

# My Conversation with Laxmana Dalmia

There are only a few things in life that are as nourishing as a good conversation, and a fine example of that is mine with Laxmana Dalmia. I'm not sure how best to describe Laxmana—poet, filmmaker, wellness guru, healer—she is all of this and yet so much more. In the one hour that we spoke, we touched upon varied subjects and I knew right at the outset that I wanted to spend a long time listening to what this person had to say. I must confess that I am always hesitant to initiate a conversation with someone I haven't known before, but there was something so calming about Laxmana that it put me at ease instantly.

I was eager to learn about Laxmana's idea of 'healing', and if the fractured self can at all recover from the insurmountable pain and suffering within and around. Of course, my fascination for pain, especially that which stems from conflict, is further whetted by my disciplinary knowledge of literature and psychoanalysis, so there was that emotional-intellectual-ideological curiosity in me.

As we spoke, Laxmana took me back to a time over forty years ago, when she was first introduced to the Tarot. It was a chance encounter with a Spanish gypsy called Martha at New Delhi's Triveni café, and this serendipitous meeting had much in store for Laxmana. Even though Tarot appealed to Laxmana greatly, it was never about making the kinds of predictions that us lesser mortals are always a keen audience for. What she had been seeking in her life, all along, was the guidance to be able to make the right choice. A woman of great substance, Laxmana has been courageous and exemplary when it comes to breaking disciplinary boundaries in her practice and making difficult life choices. After many years of a dynamic career as a filmmaker, Laxmana revisited the world of Tarot when things took an unexpected turn in life, as they do, when all seems to be going well. Her studio caught fire one night, and every little thing in the office, from the reels to the scripts, was turned to ashes. When Laxmana discovered the immaculately untouched box of Tarots cards in the debris (which had been given to her by Martha), she recalls hearing Martha's voice distinctly in her ears, "Now, go professional". Laxmana has never shied away from starting over, each time with renewed energy and vigour. So, that's what she did—she became a professional Tarot reader while also rekindling her endeavours as a filmmaker.

But the visual appeal and the almost godly guidance of Tarot was never enough to satisfy Laxmana's soul. As the years passed, Laxmana engaged deeper with the idea of

healing, believing all along that it has to be a multifaceted approach. From Theta healing and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), Laxmana has enriched her practice with new knowledge to allow for a harmonious healing of the mind, body and soul. I was awed by how intrepid Laxmana has been in her journey, and how she has never been afraid to try something different to empower herself both as an individual and as a practitioner.



Among the many things that she told me about her quests, I was particularly keen to know why she had been drawn to past life regression. As a student of psychoanalysis, I have always been keen to 'regress', as it were, but I had never thought of going back to

a time before this life—if at all one were to subscribe to the notion of many lives. I asked her why she had felt the need to seek answers in the lives before, upon which she introduced me to the very captivating idea of Akashic records. Laxmana went on to tell me about her incapacitating fear of elevators, and how she had ‘solved’ the mystery by revisiting one of her (recent) past lives. In yet another life, she saw herself as the Queen of a *rajwada*, having being cursed by one of her maids for punishing her husband—she told me how she sees herself living out that ‘curse’ in this life. Laxmana assured me that her rational part has never been lost to this complex process of psychic healing. In fact, I see Laxmana as someone who combines the prowess of astute academic thinking and deep emotional engagement to underline her healing practices.

Laxmana has enabled me (and the thousands of people whom she guides) to understand the power of meditation and self-reflection to be whoever you want to be—age no bar. Truly, my conversation with Laxmana has only just begun.

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