

# sister who's perspective

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## Overview

Whether as mass and energy, body and spirit, or action and word, the physical and non-physical dimensions of life have been with humanity since the very beginning. Curiously, individual and collective understanding of the relationship between the two is far from complete. In fact, each new individual offers even more possibilities. Realizing any of these, however, comes only from introducing them to each other as often as possible.

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

## The Manifestation of Family

It is far too easy to say, "we are family" and to imagine that it is so, without any action, resource, or potential that actually corresponds to the meaning of that word. Upon further contemplation, it is actually quite easy to live a meaningless life--at least for many people.

Whether as blessing or curse, however, I have never found that to be tolerable. It is specifically the meaning and purpose I find within life's experiences that provide the fuel essential to any and all growth and positive development. Considering that physical life is comprised of a finite number of days, the peacefulness of lying in a coffin throughout any portion of that time, has never appealed to me.

Without manifestation of some sort, it is a very legitimate question whether life, love, or family genuinely exist at all. One could even say that such reality is diminished whenever the word is subjected to casual utterance that in practice becomes a lie. I counter that certain words such as "family," "friendship," and "love" must be protected from such erosion and thereby retained as sacred. If it ever becomes genuinely true that nothing is sacred, life itself will have lost essential meaning and there will be nothing to justify the inescapable and inherent struggle each day includes.

So I persist in my lifelong search for the sacred and the true, deriving therefrom the strength to persist in engaging whatever struggles I encounter along the way--and not judging myself harshly simply because others may interpret that the experience of struggle is synonymous with being in error. If that were true, every birth would be mistake.

To engage in the manifestation of family, however, is no easy task for a number of reasons. First and foremost is that this involves both giving and receiving; being both the source and the recipient of relational blessings. Next is the inescapable necessity of tolerating imperfections; we are all at different points of growth and development, speaking and acting out of the limitations and abilities of that particular level of maturity (or lack thereof).

As much as a family tolerates such imperfections, there must also be ongoing encouragement to transcend them. Any family that fails to thus nurture its members, is failing its primary purpose. Failing is only forgivable if it is not the last action. Constructive address of circumstances must follow, if forgiveness and subsequent healing are to be reasonably expected. As much as we are "spiritual beings having a physical experience" instead of vice versa, the fact that we do have physical experiences indicates that we must tend to physical environments and contexts within which that experience can be constructively nurtured. To insist that the spiritual reality is the only one that matters, trivializes the growth that comes only from serving the current physical experience and deprives family members (as well as one's self) of the love that is essential to respective life journeys.

Ultimately, everyone has to be somewhere--both spiritually and physically. If I fail to contribute to a suitable context for both aspects of being, I fail to serve the creative work of each individual life I encounter.

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

## The Manifestation of Home

When resources are lacking, I often hear people advocating that materiality is not essential to any reality of feeling "at home." I have also noticed, however, that such words are nearly always spoken only by those who already have virtually every material resource they need and almost never by those who must improvise or make do without such resources.

As an extension of human perception and understanding, conceptions of home are indeed spiritual, but this does not make their corresponding physicality any less important than the physicality that is so painfully missed whenever a loved one physically dies or "crosses over to the other side." It is just as problematic to be denied the ability to physically hug a loved one, as it is to believe in a sense of home that has no physical reality.

The corollary, of course, is that having a physical reality without an indwelling spirit is absolutely pointless. Like a stage lavishly dressed with glittering sets and portals for dramatic entrances, within which no words are ever spoken, no songs ever sung, and no actors or actresses ever present, the effort is a waste and the life that could have unfolded there is in a sense still-born. Metaphorically, the tableau is a broken promise, suggesting inspirational possibilities while providing none.

The provision, however, cannot come from the materiality itself. It is the symbiotic intertwining of materiality and consciousness which creates the multi-dimensional and transcendent miracle we call "life," which by its very nature is always greater than its individual contributors. This creation only occurs, however, when combined the substances of individual and collective consciousness, material forms, and the enigma of time itself converge. When such convergence does occur, the essence of what we call home is virtually unavoidable.

That is, as long as the convergence is honest and genuine. Fraudulent interaction is incapable of such creation and the blessings which only a genuine manifestation of home can bestow, remain out of reach.

So why would anyone resist? Perhaps because each manifestation of such is unique,

unfamiliar, and powerful. In spite of the myriad of attempts to deny humanity's limitation and weaknesses, they remain inescapable real and encounters with greater beings thus also always require confronting those aspects of ourselves and trusting that--in spite of every tragedy that has ever occurred--the next moment is still able to be profoundly good.

If we want good moments to keep occurring, such trust is absolutely required, but, like the construction of a home, windows and doors must be strategically placed so that we do not rush into such encounters blindly or without appropriate boundaries. That being said, there will unfortunately still be times when no amount of preparatory research will prevent a subsequent tragedy. Forgiving ourselves and moving on with our lives may be time-honored wisdom, but it is never easy.

Especially within such moments, an awareness of family is essential and the members of one's family might not always be human, animal, or organic in any sense of the word. Crystals, clothing, and even plastic talismans can become saturated with the dreams and emotions of human life and thus stand in for absent humans during moments of intense importance and shift. When I was unable to be physically present for the passing of a beloved canine a few years ago, for example, I sewed a special blanket for him, slept with the blanket for perhaps a week, and then had it shipped to him so that he could smell the scent of my body all around him as he prepared for his final earthly journey.

Within my own earthly journeys, this is also why I allow for a reasonable amount of sentimental attachment to objects generally regarded as not being "alive." In one way or another, everything is alive and if we do not respect this, we will be also unable to infuse genuine life into any home we ever create.

The corollary to this, however, is the knowledge that we carry within ourselves the ability to create and infuse objects with life, wherever we go. Like the Velveteen Rabbit, we can provide the love that makes all the positive difference necessary to whatever life will unfold there. So make it beautiful.

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

## The Manifestation of Purpose

I recall an insight attributed to Mother Theresa that her work was not a matter of being more special than anyone else, but rather of going to a situation, seeing what she could do, and being faithful to do it. I have found this to be a constructive and helpful pattern worth following.

The first step is to go to a place: to travel beyond one's own familiar contexts; to be fully present there; to take inventory of all that is there and learn from all of it in whatever ways one can. Obviously humility is required, the primary adversary of which is dogmatism.

The next step is to see what one can do: to be sufficiently aware of one's abilities and limitations in ways that do not disallow the discovery of new abilities and limitations; to learn the languages, customs, expectations, and beliefs with which one must interact; to have sufficient faith in possibilities to be willing to try. Having a mature faith in possibility does not, however, guarantee that every effort will be successful. The measure I recommend to myself within such moments is that of demonstrating what sort of person I am instead of being merely a reaction to whatever is around me; to shine my own light rather than being only someone else's reflection.

The third step, from that resultant place of awareness and understanding, is to act: to move from potentiality to manifestation; to accept that manifestation will never happen all on its own but rather invites each and every one of us to be its servants and thus become co-creators of both the universe within which we live and the future gradually unfolding; to

*"Cynicism is easy and,  
like sand, flows  
into every crack it finds.  
Only faith is hard enough  
to provide a solid foundation  
during life's  
most difficult moments."*

-- Sister Who

forge a particular relationship with time, with the story of our own lives, with the environment which forms the theatrical stage upon which we perform, and with every other actor, actress, musician, and technical assistant encountered.

A curiosity of purpose is that it indirectly arises from the combination of everything just mentioned (and more). Attempting to select and embrace purpose directly and consciously, is generally a frustrating, superficial, and marginally successful venture--specifically because the success or failure of such efforts relies upon forces, circumstances, and contributions beyond our control.

One could consequently say that the manifestation of purpose is analogous to the sun rising over the eastern horizon each morning: we can neither cause it to happen nor prevent it from doing so; it is comprised of mass and energy we do not fully understand; that purpose will happen is undeniable, but it can frequently be named only in retrospect.

What purpose did this or that moment or event serve? Often we are standing too close to be able to accurately say, so we must proceed with our lives with clouds of confusion overhead, of varying density.

To the extent that we allow others this experience and do not pressure them to provide answers they simply do not have, we create space for ourselves as well to gradually integrate the mysteries of our uniqueness. It is after all this same uniqueness, which will ultimately offer itself for interpretation and thus shed more light on why each of us was "really" here. By infusing that process with love and awareness, we create the possibility of every life being truly a success by being also one of both good purpose and good effect.

Although we can no more demand a particular purpose than we can demand the sun to rise, we can make whatever happens into a good thing and value whatever purposes the greater mystery of life offers. It is so very difficult whenever life is characterized by pain to embrace the often incomprehensible purpose of the particular moment. The love and compassion of community at such times, however, can make those moments good too.

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

## The Manifestation of Spirit

I suppose in some ways this may seem like an oxymoron, since manifestation speaks of form, mass, and visibility while spirit is nearly always exactly the opposite. Like wind, spirit seems to disappear completely every time it ceases to move yet to be recreated the instant it is once again in motion. Similarly, when we are silent and still, we remain mysterious. It is within our expressions and our movements that our truth becomes known. More concisely, when spirit manifests, we learn what it is.

That is, we learn some of what it is. We can never say for certain what additional parts or aspects of spirit there may be, which have not yet chosen any sort of motion by which their character, purpose, or presence can be known. To insist that nothing exists beyond what is thus far known, however, is to deny the most fundamental lesson of history: that (ideally) we continually move from ignorance toward ever-greater understanding.

It is not enough, however, to simply possess understanding. To be real, it too must have appropriate expression and constructive relationship with all that surrounds or is encountered. To exist only as understanding or an idea, is to remain devoid of actual life and living. To manifest anything, conversely, is to be in active relationship.

If the relationship is tragically one of rejection or exclusion, one can still be active--as so many artists, composers, and authors have been--by leaving behind a body of work which may be discovered by persons yet to be born. It is not, after all, only his or her own generation for which an author writes, but rather for all of humanity yet to come as well.

Innumerable artists, composers, and authors have been described as being "ahead of his/her time," which also suggests that they were the pioneers blazing a trail through various kinds of wilderness. From one perspective, it is sad that we do not appreciate the intensity of their struggles. Even they, however, would likely concur that what is most important is not to remember their sacrifice, but to wisely utilize their contribution.

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

## On a Personal Note

In reflecting upon the experiences of oppression and pain which filled the brief four weeks in New York--astonishing in their intensity--I cannot help but appreciate the current time as one of profound importance, although I am yet uncertain of exactly what purposes were served.

Unfortunately, the struggle is far from over and in some ways my situation seems to be even worse, now that I have fled back to Colorado; I really don't know in which direction life will go next. It is also a very real possibility that if I lose the ability to access and utilize my computer, my voice within the world will go silent as well--in which case finding sufficient purpose will also be much more difficult.

The dogs are happy in each others' company and very happy to be with me as well as I strive to keep my little family together, but limitations in regulations and resources seem to be moving in undesirable directions. When, whether, or how positive alternatives will ultimately manifest, I can only guess. An overabundance of positive thinking having been ineffective in the past, I can only speculate that what I am experiencing is simply a tiny part or a dim reflection of the larger struggles of the world within which I live, as humanity struggles from past toward future.

In the meantime, my one means of expensive but more reliable communication seems to be my mobile phone: 720-381-7743 (no text-messaging capabilities whatsoever).

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