

# sister who's perspective

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## Overview

Life is inseparable from motion and energy, both of which exist in actual and potential forms that may additionally be visible or invisible even to those directly involved. To be fully alive, therefore, one would do well to have as much awareness and understanding as possible, yet without embracing a state of being overwhelmed.

May these essays give strength to live your truth throughout the year ahead.

## Agendas of Normalcy

As an individual, I sometimes feel like I can go anywhere and do anything. As an autistic, however, every social event is an encounter with unknown and innumerable expectations--many of which the persons themselves do not even realize they hold, but become painfully obvious the moment they are disappointed. When, additionally, I am informed and encouraged to be open and honest about myself, it is either an invitation for disaster or a growth opportunity, depending entirely upon how the initiator and other by-standers respond.

It has become a very common witticism within the current age that "normal is a setting on the washing machine." What remains mostly unknown, however, is what should follow the probably-legitimate uttering of these words--which hopefully includes that it is a multi-faceted challenge requiring both intelligence and sensitivity. Potentially at stake are innumerable relationships which may be essential to future collaboration.

An important initial consideration is that both personal/individual and communal results will unavoidably be positively or negatively constructed. It is virtually impossible for any such interaction to be exclusively one or the other, specifically because of life's inherent and inescapable

interconnectedness and of every individual's existence--intentionally or not--within a constellation of relationships with others. As preferable and perhaps more convenient as it might be to deal with specific interactions in a focused and separated manner, a rock dropped into a puddle sends out ripples in all directions--much like every interaction with virtually any other person.

Additionally, for every person who sneers at agendas of normalcy as being inherently ridiculous, there are still countless persons who passionately believe in certain alleged benefits of homogeneity. What is usually not apparent on a surface level, is how viciously and maliciously such pressures strangle the life out of innumerable creative spirits all around them--thereby sabotaging the future of themselves and perhaps even of humanity as a whole. Whatever label one wishes to attach to such interpersonal and societal dynamics, love is conspicuously absent.

Herein arises a double-bind: I wish to be respectful and nurturing toward those who do not yet understand how unloving they are being, yet the need to stand publicly and resolutely against the negative effects of such censorship is equally obvious. I wish to be patient, trusting that at some future time when they are individually ready, better perspectives and understandings will arise within each person's life. Yet I mourn for the suffering, injury, and loss that will continue until that time finally arrives.

Becoming a bully within discussions of ethical behavior in order to force growth within particular individuals, is inherently objectionable. Yet tolerating loss, injury, and suffering is equally so. I also do not want to become an embodiment of what I oppose.

If love is still the answer, however, then I must be willing to at least remain present, until a better response is ultimately found.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

## Agendas of Notoriety

Within the capitalistic/business approach to societal challenges currently in vogue, is that with notoriety comes a certain power to positively influence and/or change societal dynamics. The problem with power noted by Lord Acton, of course, is that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely"--unless one has first infused the power which has the ability to regulate and constructively constrain all others: the power of love. Any such mention, for me at least, also inspires remembrance of words attributed to the musician, singer, and songwriter, Jimi Hendrix: "When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace."

The first obvious indicator of whether an infusion of love has occurred, is the extent to which actions are oriented to service or, conversely, to an inflation of ego. Phrased according to one example of practice, it is the question of whether the attainment of financial wealth is efficiently orchestrated toward greater public service and societal revitalization or toward a predominantly selfish experience of luxurious living. In other words, is my life most accurately described as a collection of choices that are competitively oriented around "either me or them" or, alternatively, configured around ways of integrating what is best for both?

I suspect it is absolutely not the norm, but what I wish to recommend for those who feel called to pursuits of notoriety, is that this is ultimately a calling to greater service. As it is currently constructed, a great many very important societal choices rest within the hands of relatively few people, who often pay little attention to the voices of both minority and majority populations. On both sides, an illusion of separateness eats away at the collaborative abilities essential to resolving humanity's largest challenges.

Yet this is may be equally both an appeal for a present/future revolution and a revival of certain traditional dynamics of the past--specifically "noblesse oblige." At the heart of this (at least as I currently understand it) is the notion that with greater resources comes

greater responsibility to care for those with less. Indeed, within the shifting fortunes of time, there are many who have experienced both sides and who--logically--should thus be most sensitive to extending whatever blessings within times of abundance as they would wish to receive during times of need.

It is difficult to argue against notoriety being a state within which one has greater power to positively influence the distribution of blessings. The one experiencing any such notoriety, however, may be standing too close to their circumstances to recognize which specific influential ability has come within reach. When society metaphorically places one upon a pedestal, it can be difficult to perceive which persons are still listening and which ones utilize the pedestal as a means to create more distance--so that truly listening can be avoided.

In some cases, granting notoriety has even proven to be a means by which an individual's authentic voice was either silenced or edited to serve the agendas of less scrupulous persons. The loss of integrity which inevitably follows is nearly always more tragic than may be apparent. In seeking to re-establish authenticity and integrity, many an artist, statesman, or writer has found empowering notoriety withdrawn.

For those who truly see, choosing between integrity and empowering notoriety can be most painful indeed and may even constitute a sort of sacrifice. In being at least to some small degree a student of history, however, my observation is that longevity belongs to integrity. This is why, for example, eight hundred years later, Saint Francis of Assisi is more remembered than any of the wealthy or allegedly influential persons of his time and place.

I received the comment many years ago that if I was willing to be more sensational, greater opportunities would follow. In retrospect, however, I'm glad I declined, because I very much doubt I had sufficient wisdom to manage the notoriety which might have followed and cost me my integrity.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

## Agendas of Duplicity

When positive intentions require secrecy in order to be expressed, one is essentially gambling with others' life experiences, in most cases with insufficient information to guarantee a positive outcome. It could even be said that one is attempting to play God with how particular moments or seasons of someone else's life will unfold. More often than not, unfortunately, no preparations are made for possible responses if the outcome veers in a distinctly negative direction.

This is why a common witticism advises that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions" and I have similarly never been a supporter of any policy of sharing information only on a "need to know" basis. If the person concerned is unable to effectively process or respond to particular information, that is only an indication that he or she has not been effectively educated or prepared for any and all challenges life may present. It is not in any way whatsoever a confirmation of inadequacy within any affected person.

The greatest validation of any teacher is that a student is able to respond to a challenge effectively after instruction has been completed and the mentor is no longer physically present. Duplicity, conversely, arrogantly presupposes godlike knowledge of future evolution, experiences, and outcomes to extremes not likely to be within the reach of human certainty for perhaps a hundred more lifetimes. More advisable is that teacher and student persist in studying

*"Most creatures do not live within ideal circumstances, specifically to invite personal growth and greater love and wisdom within both themselves and all who truly see them."*

-- Sister Who

jointly and with mutual respect, the first imparting all that is thus far known and the latter adding to all of that, so that ever greater competence is achieved.

It is not that "s/he wouldn't understand," but rather that, in truth, neither person fully understands but both ultimately may, if rather than duplicity, commonality is treated with life-affirming reverence. More directly, if you presume that I will not understand and thus choose to withhold information rather than guiding me toward more effective use of that information, there is a presumption of being superior that may instead give opportunity to catastrophic failure and tragic loss for both of us. Being blindly optimistic in relation to possible outcomes reduces the chances of positive developments to fifty percent at best.

If instead we pool our internal and our external resources--believing that only what is good for one *and* good for all, is the only genuinely good response--and if we commit ourselves to settling for nothing less than genuinely good responses to whatever challenges life may present, what some dismiss as unrealistic or utopian may in fact be established as the new norm of life. An agenda of duplicity settles for less, is too lazy to do anything more, and thus shares responsibility for the diminishment of life which follows. More concisely, we may not only lose our ability to trust each other, but we may also lose our ability to fully trust life.

All that being said, it would be unwise to attack an infection with an overdose of a curative agent. Honesty remains one of my principle values, but not as a club with which to batter a dishonest surrounding world; it is instead a star in the heavens by which to navigate a better course of life. One need not spray the garden with defoliant in order to rid it of weeds, if one has the ability to gently, carefully, and wisely restore purity.

Those who make themselves agents of duplicity cannot legitimately expect me to trust them. Those who make themselves agents of honesty, conversely, need only allow me to see who they truly are. I suspect that we could thereafter be lifelong friends.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

## Agendas of Integrity

If I am not who I say I am, I rob my every word and action of its best and most positive effect. Even if I do this only because the surrounding world requires it, no harm is thereby prevented. If, as a common saying advises, "no good deed goes unpunished," I choose to stand with the unknown author's words that "I would rather be punished for what I am, than rewarded for what I am not."

Yet I concede that this is my personal choice which may not be shared by a great many other people. In order to have that freedom of choice, I must similarly respect others' choice to live in sometimes extreme contrast and to be as charitable as I'm able when they reap a corresponding harvest. At no point, however, does this necessarily mean being less like me and more like them.

If I were, I would similarly have less to offer within their times of need. It is not the contribution of another that I need to give, especially within times of crisis, but rather it is my own. In most cases, however, I will be standing far too close to the situation to understand what a profound difference my contribution might truly make.

As I look back at what I have just written, I wonder if this suggests a greater faith in the goodness of life than is obvious within the world around me. Considering how often I wrestle with doubts about whether life will indeed be able to overcome its adversarial circumstances, I do not often think of myself as a person of great faith. Yet I am a person of great commitment, because nothing makes any sense to me except continuing to try--ever and always--to make things better.

I can only hope that my integrity--added to that of others--will ultimately overcome any and all challenges encountered. It is specifically in encountering that adversity rather than avoiding it, that integrity is known for what it truly is--but even this will not ensure that every battle is won. To paraphrase and reverse another common maxim, it is sometimes better to deliberately lose the battle in order to win the war.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

## On a Personal Note

Life in Longmont, Colorado is slowly taking shape, presenting me with the usual continuous bombardment of ethical and moral issues. I continue to be as frugal as I am able and have remarkably managed to scrape together sufficient resources for the printer's toner cartridges, which means that anyone who needs me to print copies of either (or both) the wall or desk versions of the 2018 calendar for them can now send such notification. Unfortunately funds for repairs to my thirty-year-old car are lagging much further behind, but somehow I persist.

I cannot wish to be anything less than all of who and what I am, but I do concede that it is a most exhausting endeavor, straddling awareness of both the microcosm of my daily life and the macrocosm of the wildly shifting and transitional time within which we are all living. Being an adult with autism attempting to survive on a monthly disability check because my doctoral program was ultimately sabotaged and no adequate employment could be found, grants a certain vulnerability to bureaucratic adversity as well (such as a recent notification that my food and medical assistance were being reduced). Where I would be without the support of my canine family, I simply don't know.

Yet a new year has begun and several tentative yet promising possibilities have offered new hope for the weeks ahead.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

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