

SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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Overview

In contrast to the common assumption that circumstances can be maintained in a specific form, the ancient Greek philosopher asserted that, "Change is the only constant in the universe." At the heart of such matters are most often questions related to degrees of human awareness. It seems the obvious is always the last thing to be perceived and--specifically because of the struggle which precedes--may seem like an epiphany.

A Revelation of Home

It occurred to me recently that beneath my conscious thoughts have always been the beliefs that each and every person has a right to food, clothing, shelter, and medicine; that every person is potentially as valuable and deserving of love as every other person, in an egalitarian rather than hierarchical way; and that each person has a responsibility to do whatever good he or she can, using whatever resources are available--because opportunities will not always be available and contributing to the healing of the world one person at a time is everyone's job.

It is in creating spaces of healing, of love, and of shelter that the truest definition of home can be found. It is not so much a question of finding a structure as of creating an array of invisible interactive dynamics. It is thus a way of being that is quite impossible within a narcissistic approach to life.

The one who sees no further than the self will thus never find a way home. In a similar but reversed way, the one who loves but is consistently rejected, will be denied every true experience of home within earthly life.

Specifically because love must be chosen, either as an expression or as an acceptable gift, it is never automatic and its success is never guaranteed. Nonetheless, when love is both given and received, a

sense of home quickly follows--at least for those who choose to participate. A curious and perhaps amusing quirk, however, is that the participants in this relational miracle may be completely unaware of this wondrous dynamic that they have collectively created.

Hence the ability to describe this new awareness as a revelation. It is not that a sense of home did not exist, but rather that by remaining below or beyond conscious awareness, it could not be completely, consciously, and constructively utilized.

Within the revelation is the ability to move beyond past and present forms into greater future empowerment and expanded ability to address whatever future challenges arise. It is quite reasonable to presume, however, that while the forms of the future may be derivative, they will not be identical with those of the past. Past solutions were custom-tailored to past circumstances, which have given way to different circumstances within the present that past solutions are unable to effectively resolve.

None of this, however, suggests that no timeless wisdom can be found within past solutions by those with the patience and perseverance to sift the gold from the ashes (so to speak). Just as the first tasks following the destruction of a home by fire (after constructively mourning the loss) are determining and enumerating what can be salvaged and/or reused, the most important revelation for every individual experiencing a tragic loss, is the discovery that renewal and even rebirth remain absolutely within reach.

Without the home of a surrounding community, however, it will be far more difficult for individuals to find sufficient strength to do this. It is, in fact, the strength of a communal home, whether or not it is named as such, from which the will and imagination essential to growth arises.

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

A Revelation of Work

If one never sees beyond the superficial actions, work is denied its spiritual and relational significance, thus potentially inspiring resentment instead of deeper connection. In some instances, I can honestly say that I was actively discouraged from any such perception, by the choices of others to remain mysterious to me. As much as I may have desired a deeper relationship with certain persons, I could only build the bridge halfway (so to speak) and, whether because of their past experiences of disappointment or even serious mental and emotional pain, my attempts failed.

Nonetheless, the work of life continues, wearing many different masks within differing moments and exchanging masks as often as circumstances recommend. If one sees nothing more than the face of the work, if one never knows the spirit and the heart which drives the work to do what it does, one will never understand. If or when revelation occurs, however, the work will no longer be merely the sum of its parts.

A work that has evolved into conceptions legitimately described as multi-dimensional, becomes an invisible collaborator in the design of future manifestations--offering structural guidance to those with the eyes to see its shadows and the ears to hear its whispers. It is no longer simple drudgery, but rather giving birth to new forms and ways of being by which life is renewed. It shifts to being an interconnection with all of life's other expressions, building a road into the future upon which all future generations will walk and by which they will also be shaped.

It must also be noted that a true central purpose of one's life may be far larger than the fulfillment of any specific role. More directly, I think I was put on Earth during this time to be more than merely a parasitic extension of someone else--more than someone's lifepartner, someone's caretaker, someone's relative, or someone's entry-level employee. As demonstrated within the timeless holiday movie, "It's a Wonderful Life," each individual may quickly but unknowingly become very pivotal within the

development of each individual life of his or her surrounding community--just by living authentically as whatever that person finds himself or herself to be.

One's true lifework rarely corresponds to something as superficial and perhaps even trivial as a paycheck. As with the protagonist of the movie just mentioned, a moment in which one becomes aware of that larger scope and impact, could legitimately be described as an epiphany or revelation--especially if the impact of that new awareness is life-changing. It would be most enlightening, for example, to know the life events and further development of George Bailey, his wife, and his children, after the movie's conclusion, but there was no sequel.

What must not be forgotten while focusing upon the happy ending, however, are the moments of confusion and struggle which must be endured in order to reach that joyous finale. As the plaque on my desk seeks to always remind me, "For those who have had to fight for it, life has a special meaning the protected shall never know." It is this deeper meaning which has the most impact upon the choices I now make.

None of which, however, means that I regard familial relationships lightly. In truth, I suspect I treat them more seriously than most--not as ends in and of themselves, but rather as constitutive pieces within a larger and more complex configuration. Perhaps we're all standing too close to see its large and awe-inspiring dimensions. If life does *not* inspire a sort of awe, I must wonder if one has truly perceived it at all.

Yet even if that is the case, then perhaps it has finally become clear, what the work that needs to be done next actually is--as well as how symbiotically interdependent and interconnected the individuals within the human family are. In the words, of Benjamin Franklin, "we must all hang together, or we will all hang separately." Our challenges have grown in size and scope, such that only individuals acting as community can resolve them. This is the current generation's work.

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A Revelation of Spirit

The first obvious quality of this seems to be that it is never truly finished. The depth and breadth of any spirit is ongoing and time, by its very nature, allows only a small part to ever be truly seen. In considering my own life from this particular perspective, the epitaph upon my gravestone (should there ever be one) might read, "I would have created so much more, if I could have spent less time merely fighting for survival."

Metaphorically, the body of creative work I am ultimately able to leave behind may serve as at least the beginning of a map of the dimensions and content of my spirit. I cannot say, however, whether anyone in the future would assign any value to such a map or whether it would be a helpful reference to empower the journeys of others. That is certainly among my hopes, but I will never personally know whether or not my efforts in that direction succeed.

What is therefore essential for me to remember, is that response is not really a true or accurate measure of the value of my spirit or my life. Just as the measure of the ministerial work that I do is not the amount of attention I receive, but rather the insight, empowerment, and growth that occurs within the individuals I encounter; the measure of my spirit is not those things which can be depicted narcissistically, but rather those which must be relationally described in order to be truthfully understood at all.

Metaphorically, a revelation of spirit may be akin to a morning sunrise, encompassing a pending sequence of events, of growth, and of expansion. A revelation of spirit might also be a concentration of energy, of possibility, and of creative motion. Equally

"I usually know what it is for which I wish and reach, but the unfolding of my life has more often been defined by discovery than by choice."

-- Sister Who

and additionally, a revelation of spirit could be a juxtaposition of astral phenomena, of choice and response demonstrated by diverse examples of consciousness, and of multiple dimensions of reality momentarily fusing at least into a completely original and unique combination.

In striking contrast to all of these positive conceptions, however, are the negative ones that are unfortunately just as likely to spring into being, if one is not careful to prevent them from ever taking root within one's life and/or community. It is difficult, for example, to avoid being discouraged by the overabundance of indifference to human struggle and suffering, most especially within those who have been so richly blessed that struggle and suffering are not part of their daily lives. The revelation of spirit in such cases, would be the discovery of who such persons truly are, at that level of their being.

Nonetheless, in the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, "It is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness. Indeed, included within lighting that candle, is the action of recognizing that the darkness is real and needs very much to be dispelled. In spite of any contrary claim "learned helplessness" would like to make, within every example and experience of life is the figurative or literal ability to light a candle and dispel a larger or small quantity of darkness.

One must remember that it does not require a large amount of light, to perceive the key within one's hand and guide it to the locked door it will open. I recall viewing a documentary of Mother Theresa years ago while in college, within which I recall a comment attributed to her, that it was not a matter of being an exceptional person. It is rather that one goes to a situation, sees what one can do, and then faithfully does it. I cannot legitimately be held accountable for that which I did not have the ability to do, but I most certainly hold myself accountable for doing whatever I can--because this is how the truth of my spirit is revealed and shared with the world around me.

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

A Revelation of Life

A glimpse of the totality of life is likely to be overwhelming, specifically because of the extremes that it includes. To claim that any part of that spectrum is representative of the whole, conversely, is a lie--specifically because of the true realities which are thereby dismissed and/or negated. This is why neither pessimists nor optimists can ever be described as telling the whole truth, but instead are dishonest to varying degrees.

One might wonder whether complete honesty is even possible, but dismissing the pursuit of truth and honesty guarantees only undesirable outcomes, so perseverance is recommended, in any and all ways of which one is capable. Indeed, it is within such pursuits that one can feel most truly alive, regardless of whether the particular form of one's pursuit is physically, intellectually, politically, socially, or spiritually defined. In resigning one's self to defeat and thereby becoming a perpetual victim, one equally embraces an absence of life, which makes all subsequent activity devoid of any positive, empowering, or constructive meaning.

Once again I turn to the plaque on my desk, "For those who have had to fight for it, life has a special meaning the protected will never know," but the definition of the word "protected" within this sentence now seems problematic. What true safety can there be in being protected from experiencing life at all? Time will ultimately run out and while one may at that point have been protected from adversarial life circumstances, the gift of life will not have served its main purpose of being truly lived.

If I were given a car, would I refrain from ever driving it in order to ensure that it would never be damaged? Nonsense! To honor the giver, I would instead both accept the gift and then strive to drive the car as well as I could. To honor the life I have been given to live, I must strive to incorporate all of the expertise, love, and wisdom available.

If mistakes happen, I will recover. If there are no attempts, however, I will never live.

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

On a Personal Note

Well, it seems that life is once again pitching curve-balls. Just when I was about to begin moving my sense of home to a friend's spare bedroom in Aurora, Colorado, I received a phone call that, alternatively, an affordable one-bedroom apartment is almost ready for me in Trinidad, Colorado. Okay, obviously I need to readjust my thinking as quickly as possible and make other plans.

The next week will consequently be a blur of finishing vehicle repairs and preparing for a shift back to small-town living. I'm told an artist community of some sort is there. If so, perhaps some sort of collaboration will be possible when it is time to create this year's new episodes of "Sister Who Presents."

I recall innumerable times when I've been asked, "why hasn't someone discovered you?" to which my usual response is, "Is there someone to whom you would like to introduce me?" Perhaps I have always been impatient for such collaborative connections to happen, but I am also mindful that one must wait until the time is right, rather than tear a new work from the womb prematurely.

In the midst of all of this, I am also concerned about maintaining activities of spiritual service. The primary commitment is that I never give up striving to do all the good that I can, however I can, wherever I can, with whomever I can, whenever I can.

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

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