

sister who's perspective

Sister Who's Perspective, Issue 226, April 2018, copyright

Overview

One of the challenges of being human is having two eyes on only one side of our heads—meaning that there are always three other perspectives we're not seeing and important considerations which are slipping by all around us. This month's essays explores some simultaneous yet contrasting realities which I hope will prove empowering within the circumstances and situations of life for each unique and wonderful reader.

The Taking Giver

I've decided to forego participation in food banks, because the personal cost is nearly always higher than the applied value of what I receive. The focus is not ultimately upon what I need, but rather upon what this or that well-intentioned person is interested in providing--which I must then find a way to utilize. When I later find that having spent my time and energy managing such tasks, I have less available for ministerial activities, I feel as though I've let someone down.

If all I do is survive, it is more difficult to honestly claim that I am still living life as fully and completely as recommended by its inherent value. I know, for example, that I'd rather be skiing, hiking, or participating in an educationally and ministerially oriented fair, because these activities are accompanied by my greatest sense of authenticity, but what stands between myself and such actions may sadly be as little as having sufficient fuel to get there by motorcycle or car. So I too often find myself forced into doing what I can only from home and not directly.

An acquaintance once explained that what he most admired about me was that I was someone who pursued his relational goals and refused to settle for less, "like so many other people." A friend similarly noted recently that what amazed him most was my

tenacity and perseverance within each and every circumstance I encountered, to doing any and every good thing I could. While I am honored to hear such statements, I know that I also persist in complaining about limitations which prevent my best contributions from blessing others around me.

It's as if the generosity I encounter is not what it claims to be, because there has been no dialogue with the one in need. It is not that the generosity should cease, but rather that it needs to become relational rather than narcissistic. Virtually every successful business integrates customer satisfaction surveys, so why is the conversation with humanity's most vulnerable members so conspicuously lacking in content?

An additional consideration is the social and psychological stratification; as if by identifying as a person in need, I am further classified as one without his own voice. Yet without communicating my needs, the onus remains upon the giver to telepathically guess what could be simply stated. I prefer to turn our relationship into a symbiotic exchange so that its parasitic appearance could be dispelled, but, like the giver, I may be psychic, but I am not a mind-reader.

Within those moments when roles are reversed, when I am potentially the giver, I similarly wish to know the potential recipient; to know the story and to discern thereby what would be most truly helpful, rather than merely a projection of what I imagine to be a basic need. I do not wish to pry or impose, but a superficial relationship of nothing more than material exchange offers no genuinely empowering future. The living of life--truly, authentically, and even completely--requires significant personal investment.

What I want most, is for us to be family; to embody the symbiotic reason that none of us would ever have to face anything all alone.

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

The Giving Taker

Maintenance of life, at its most basic level, requires taking energy from one place and moving it to another. Perhaps within some far off future world, all life-energy will be self-sustaining and no such sacrifice will be required, once we have learned how to love without any inherent need for symbiotic exchange, but, for now at least, it seems that "necessity is the mother of invention." Within this world and as creatures inseparable from experiences of time, a basic law of physics constrains all beings by insisting that "energy is neither created nor destroyed, but rather merely changes form and place."

That being the case, every act of harvest must be followed by planting more seeds; if one has received, one must also give; and if healing has been applied, one must also apply healing wherever, whenever, and however one can. One must never be the point where the energy stops, because that would create only the constriction of death without providing any opportunity for life to expand toward new horizons. If what will be is never more than what has been, life can not be honestly described as ongoing.

Conversely, if every gift is reverently seen as a responsibility to honor the giver by maximizing consequent positive effects, a sort of legacy is present within even the smallest and apparently most insignificant gestures. The single candle flame that gives hope to a crowd thus embodies far more than merely its physical dimensions. A song within a silence may lift spirits in ways that large earth-moving machinery could not.

The candle requires air in order to burn and the song requires an audience in order to be communally meaningful—instructing any who imagine absolute self-sufficiency to awaken to how inescapable symbiotic relationship is. The smallest and weakest will thus teach profound understanding to any willing student. What must be decided, consciously or not, is whether one will learn.

Within each such expression are forms of love, but sometimes it's difficult to discern what the roots of a particular expression of love are. Sometimes it truly is unconditionally

giving of one's self for another, perhaps even in self-sacrificing ways. At other times, what one truly loves is a perhaps subconscious definition of normal, such that one is giving to the other what one imagines will empower the other to be normal—whether or not the gift is truly and specifically appropriate.

Ultimately, one must seek out ways to truly, constructively, and authentically be one's self—in the best and most beautiful ways possible--while simultaneously offering encouragement to one's community to pursue the most inclusive and empowering collective choices. Life is such a multi-faceted phenomenon that it is no wonder an entire lifetime is required to even begin to figure it out. Sometimes experiences of being victimized are nothing more than the logical effect of living within a world that is so lost, confused, and broken that even endless strategizing will neither protect one's self from the effects of being within such an environment, nor provide any way to leave if experiences become too painful.

The amazing thing is that miraculous developments can occur within even the least supportive circumstances, such that the essence of faith is merely the determination to keep trying--no matter what. Yet on innumerable occasions and even within moments when faith is gone, good things still happen (which is perhaps the most significant reason I still believe in some mysterious conception of the Divine). In summary, I love life not because it is always perfect (it isn't), but rather because it is a realm of infinite possibility within which the best and most beautiful outcomes can still happen--but it helps a lot if each and every person makes the best possible contribution.

Taking from the world around us is part of being alive. If we wish to also be surrounded by life throughout the days that we live, we must find ways to give back so that the creative cycles of life do not end with ourselves. Taking should not inspire guilt, but rather response, specifically because life is so very symbiotically intertwined.

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

The Relational Middleman

In a way similar to when I was told that "sometimes the leader is simply the one who goes first," it is equally true that one may be the middleman simply because there is someone standing on either side, attempting to pass a resource from one to the other, through the space one occupies. Their reach may not be adequate to make the transfer, rendering one's cooperation (or lack thereof), a decisive element of the societal configuration. The fact that one or the other does not have what it needs--a resource that did not start with one's self--becomes a truth for which one thus shares responsibility.

It is not that one is responsible for the circumstances of either of the others, but rather that one is responsible for doing what good one can, within whatever situations or circumstances are encountered. One cannot be legitimately judged for the actions of others, but even within silence and stillness one's own actions (or lack thereof) may be the harshest judge of all. What must also be remembered is that sometimes "the other" is quite specifically the face in one's mirror.

While on one hand I wish to be gentle and loving toward those who are crippled or even paralyzed by fear, I cannot accept that this is where life should stop. I was once asked prior to a presentation whether I ever experienced fear and I was quite surprised by the question. It is not that I do not feel afraid, I responded, but rather that I do not consider this to be an adequate reason to stop doing whatever I can.

I recall reading somewhere years ago that courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the awareness of something more important than the fear. In a similar way, being willing to effectively stand in the place of a middleman, is not a matter of having inflated ideas of self-importance, but rather

of choosing to serve something greater than one's self. By connecting with that larger something--even if only imaginatively--one also connects with the greater strength of that which is envisioned and to some degree begins to channel those additional resources toward one's immediate circumstances.

To say therefore that one is "just" the middleman or "just" the person in-between diverse persons, times, places, resources, or communal entities, belittles how extremely important the particular transfer may be. Yet it is equally as false to self-identify as a source rather than as a servant. In balance, persistent truth can be found within whatever honest participation one is able to do.

Part of that doing is one's own process of becoming, yet one is often (perhaps even usually) standing far too close to see what the cumulative effects are. This is why I often ask others what they see when they look at me: I honestly often don't know, specifically because I'm standing so very close to the work that is unfolding. Yet I strive to persist, especially because of the innumerable individuals who have virtually pleaded with me to never quit.

In terms of the creative work of my own life, I am in the middle. I know not where my current circumstances are headed, what will be added within the months ahead, or what the overall work will eventually include. I am always very concerned, however, in light of the apparently limitless creativity with which I've been blessed, that even if I live to be two hundred, I'm going to run out of time.

Whether I did anything right or everything wrong, will, I suspect, be mostly measured by the effects of my contributions within the lives of others. What I give must therefore be more than merely a projection of my very limited and human self. If I am not a channel of things greater than myself, then I must conclude that the struggles of my life will have all been for nought.

The responses of viewers, readers, and collaborators posted upon my stairway wall, however, insist that too much good has been done, for that to ever be true--thank you.

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

*"It is in finding
the courage to reach
that one learns to become."*

-- Sister Who

The Bridge of Blessing

Fundamental to any bridge is a basic awareness of connecting two (or more) contrasting sides of a divide. Seasons and cycles of life being what they are, symbiotic exchange is a virtually unavoidable necessity and not truly a question of whether each will experience need, but only of when and how.

Love is the dynamic by which not only mutual survival but even greatest success is brought within reach. It is not just a matter of discerning who wins, but rather of building those relational structures that empower everyone to do so. Attempting this while wearing societal blindfolds of mere efficiency is self-sabotaging at the very least.

Categorization is, in fact, adversarial to love specifically because it obscures the truthful details of the particular individual or circumstance. If one cannot see how an example is unique, one will not understand why the method which worked previously, is now less effective. If a conversation is only with a category, no individual can be heard.

The central challenge to every community is thus an integration of individual voices toward the resolution of common needs, in ways that can be custom-fit to each unique member. Unless, however, one actually *knows* the diverse and contrasting members, the effort is sabotaged before it has even begun. Yet what is thereby recommended is not giving up, but rather going deeper.

In rediscovering relationships which have been lost and forging deeper bonds--which requires investment from all participants--the larger family of humanity can again be a multi-branched bridge tentatively connecting every generation with every other, every community with every other, and every individual with every other--and yet without exhausting the resources or strength of any of them. As removed by disappointment and despair as this may be from current life experience and practice, the seeds of love persistently wait within each heart and mind, for a chance to begin again to make the world as beautiful as it always could be.

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

On a Personal Note

Residential conflicts are ongoing and it remains a very strong possibility that I will need to find a new place before November for my dogs and I to live. It is often overwhelming to wrestle with this reality while striving to continue the multi-faceted creative work of this unconventional ministry, but each new episode and photo suggests still further possibilities and potential opportunities that have not yet been fully explored. It has, therefore, been an exceptionally busy and productive month.

The annual commitment of twenty-four new episodes of "Sister Who Presents..." is now complete and will soon be available at [YouTube.com/DenverNeVaar](https://www.YouTube.com/DenverNeVaar). Props are ready for the next photo shoot as well as the one after that, leaving only two more after that to finish "The Tarot of Sister Who."

Additional challenges of the substandard conditions I've experienced within subsidized housing have often felt overwhelming, but I remain as aggressively proactive as anyone could be within such circumstances. Car repairs are ongoing, but a friend has agreed to cover these expenses in exchange for landscape and handyman labor.

I struggle against my proposed epitaph: "I would have created so much more, if I hadn't been so preoccupied with the struggle to survive." Nonetheless, the work goes on.

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

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