

sister who's perspective

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Overview

A hug may be a simple gesture, but a true embrace is a bit more complicated. Where one becomes the other is usually (but not always) somewhere beyond the moment of actual occurrence, wherein much more can be learned. Hopefully this month's essays will empower you to bring greater awareness to such times of reflection.

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

Others Embracing Myself

A certain popular perspective suggests that no one else's opinion matters, as if any individual were able to survive without a community of supportive relationships. While it is true that disempowering opinions often need to be filtered out, if we encounter people who for whatever reason cannot see our true worth or undiscovered capabilities, innumerable challenges are beyond the reach of individuals acting alone. Every business venture needs customers, every theatrical performance needs an audience, and a trailblazer will not be regarded as such if no one else ever follows.

An often-referenced study (the details of which I have never been able to locate), insists that each person needs a minimum number of hugs per day to survive and a larger number to thrive. It is important to remember that this applies to social, professional, and relational situations just as much as it applies to physical, emotional, and psychological ones. If I am not embraced within my hour of need, it is highly questionable whether or not I will even be available within other moments thereafter.

At some deeper level of consciousness, everyone is looking for interconnection with the larger all-encompassing circle of life. It's as if our souls remember some sort of wholeness that is rarely if ever available within our finite lives on Earth and is consequently always

striving to recreate that wholeness in whatever ways are possible. Stumbling along blindly and making choices based upon incomplete and questionable information, however, leaves us always wanting more while unintentionally sabotaging ourselves in countless ways.

So sometimes I must wait until you and he and she and they are ready. I cannot go forward alone. Although the significance of love is eternal and consequently timeless, the paradox is that its genesis is dependent upon symbiotic relationships of mutual support and exchange constrained by our experiences of time here on earth.

When the embrace finally happens, however, the treasures of the individual soul are discovered and the whole of humanity is both enriched and empowered. Such was more obviously the case with Helen Keller, Albert Einstein, and innumerable other artists, thinkers, and innovators of every description.

In each case, it is specifically from the embrace of others that the wings of the specific individual arise. A curious quirk of the process, however, is that these wings are frequently bestowed after the physical life of the individual has ended. The general character of such individuals' lives is most often intense struggle.

To say that they must struggle is to assert that their gifts arise from experiences of difficulty. Equally possible, however, is that the blessings which expressions of their gifts have left behind, are made complete by finally being loved by people who genuinely look and listen; more succinctly, the wings are not made from the preceding pain, but rather from the healing touch of love.

The body may be gone, but the spirit remains within the words, works, and memories left behind. It is these that are healed of their pain and sprout wings the moment they are touched by love. Ultimately, it is simply a question of when.

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

Myself Embracing Others

I suppose I've never known even a moment of life devoid of empathic sensitivity, for which reason a sense of embracing others readily has persisted from my first breath all the way through to the present time. In some cases this heightened sensitivity allowed me to safely tiptoe through war-torn emotional landscapes, but in other instances I found myself vulnerable to forces that were so lacking in understanding and compassion that their effect upon my soul was essentially (but perhaps unintentionally) abusive.

To embrace others who had made themselves players within such complicated exchanges, times of seclusion for personal healing were often necessary. Left to myself, I even chose to occasionally refrain from attending church services, for example, because I would typically be so engaged in giving that I returned home completely exhausted from the effort.

To the extent that I was able to engage in communal spiritual practices, however, I learned a great deal from others. I don't think I realized it at the time, but in retrospect I think I was most often viewing them holistically and attempting to integrate their words and their behaviors into singular consistent and coherent understandings of personalities. Although some of the resulting conclusions made keeping my distance advisable, it was only after completing that phase, that I was able to truly embrace those that I could, in one way or another within my life.

On some level I understood early, however, that being unable to love someone was a truly tragic circumstance and I was always surprised that so many others seem to think this inability was trivial--as if the persons involved didn't really matter. This also raised the issue of those times and relationships within which it seemed it was I who didn't really matter within the larger context of others' lives.

I thought of all of this many years later while listening to the daughter of a Holocaust survivor tell how her mother would sometimes respond to the question of "What are you doing?" with "Trying to matter." The primary difficulty, of course, is that most of us are

usually standing too close to our own life experience to recognize in what ways we matter to those around us, whether or not anyone (including one's self) is aware of it.

An embrace is a very, very close place to stand, in relationship to another person. A great many details of similarities and differences become obscure while in such close proximity to one another. Does this mean that these similarities and differences don't matter? The most truthful answer is sometimes yes, sometimes no, and sometimes just for the moment of the embrace. None of these possibilities, however, recommend being less aware of their respective realities.

Perhaps it is specifically by being aware of such realities, that we become more aware of their true value and implications. We may want to pull away from the embrace and immediately re-establish comfortable distance and personal space. Conversely, we may pull away from the embrace and wish we hadn't. In remembering our individuality and reflecting upon the very small example of community that every embrace demonstrates, a whole list of preferences (perhaps even including expectations) invisibly rushes forward, requesting our judgment and administration to categorize and assign them relational patterns so that it can be clearly understood whether the creative works of our individual lives are in the process of building up or of breaking down.

It is unconditional love that insists we embrace others whenever possible, but human experience and memory which threaten us with more pain if we do so. I am reminded often of late, however, that sometimes the work of love is so very important that whatever pain is involved, doesn't really matter.

Embracing others is--ideally--a task of expressing unconditional love that (thankfully) is not always accompanied by pain. It is also a task of making the world and thus also the universe, a larger place within which to live--even extending beyond the reach of both time and our physical and social senses. We are here for a while and then we are gone. The victory of a specific life is thus whether it is able to embrace more than its moments ever could.

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

Categorization Embracing Individuality

In contrast to the countless times I have insisted that no individual is the embodiment of a category, I readily confess the social need to categorize individuals according to particular commonalities, in order to move toward communal goals. Ideally such categorization would be so inherently flexible and adaptable that recognition of a commonality could be done in a way that other individual qualities would not be negated, erased, or trivialized, since it is these additional individual qualities which are often most empowering to the group.

Specifically because these qualities are in fact valuable and potentially empowering resources, it would be utter nonsense for the category to neglect, overlook, or even censor them. Obviously we have all nonetheless been witnesses at one time or another, to such unintelligent behavior, because of how very commonly this occurs--at least in times past.

We do nonetheless have the ability to minimize such occurrences throughout the present and future. Part of that process is recognizing that the eradication of individuality and/or its related characteristics, is sometimes a potentially helpful indication that definition of the category is incomplete; that the category has begun public interaction while still very insecure about what it does and does not in fact embody. Indeed, the largest portion of all insecurity is related to deficient self-awareness that either does not appreciate or has not discovered how truly resilient, ingenious, and empowered a category or individual is.

On more occasions than I can count, predictions have been made of this or that

"Circumstances, feelings, and thoughts are often in conflict, specifically because of how inherently and inescapably multi-dimensional we truly are, as we journey toward ever-greater wholeness."

-- Sister Who

event or contribution signaling the pending termination of a country, a community, or a church, only to find when the dust settles that it is still there; that the power of the calamity to terminate was exaggerated. This confirms, as I was years ago instructed, that "anticipation is always greater than realization." In other words, what the mind imagines--free of the actual influences and qualities of the world within which we all live--typically exceeds what is able to manifest within the actual reach of those elements. This is why the "road test" of an idea or proposed practice is so important.

During such tests, it is wise to make detailed notes, to minimize any unanticipated losses, and to maximize awareness of any strengths. If the particular test fails to increase awareness, then it has most truthfully failed.

In a similar way, any categorization's embrace of individuality should never be done without careful attention to awareness. Failing to do a head-count of students on a school bus at the conclusion of a field trip, could result in someone being inadvertently left behind.

On a similar note, however, when one is concerned about having been overlooked, because one does not know how or whether leaders have already planned for the inclusion of anomalies, issues of trust are among the concerns that categories must embrace. An example of this which is now common but was not always so, is the practice of airlines offering vegetarian meals within long flights. Still, there is no harm in confirming that such details have not been overlooked--by which trust in the planners of the event is established.

If an individual has not been given a reason to trust a category, it is pointless for the latter to complain about insecurity in the former. One cannot allow the other to be uninformed and still expect that the silence will communicate anything other than confusion.

Ultimately, communication extends love and compassion. If we provide information in order to unburden others from degrees of insecurity about whether life is unfolding in negative or positive directions, we include them in the sharing of knowledge and become collaborators rather than adversaries.

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

Individuality Embracing Categorization

If I do not respect others' need for categorization and resist being categorized, from a certain perspective, I make myself invisible. Specifically because I find the truth of myself so uncategorizable, however, the most acceptable compromise that may be available, is to help others create new categories able to embrace individuals such as myself.

I recall reading somewhere recently that a good strategy for ensuring a positive future was to involve one's self in the writing and formation of it. The same can be said in reference to the creation of new categories, new languages, and new methods. If we leave the composition of definitions to others, we can hardly complain if the resulting definitions are not inclusive of concerns which only we ourselves could have added to the discussion.

It is our world--both individually and collectively. Specifically because of how many individual selves there are, we must be friendly to public discussion that influences present and future communal forms. One can only live in isolation for just so long, before either the world comes knocking on one's door or one must go visit the world in order to replenish supplies.

Embracing categorization does not, however, require embracing homogeneity or conformity. Rather, it is a matter of allowing one's self to be known, especially in relation to qualities and characteristics which can also be found within others.

That being said, allowing one's self to be known honestly requires an ongoing practice of discouraging inaccurate generalization. Having one commonality is no excuse for presuming the existence of others. Discovering another's individuality is a process of learning both where the commonalities begin and where they end.

Nonetheless, embracing categorization provides specific bridges of collaboration and ongoing relationship, the strength of which is nurtured by continuing communication and dialogue, especially about changes that follow.

It is love that provides both the means and the reason for doing whatever work is necessary, to holistically pursue life in this way.

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

On a Personal Note

I persist in my attempts to make the best of things here in New Hampshire, but as my perhaps usual uniqueness persists, am increasingly persuaded of being a displaced Coloradan--hoping someday to return home whenever the current phase of my life's work is finally complete and when Colorado itself has somehow recovered from its current malady of unbalanced economic obsession, with which I have inadequate financial resources to cope.

In the meantime, in addition to this newsletter, I persist in editing new episodes of my television show (hoping to have them available on the Internet within the next week or so) and preparing for completion of my 2016 inspirational calendar. Additionally, on the first Saturdays of November and December will be screenings of my second and third morality plays at the WREN Makers Studio at 4-6 p.m. here in Berlin, New Hampshire (at which times I will be available in ritual garb to facilitate discussion of the videos' content).

As for my house here, circumstances are adversarial and dubious at best. Colder weather is becoming predominant, but the work of equipping the structure for winter is more than one person can accomplish within any short amount of time. Hopefully ingenuity and divine providence will ensure successful passage to the following spring season. It is times such as this, when faith in ultimately positive outcomes becomes a most essential but obviously difficult resource to maintain.

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

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*Sister Who a/k/a Rev. Denver NeVaar, MTS
97 Granite Street, 2nd Floor, Berlin, NH 03570
email: dn@SisterWho.com*

Internet website: <http://www.SisterWho.com>

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