It’s all about your attitude

Some lessons on how to confidently assimilate oneself into a new family and milieu

I was to tie the knot in a few weeks, and as most young women would at that stage, I had the wedding jitters. I didn’t know my new family at all. To add to my anxieties, their culture and customs were very different from mine.

Though the precursors had been positive, I was nervous. I am sure it would have been the same had it been an arranged match. I was to be an important member of the new family, a daughter-in-law! With tonnes of expectations and prejudices against this role in society, I was feeling rather antsy.

Also, my husband and I belong to geographically opposite ends of the country, to the “Two States” but in the opposite configuration. I bring in the beats of Bhangra and my better half the thaalam of Bharatanatyam, to the conjugal dance.

Not unique in today’s age, as far as we are concerned. But special still I guess, considering the curiosity we arouse in people around us.

Once they are a little familiar with us, they want to know how it all did happen! While meeting diverse sets of people is commonplace in metropolitan cities, most people want to know the reactions of our parents. And get rather disappointed when we tell them it was all peaceful and smooth. Some don’t believe it. For, how could our parents be so accepting is what many wonder aloud.

There are many young couples caught in the crossfire of parents’ egos, in such situations; all in the name of family honour!

Going by this standard, then, our parents (and all such) need to be hailed for their practical and mature outlook in life. Relationships are based on human sentiments and mutual responses at the end of the day. And it all begins with one’s attitude, isn’t it? Fortunately our parents live this reality.

As for my husband and me, after knowing each other for some time, we decided to formalise our relationship. We broke the news to our parents, individually. And before we knew it, my father had flown down to meet my father-in-law. And the venue and menu were frozen in the very first meeting as the next logical step.

My father-in-law even called me to check if I wanted a lehnga instead of a saree, for the wedding ceremony. With such love coming my way, did I even want to assert?

Soon the big day arrived and it all went off well with lots of happiness and a little anxiety. When our parents had taken a positive stance, nobody in the extended family really cared or dared to behave otherwise. There was novelty, fun and joy all around.

And my in-laws welcomed me with much warmth and love. Needless to say, it was a great beginning. Right from ensuring that there were food options for me, to letting me be myself even in appearance and dress. I was accepted as an individual.

I took my time to assimilate myself into the new family and its culture. Today, sambar sadam is as dear to me (if not more) as is rajma-chawal. And I think this is what you call the best of both worlds.

I wonder if Norman Vincent Peale was inspired by my parents and parents-in-law when he said, “Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude towards it, for that determines our success or failure.”