, that's why this conversation creates a different opportunity for people to look at these different topics. Whether it be chronic pain, or depression or anxiety, and in this case, intimacy. So I think that that's what makes this unique is just to be able to have just a different look – we're just taking a different look at it. And I was looking at the different definitions of intimacy. And you know, when I was, I can't remember at what point I was even aware of the word intimacy but it always meant sexual intimacy. Like if somebody was in a relationship is it, as it intimate relationship. And know, we can do a show on sexuality, but, you know I think that being sexual can also be a distraction or a running from true intimacy. So I wanted to go through kinda the different types of intimacy. And, you know, interesting definition in the dictionary was, they always use the word familiarity. But I'm gonna go deeper than that because you go deeper than that. And that's personal or spiritual intimacy for lack of a better term. And, so, so I kinda wanna just jump into the core of it, in the fear of it and, the last time we were talking about integrity. And, and it seems to me that has everything to do with intimacy. Because there might be this fear among all of us as human beings in relationship to other people and ourselves, this fear of being found out. Like if you really saw me completely as I am, then the show would be over. And you would be gone.

[03:13] GANGAJI: Yes, if we really understood what that means – the show would be over and you would be gone – that’s where intimacy actually is. And, you know when you said about a sexual intimacy I know in my own life it was in sexual intimacy that I first tasted what this word – intimate – really means. And, so connection, to me is a stronger word than being familiar with, with another. It’s connected in such a mysterious and astonishing way that was beyond finally the physical pleasure of sexuality. Maybe it’s a limbic brain connection, but something so, dissolving of the show, and of me and of other. So, we both fear that and yet in a moment of tasting that we recognize – *this, this is it!* And of course if it is just linked up to sexuality is, as you say it, then sexuality can be the problem because we think that’s the cause of the intimacy. Really, when I understand the greatest tantric teachings, the Tibetan teachings, it’s really a willingness to be intimate with the universe. For the show of you as separate from the universe, to stop. And you recognize the hugeness, and the astonishment – to be conscious in, in this hugeness, as this hugeness to be – and even connected then is, is to form a low word. It’s, there are no words, in that moment. And that’s the possibility of a life. I, I’m not sure all lives; all humans are even interested in intimacy. Because it is a dissolution of myself as, as superior, inferior, or other or even one way if it’s a dissolution of all those constructs, and a revelation of what is here without the interference of, the interference I think, goes with the blocking intimacy, the interference of our thinking minds.

[05:29] HILLARY: I want to talk about, there’s, we have a couple questions here about, you know relationship type intimacy and ultimately I think it’s all the same thing. But I want to actually jump ahead to this question I had because it’s perfect for what you were saying right now is, I wanted to ask you about. I never really thought about the word intimacy with regards to the experiences you’ve had, the awakenings you’ve had because. We did a pilot show months and months ago and you talked specifically about those moments where, where your structure just shifted and then collapsed and, and you’ve also talked about those moments where you faced everything. You faced your deepest fear and it seems to me that’s the deepest intimacy – is that the deepest intimacy you’ve ever experienced in your life?

[06:18] GANGAJI: Well I would say it’s always deepening. And that’s the truth of intimacy, because, this dissolution is – as long as there is a human form here – is always present and yet we are always somehow reincarnating or constructing a reality even based on an intimate moment, or an intimate experience. But the possibility is to surrender, there’s no intimacy without surrender, is to surrender to *this* moment. And yes, that’s when I speak of awakening – intimacy is a much clearer and much more accurate word. And that, first of all meeting my teacher, and feeling the welcome from him, there was a surrender that had to be there even to receive that welcome. But I was ready for that and maybe mature enough for that and had resisted surrender enough in my life, that I, I recognize that surrender is the key – and it is. And really there’s no difference in surrender and intimacy.

[07:22] HILLARY: I’m gonna give you an example of the opposite of that. (laughter) You know, if we’re going to have a conversation about intimacy, we have to link that up with the word love. And, one of my deep dark secrets but, when I was in the seventh grade I was going steady with this boy and I remember it was around Christmas time. And I had, I was sitting in my room and I had my Elton John albums and I had just gotten this Lady Remington razor, it was electric razor. Anyway, he called, and he um, we were chatting and then some, like visceral feeling came over me, at a certain point like something bad was about to happen. And in that moment, he said “I love you”. So I grabbed the razor, because I panicked, I grabbed the razor and I put it up to the phone and I turned it on. I said, I was

pretending like there was something wrong with the phone because I freaked out. I couldn't handle that. So then I thought, well now what do I do so I hung the phone up.

[08:19] GANGAJI : (laughter by both) That's so tender you know. That's yeah.

[08:27] HILLARY: What's more tender is then he called back. (laughter)

[08:29] GANGAJI : Oh, oh, what a courageous person he is. He didn't take no for an answer

[08:33] HILLARY: So, we started the conversation again and I was trying to distract probably on my Elton John albums and um. And then I, the same thing happened, I felt the feeling, the feeling came over. And you know I had, I could not be creative in the moment, I did the same and then, hung up the phone again, but anyway if Eric is listening, that was actually my electric razor and. But it was just like that fear of somebody saying I love you.

[08:55] GANGAJI: Yeah

[08:57] HILLARY: Why do some people have so much trouble receiving that?

[08:59] GANGAJI: Well, there, I, think it's the dissolution, dis-illusion AND dissolution, because we are afraid to lose who we think we are. And to receive "I love you", to really receive that is to be the love that is loving. And there's no room for who you think you are in that. And that's also, I think it's natural. That's part of growing up and the reason you can tell that story, and remember that story from that time, is you recognize, what a mistake that was. But that mistake then is part of your self-correction to intimacy. So I, I think that we DO reject love when it comes to us. Because for many reasons. And then we realize that that rejection of love is at the root of our suffering whether it's internally rejecting, truly loving ourselves, loving life, loving being. Or reflected externally, truly loving and being loved by another.

[10:10] HILLARY: It's such a paradox too because I think that as human beings we just crave love

[10:12] GANGAJI: Absolutely.

[10:13] HILLARY: Then there's the way we push it away.

[10:14] GANGAJI: Yeah, we wanna control it. And love is uncontrollable. You, you don't really determine that you will now stop loving somebody, or you will now start loving somebody. It's, it's grace and it appears. I've been divorced from my first husband for forty years and I still love him. Of course I love him. If you've ever loved you love. But I have no relationship with him and haven't spoken to him in twenty-five years. Maybe, maybe at my daughter's wedding we spoke. We did speak. But it, the tenderness and the love I feel is still absolutely alive in me thank goodness. But the relationship is not present. And I don't even know who he is now as a person. And it doesn't matter because that's not what I loved. There is love meets itself, somehow, in another. Whether the biochemistry is a part of that or supports that, or the neurological impulses say "this is a good mate", or who, who can even say what the biochemistry is, but it doesn't have to be biochemical, it can finally be with the whole universe *I love! I love!* And then you realize that love, I mean, this word, is pretty paltry word, four letters and it's so sentimentalized in our culture. But there is a depth to it that is

ruthless and relentless, and when there's a surrender to that – hugeness – to the annihilation, of who you think you are. You, you are intimate then, with yourself, as, as the universe.

[12:01] HILLARY: You know, speaking of that there's a clip I actually want to play right now and it's on a cd, on a dvd compilation that you have. It's called Open, Unprotected and Free. There's one segment where a woman gets up and she's talking about shutting down and protecting herself. And you walk her through how she does that. Because I think we do it so, (finger snap, snap) like, it's just what we do. It's so habitual. So you, you've walked her, this piece that I'm picking it up on, you've walked her through this process of how she does that and in her case she was talking about jealousy. I get jealous and I shut down. So I'm just gonna pick it up right here.

(clip)

*[12:38] GANGAJI : But you see that in protecting yourself you still experience the pain. So what a bad joke you have played on yourself. If this protection actually worked, it would be another matter. But the protection augments the pain, turns the pain into suffering. Pain is pain. And yes, so let's say there is jealous pain and we can diagnose jealousy – why it shouldn't be or why it should be – but say it's there, just as part of the human experience. Jealousy – feel it! I'm jealous. I hurt. I'm fearful. I love. Now what am I gonna do? Withdraw? Hate? Close off? Or just hurt and love. I recommend hurting and loving.*

(end clip)

[13:32] HILLARY: (laughter) I love that. And actually leads me up to the first question and it's a perfect one. Because I, there's a way that fear of commitment is kind of joked around about in this society and sometimes it's not joked around about. And this one woman wrote into you and she's describing this situation she has with this man that she hadn't been in a relationship for a couple of years but was open for one. And she met this man and it seemed like it was beautiful. And they were open to each other and he had mentioned that he had this fear of commitment thing that caused him to close down. And she said, but it was very open and he'd even kinda mentioned, kind of dropped the "m" word a couple times just to kinda test the waters. And then just out of the blue, you know, he's this just isn't gonna work. And um, so she could see that as a symptom of his fear of commitment and so her question is: is there anyway I can get him just to address the direct fear, rather than using the reasons why the relationship didn't work out? I hear of other people having that same experience all the time. Are some people just hopelessly afraid of commitment.

[14:44] GANGAJI: Well, there's no way you can really control another person in their commitment to intimacy, to love. You can speak directly and honestly of your own experience and you can invite them, and be willing to support them and, in this discovery. But finally, it's a freedom of choice. And it's determined by what is really wanted. What does this person want? We say we want intimacy. We say we want love, but what are we willing to give for that? What are we willing to face for that? What are we willing to feel for that? Are we willing to hurt? Are we willing to love? Are we willing to be humbled? So there's again, no distinct formula for what to do. But all you can do is, is share your own love, and that you are here. And then at a certain point, you may have to move on from the whole of this relationship. When that is, if you don't determine that, by your thinking mind, you discover. But to be willing and to recognize, I mean, this sounds like, she does recognize that, that it

really has nothing to do with her. It has to do with him, and so, her opportunity is to be true to herself as love. And to see him as love, and then to see if its possible for this relationship to reconnect. It may not be.

[16:12] HILLARY: Is the advice pretty much the same Gangaji if it's a person asking you about their fear of commitment?

[16:15] GANGAJI: No, that's a different matter. (laughter)

[16:18] HILLARY: Can we look at that for a second?

[16:19] GANGAJI: Yeah, because that's then YOU have to say what, what do I want? And if you want protection more than you want commitment, you will go with protection. And if you want protection, you tell the truth about that. And tell the truth about what that protection is doing for you and what costs the protection. So I can support you in telling the truth which is, really is inquiry. And is the point of our whole meeting – always. In, in saying, what do I want? Because if you say, I want love, but I want to be protected too, I want to take care of myself. Well if you get love and you are protected too, what would that give you? What do you want? What do you want, and what you think, what do you want will give you if you get it? Then we get to see what you really want. And we get to this, when that is exposed to yourself, there's a, a power that you can be committed to that. I want love, more, more than I want protection. More than I want to know that he loves me or she loves me, I want to love. And then the willingness to be true to that. From that there's a, there's certainly insight and revelation, and a discovery of what appropriate action is. Whether it has anything to do with what is said to another person, or, how a relationship goes, or doesn't go, is secondary to really telling the truth to yourself, where love is.

[17:58] HILLARY: Sounds like the choice of a lifetime really.

[18:00] GANGAJI: Yes it is! It's the choice to be free because there is no separation between freedom and truth and love.

[18:09] HILLARY: I was thinking about the, in the world of protection the drama that can happen and I was having this great conversation with a friend of mine the other day. And, and I was leaving his house I was thinking that drama is the opposite of intimacy. And that drama shows up on the outside, but it also shows up on the, I've got a lot of drama in my mind, but you'll never see it. You know it can be very quiet and. But the place that you talk about where you are just being with what the emotion is that you don't want to experience.

[18:45] GANGAJI: Well you give up the, as I'm understanding you, there's a mental drama that can distract you from actually being present with very intense experience and yes, that's what I'm here to support you in recognizing you have that capacity. And it just requires that you withdraw your attention from the mental distraction. And allow yourself to experience, to feel whatever is here and to discover what is deeper than that, and what is closer than that.

[19:18] HILLARY: I've heard you, oh, I'm sorry.

[19:20] GANGAJI: No I was just going to say, be intimate with yourself.

[19:21] HILLARY: I was going to say, I've heard you many times talk about how superficial the emotion of anger is, and that a lot of times drama is expressed in anger. And that, if you peel down to the fear, [GANGAJI: Yes] and maybe the self-hatred underneath that. I don't know. I mean that's more the truth than that. I mean it's easier to actually yell, or call you friend and say, so and so did this, then actually just to feel fear or

[19:47] GANGAJI: The heartbreak, Yeah. Well anger is, is a superficial emotion. It's the most powerful emotion, in terms of it's capacity to generate drama and to cause destruction, internally and externally, but it's, if you look at it, anger is some kind of defense of something, rightfully or wrongfully. And there's only defense needed when there's some fear, appropriate or inappropriate fear. And when we're willing to experience that fear, we can then discover what we are trying to protect, by our anger

[20:23] HILLARY: Yeah, and I think the subject of protection and how we do that is, is the crux of this conversation and this next question is from somebody who was young, and she lost her husband. Ah to, I think it was brain cancer she said. And, and it was the love of her life. She felt like it was the love of her life. And, but she had a whole life to live, you know, after he passed away. And what she's battling with right now is just, never feeling that connection again. And, but she feels like it's protection. Like, that I never have to experience that loss again as long as I live, but then there's also a deadness to it as well. So, so the question is, is it possible to unprotect your heart once it feels like it's been broken, whether it be from through the loss as a result of a death, or a betrayal. Is it possible to unprotect?

[21:24] GANGAJI: Definitely it is possible. You have full capacity. The heart is actually already unprotected, it's only our mental constructs that appear to build the walls. And then generate the experience of desolation. Because that's what I hear a flavor of there. And so, it's, once again it's a question are you willing to be hurt by losing? Are you willing to hurt by having your heart broken? Are you willing to hurt by not being seen? Are you willing to love? It's a willingness to love, it's different than getting love, just a willingness TO love, to be love. And then there's a fulfillment in that. Whether a particular relationship is formulated around that or not. The fulfillment is then self-love and, in the true sense of self-love.

[22:14] HILLARY: I don't want to leave you with this giant questions because we only have three minutes left. But, it seems to me when you are talking about that the deepest moments of intimacy actually happen when somebody's about to die, whether they're experiencing this openness, and the people around them are – it's too bad we can't live that way all of the time, but there seems...

[22:35] GANGAJI: You can! You can! Because we're all about to die. The universe is dying. Each, this day dies. This moment will die and, in just, less than three minutes. And so, the preciousness of that, and the, relentlessness of that, is the wake up call. No we absolutely don't have to wait until someone's deathbed to experience the grace of surrender, the grace of being present for one self, for one another, same presence, same love.

[22:11] HILLARY: It's a perfect place to end off. I um, I'm gonna end off, this segment on intimacy from a little clip that I took from Love and Gratitude, which is another cd and dvd, and dvd compilation. And it's basically about the willingness to say I love you. But before we finish off completely, I wanna talk about next time. And you know, I, I have this desire to do a show on enlightenment because I think there are so many, it's a circular conversation. It

never seems to resolve itself and I would think it would help people have clarity in future conversations that we have.

[23:51] GANGAJI: If we are willing to stop the conversation I'd be willing to, (laughter) to entertain it.

[23:53] HILLARY: I have nothing, I have nothing more to say. It's a perfect place to end off and we'll just end with I love you

[24:01] GANGAJI: That's right, I love you.

[24:04] HILLARY: I'll see you next time.

(clip)

*[24:11] GANGAJI: Our hearts have been broken. And they will be broken. And the more you surrender to love the more your heart will be broken. (laughter) It's not like your heart just gets "UN-BROKEN" ever and ever, no, (laughter) broken more and deeper. And there will be pain. (pause) So what. If your life is about protection from pain, your life is about suffering. If your life is openness to whatever, pain or lack of pain, your life is freedom to surrender. So this, simple, profound statement: I love you. This is in truth what we are saying to one another all of the time. But with layers, and layers, and layers of conditions. I love you if I get to do what I want. I love you if you will fit my projection of my mother that she didn't fit so if you will. I love you if you'll be a saint. I love you if you'll be a sinner. I love you if you'll play with me. I love you if you'll work with me. Love is free of conditions. And it doesn't mean anything. It certainly doesn't mean that you keep living with your mother if she's abusive and horrible. You may walk out the door and never see your mother again, or your lover, or your husband. But in that, the recognition and the truth telling, that the love is alive. The love doesn't go anywhere. Relationships change and end, but love, is free of that. Do you understand that? Because this gets interpreted as love is no conditions therefore, this is what I should be doing, or what they should be doing, or what it should be looking like. It's much more simple. I love you. It's that simple. I love you. What a power is there. It's power to face anything. Even sentimentality. Anything, heartbreak, desertion, isolation, rejection, heartbreak AGAIN, so what? I, LOVE. I comma LOVE. I love – huh. What freedom – I love. Then.*

(end clip)

---

[27:11] HILLARY: Thank you for joining us. This has been A Conversation With Gangaji. If you have an idea for a topic that you'd like Gangaji to address, or if you have a question for an upcoming show, please write us at [gangajiradio@gangaji.org](mailto:gangajiradio@gangaji.org), that's [g-a-n-g-a-j-i-radio@gangaji.org](mailto:g-a-n-g-a-j-i-radio@gangaji.org). There are other ways to connect with Gangaji. Every month there's a live webcast. It's called With Gangaji. Just go to the website [gangaji.org](http://gangaji.org) to see how you can register for that. And you can also find frequent updates about this show and lots of other things on the Gangaji Community Facebook page. Special thanks to the Martin Family Charitable Trust for being one of the sponsors for this episode. Contributions like yours make this show possible and we thank you for that. And we'd also like to thank YOU, for sharing this podcast with others via the Gangaji website also on [vividlive.me](http://vividlive.me) and of course

by rating this show on iTunes. This has been *A Conversation With Gangaji*. Thank you for joining us. Be well until next time.