

sister who's perspective

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Overview

Subtle and slow as the occasional shifts may be, relational dynamics are constantly evolving. Awareness of the exact nature of these dynamics, however, is too often given little attention and regarded as a low priority--thus preventing greater empowerment from happening. Nonetheless, being unnoticed does nothing to diminish the importance of any particular contribution. If one believes in goodness at all, one must continue to act.

Being Needed

Wherever any sort of problem or pain can be found, negative as these may be, they are simultaneously signposts striving to alert any and all to essential possibilities waiting to be done. A fusion of curiosity, ingenuity, and unconditional love moves life in positive directions--even within the most deplorable of circumstances. In the absence of societal or communal support, however, it is easy to wonder whether the bearers of such creative resources might be better utilized and more rewarded somewhere else.

I am reminded of a response by Hume Cronyn's character within the 1987 movie, "Batteries Not Included," that asserted that "the quickest way to end a miracle is to ask it why it is." Wanting deeper understanding is one thing; asking a blessing to justify its very existence is quite another.

In recognizing a person or thing as being perhaps a divine answer to a particular problem, the first complication is that one may be the only person doing so. In addition to the central challenge, therefore, is also that of convincing others of the reality one has perceived and the consequent need to be open and receptive to the good that is striving to manifest. Being needed, in and of itself, is ultimately not enough; personal and communal support must be present also.

In recognizing one's self as a potential answer to an obvious need, while there is no need to wonder whether one has inherent value or worth, there is once again the task of creating communal awareness and/or support. If one is conversely shunned and scorned simply because one does not embody the methods and responses of the past--which are no longer effective within the present--essential growth into new ways of being is curtailed and life wrestles against genuinely suicidal and self-sabotaging predispositions. Preventing suicide is not just a matter of preventing a final action, but also of opposing all conditions that point in that disempowered and hopeless direction.

I suspect it is rarely perceived in this way, but what is thus revealed is the link between being needed and being patient. Everything that is needed--with or without awareness of being such--must be patient with the other persons, circumstances, and events that are (hopefully) still in the process of moving toward the configuration within which pivotal miracles of transformation will finally be able to occur. Much as the embryo of every species must endure a period of gestation (no matter how uncomfortable that may be), that which is yanked into manifestation prematurely may encounter innumerable additional challenges to even mere survival.

From a certain perspective, the very existence of any person or thing testifies to its being needed. What is most often lacking is understanding of how this piece of creation may be utilized for the benefit of itself and everything else around. Perhaps the most profound disappointment of all, is when humanity makes no effort in that direction.

What is thus inspiring each time it occurs, is when even a single individual achieves an understanding that provides opportunity for a transformative miracle to unfold.

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

Being Appreciated

I sometimes feel sorry for people who are not autistic, because of how difficult it often is for them to see important details that can dramatically affect their efforts. Conversely, however, I both value and am baffled by how effortlessly they seem to move through our very dishonest and duplicitous world and its illogical bureaucratic administrations. It is not, however, merely a question of what is, but rather of how one is able to relate to it.

Pop psychology often wishes to reduce every challenge to a choice and a recipe: just make up your mind and follow this recipe and everything will be great. Unfortunately the "snake oil salesmen" who promote such false hope are rarely around and definitely not willing to be held accountable when their remedies fail to produce promised results. I am fairly certain that I am not the only one to have been victimized by such dishonesty.

At this point in this particular ongoing conversation, however, I find myself in a bit of an ethical dilemma. On one hand I am opposed to lies, but on the other I am thankful for the hope that provided energy and enthusiasm for as long as I believed the particular promise or condition. Being in love is another way of accomplishing that, leaving one to weigh the pain of a breakup against the liveliness with which every challenge was engaged as long as the fixation lasted. Yet one quality central to this relational dynamic, is that one is both further along because of the experience yet also in need of healing from the intensity of the termination of the particular interpersonal involvement.

Parallel to all of these issues is the reality that such interpersonal connections may lie below the level of consciousness. If nothing is said, one may never know how much one is appreciated, but a painful emotional shift may still accompany any unexpected or sudden absence or parting. One does not always consciously know why one feels whatever one does, but such discoveries can nonetheless be made thereafter within focused and/or guided self-reflection.

Appreciation is thus not merely a matter of social courtesy, but also of subtle societal

interconnection--some of which include participants and/or natural forces beyond the human species. If one is able to grasp any awareness of one's place within such larger constellations of life, a mostly invisible but nevertheless profound reason for life may emerge, for persevering through struggles--even in the absence of approval from others.

A point of transition for many if not all individuals and communities, is moving from passive appreciation to active support--embracing an understanding that what (or perhaps even whom) one wants the world to include, requires certain kinds of support and/or resources, if the ability to do so is to persist. In making this transition--whether theologically, psychologically, sociologically, or scientifically phrased--one truly becomes a co-creator of the universe. Without love, humility, and respect, however, any and all such actions run the risk of being (perhaps unintentionally) abusive.

It is no secret, for example, that false appreciation has often been used to engage in self-serving manipulation. Truth is once again much more than a philosophical topic; it is in fact an ideological guardian angel, preventing greater evils and guiding toward a more holistically healthy way of being. A primary challenge for humanity, however, is that an enormous quantity of truth lies (at least for now) beyond our perception and complete comprehension.

Lest anyone think I am presenting my own recipe for eternal bliss, life has taught me that struggle is not an evil to be avoided as much as a river to be navigated. When I am able to choose my struggles and also have the necessary tools to avoid any and all serious injury throughout the process, my understanding and skill are increased. Yet because the world remains now and always a shared space, cooperative collaboration with others remains essential.

Appreciation is always relational and not something one can effectively manufacture as needed. Yet in a way that is equally real, the first inciting action can be one's own.

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

Being Wanted

As much as many positive thinkers whom I've met over the years wish to regard this as unimportant and perhaps even optional, I continue to find that it is a fundamental and essential dynamic throughout virtually every human society I've encountered. The world encompasses many people, creatures, and resources and the more I see of each of these, the more convinced I am that each and every part is required in order for the world to ever be the best that it can be. If one finds and respects any degree of truth in that conclusion, one must also want every part to not only survive but also thrive.

More concisely, love must encompass all persons and things, no matter how much time is required to learn how each person and thing is to be wisely loved. Failing to do so is ultimately self-sabotaging, denying one's self, one's community, and one's world the blessings which could have only come through that which was denied adequate love. Too much self-sabotage and life on this planet might ultimately come to an end.

None of this, however, dismisses the danger of loving beyond one's ability. The one who has been attacked and wounded by another, for example, would be unwise to return immediately to engagement with the source of violence without first equipping one's self to do the very, very difficult actions of unconditional love. Throwing one's self into circumstances that are still oriented to self-annihilation after having narrowly escaped them, must have a higher purpose in order to avoid being an attack on life itself.

Part of the healing process is the task of restoring abilities to love and to live (as much as possible) without restriction. Like any

other healing process, however, a significant amount of time may be required--ideally within a supportive and nurturing context. In the absence of such, I persist in believing that complete healing is still possible, but it seems compassionate to allow that such healing may require a much longer time.

All of which leaves one to wrestle with the wisdom of going where one is not wanted and doing what wounded people there may not want to have done. If they have become accustomed to their suffering, there may be fierce objections to its absence, because they will have to enter an experiential world that is quite different. A conspicuous absence of sacred clowns throughout more recent human history has perhaps encouraged extensive development of fearing the unknown and the unfamiliar.

As unwanted as these human anomalies may be by current generations of humanity, however, such unconventional ministers remain as essential to long-term survival as ever. Proclaiming that suffering is being prevented by not allowing any to experience such lives, paints the process by which the butterfly escapes the chrysalis and the chick escapes the egg as being adversarial to life--but they are not. Yet proclaiming that one must refrain from compassion to support constructive struggle is equally unwise.

If what is wanted is that the struggling life will prevail, protection from external attacks and hostile forces is still well within wisdom's reach. A nurturing environment can be both created and maintained so that full attention can be directed to escaping whatever shell or chrysalis (whether physical or ideological) has been outgrown. The fact that most such escapes are unwitnessed, in no way makes them less essential to whatever life follows.

It is perhaps specifically because most such escapes are unwitnessed that they are typically regarded as engrossing miracles one must observe to completion whenever possible. If supportive circumstances were wanted and created, perhaps such events would also more often be seen.

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

"I want no part of happiness that is grounded only in narcissistic ignorance, ambivalence, and lethargy, in relation to others' suffering."

-- Sister Who

Being Embraced

Some time ago while chatting with a friend about ways to respond in the event of an autistic meltdown, the two most essential phrases that formed our final conclusion were "You are safe" and "You are loved." It is these two considerations specifically that seem to be hidden within every experience of anxiety or conflict imaginable. Knowing and believing these two key pieces of information to be true, seems to provide the means for all other threats' resolution.

Perhaps it is just a matter of degree, but the contrast is so strong that it doesn't seem like much intelligence is required to recognize the difference between a compliment and an embrace. One might generate good feelings, but the other is something upon which one can absolutely stand--especially in times of trouble, which will come to each and every one of us, sooner or later, simply because everything in life is such a mix. It has never occurred to me that recognizing the regular occurrence of winter within each calendar year should be interpreted as any sort of cynicism.

Perhaps it is a strange question to ask, but what exactly is it that makes times of trouble bad? My personal conclusion is that it all depends upon how prepared or equipped one is for whatever adversity arrives. For the one who is prepared, experiencing trouble may be little different (metaphorically, at least) from surviving a harsh winter season.

If the preparations with which one greets trouble are relationships anchored in love which are able to adjust to changing circumstances, survival will never truly be in question. In being embraced, one knows that somehow needs will be met and we will all still be together when spring finally returns. To the extent that we neglect each other, humanity creates winter where none would otherwise be.

In choosing to love, however, I can only form half of an embrace. The other half must come from each "you" that I meet.

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

On a Personal Note

All of the episodes of my ongoing TV show, "Sister Who Presents..." have now been uploaded to both the Internet and Denver Open Media, the public access television entity in Denver, Colorado. I have already received a number of encouraging responses too. The next task is to finish the 2018 calendar. In the midst of all of that, however, I also continue to wrestle with relocating to a less oppressive environment.

After three months of waiting during which I became extremely hopeful that my next address would be Longmont, Colorado, I received notice that a negative credit report based exclusively on the loss of my house in the northwest Denver-metro area had disqualified me from that opportunity. Before abandoning that hope altogether, however, I have engaged an appeal process, hoping that with enough positive character reference letters and a good statement from myself, the administrators may yet reconsider their decision. All other options include certain conditions better avoided if one can.

I find myself often reflecting upon more empowered times of the past, but as thankful as I was when those moments occurred, I was unable to make them last any longer than they did. Be that as it may, I am thankful for the memories and continue to hope that the best is somehow yet to come.

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

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