

sister who's perspective

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Overview

I often suggest that an enemy of autism is duplicity which is essentially dishonesty, but I must remember that there is also a kind of duplicity that is essentially the contrasting ends of various spectrums of possibility. No two moments of life are exactly alike in every detail, but it may be within those details that such ends can be reversed or integrated.

Blessings, love, and peace -- S.W.

Duplicity in Perception

For each and every thing that I see, there is a corresponding thing that I don't. An essential thing to remember, is that they are both equally real. In contrast, I too often have more faith in one than the other--thereby lapsing into either over-confidence or paralyzing timidity.

Indeed, the eyes' perceptions are often so compelling that significant self-discipline and wisdom are required to remember all that the eyes do not immediately see. It is in recalling what is not seen, however, that I have much greater and stronger foundational reasons for the choices subsequently made, as I respond to whatever surprises life brings my way. Acting in ways that are contrary to one's physical perceptions is nonetheless never an easy thing to do.

In reflecting upon personal choices of the last couple of years, I recall many occasions when I felt as if I "had no choice." The reality of each instance is of course that I did have a choice, but that the alternative was more objectionable and intolerable than I felt (at least at the time) I could consciously accept.

I could have, for example, chosen not to leave Colorado and instead devised creative ways of living there as a homeless person with three dogs. If the saying is true that "necessity is the mother of invention," then I

suspect there would have been virtually no problematic situation to which a solution could not have been improvised. The only reason I now have the strength to consider such a possibility, however, is because of the amount of suffering that has come with my choice to instead relocate out of state.

The traditional marriage vows (at least in this country) include the words, "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, till death do us part." I doubt that most of us have any especially complete comprehension of the spectrum of possible life experiences to which those words could refer, but my point here is that the words do not apply only to marriage ceremonies--but also to each person's relationship with his or her self and the integrity one's particular and unique self requires in order to maintain basic mental and emotional health. While a great many people have attempted to coexist with dangerous compromises in these areas, I know of none who have truly succeeded.

Denying that such duplicity exists, only confirms the contrast all the more. Lest I give the impression of an unavoidably adversarial challenge, however, one must also remember that within the recognition of this duality, are innumerable empowering opportunities and perhaps even invitations--if sufficient awareness is present. The vital conclusion is thus that the universe (and life) is even more multi-dimensional than one may have previously imagined.

Specifically because duplicity is real, it remains ever and always possible by some means or another to switch between one and the other, thereby steering one's life path in a contrasting direction. Whether the methods and means of positive transformation can be found before specific opportunities have passed, is perhaps the hidden question within each and every day of one's life.

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

Duplicity in Projection

Specifically because life is always more multi-dimensional than my senses are generally willing to inform me, it is more or less impossible to imagine a future, an outcome, or a result in a completely holistic manner. There are always implications one has inadvertently overlooked. A perhaps poor but effective example of this is the common practice of doctors' pharmaceutical prescriptions, in which one medication may be prescribed to address a particular disease or condition, accompanied by others to address the side-effects of the first.

At one time, the general feeling was that doctors were analogous to demigods, holding the power of life and death within their hands, because of their knowledge of health-related conditions. What was not generally respected, however, was just how limited their actual knowledge and abilities were. This gave rise to the common witticism that "the doctor knows best," which provided opportunity for innumerable tragedies that might have been prevented by a more inclusive dialogue about potential risks and available resources.

Bringing wisdom to projection, most concisely stated, resides within the motto commonly used by boy scout and girl scout youth organizations of "be prepared" for both positive and negative outcomes. A personal paraphrase of this that I have often used in deciding what to bring along on a trip, is "Better to have it than wish you did." Some may thus complain that I often bring too much with me, but I could respond with as many narrations of problems that were prevented specifically because certain tools were immediately available.

One such example that I still recall is my participation in the 1998 Gay Games in Amsterdam, in the sport of bodybuilding. No one had bothered to explain to participants, all of whom had special training diets to maintain, that much of the food available in Amsterdam is deep-fried and that truly healthy restaurant cuisine would be difficult to find. There was also little notice that the

competition was scheduled a day later than usual within the week of Games activities.

The organizational meeting for the sport thus turned into a bit of a fiasco, as the facilitators attempted to address discontent related to nutritional and scheduling related challenges. The few participants who were completely unperturbed by the challenges, were those who had brought along all of the pre-competition food they needed. My personal solutions were to locate a very accommodating Chinese restaurant on a narrow side street and a nearby Jewish deli.

One's imagination of an upcoming event or the outcome of a particular project may be inspirational, because the mind presents an illustration of the qualities one projects--in spite of often having insufficient information to anticipate all accompanying challenges. I would often insist during my early years of public access television production, that one cannot overstate the value of pre-production planning. No matter how many details one anticipates, there will always be others one has inadvertently overlooked.

The point of planning all that one can, is to have sufficient energy available for any and all surprises that arise. Central to this method of executing an activity, is a stated or unstated awareness of one's limitations; a humble recognition that one is not such a superior human being that no additional challenge will be encountered. Within the world of the theater, it is usually understood that every accomplishment requires effective collaboration: "there are no small parts, only small players."

Perhaps the most essential insight related to duplicity could be phrased as "two sides are required to make a coin." What is central to embracing duplicity in projection, is a pursuit of wholeness and completion. It is not a matter of doing everything myself in isolation, but rather of the world that the individuals of humanity collectively create.

We may even wish to avoid what is on the other side of the coin, but we sabotage our own efforts if we insist that it isn't there.

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

Duplicity in Aspiration

Within "Star Trek: Nemesis," Captain Picard, with the help of Commander Data, realizes that his understanding of humanity as a worthy species is tied to his valuing of aspiration; that each needs to aspire to be always growing and improving in whatever ways and dimensions are possible.

A primary complication of aspirations, however, is discontent with an honest appraisal of one's current circumstances and characteristics. Having aspirations may thus be adversarial to one's peace of mind, but I for one would have to agree with Captain Picard that the rewards of such struggle are easily worth whatever effort is required. That being said, it is at least awkward that the path to making things better must sometimes begin by making things worse and moving through whatever mess is thereby created.

Remodeling an old house is probably as effective an example of this as any other. I have met people who very much want their circumstances to improve, but without any messiness along the way. Replacing old crumbling plaster and lathe with new gypsum wallboard, however, is about as neat and tidy as eating spaghetti with inadequate utensils.

Until one is willing to tolerate a temporary mess, nothing better will manifest. The preparations I generally thus include are purchasing an adequate supply of vacuum cleaner bags, surrounding the work area with a plastic curtain to discourage the spread of dust, and having a sufficient supply of garbage bags and twine. Then I just have to quit procrastinating, take a deep breath, and dive into the work.

"We can forget that we are unique and ever-changing combinations of body, mind, and spirit, but the world is impoverished whenever we do."

-- Sister Who

As a witticism of unknown authorship directs, "sometimes there's no way to get past it, except to go through it." A primary challenge of aspiration are all of the reasons one is tempted to procrastinate or avoid the struggle altogether. Parallel to the problems of the struggle, however, are the very real possibilities of accomplishment. It is not only "we might lose," but also "we might win."

The choice inseparable from every aspiration is whether we will have more faith in the positive possibilities we envision than in the circumstances, limitations, and perhaps even oppression with which we are becoming more and more restless each day.

All that being said, one of the ongoing difficulties always pressing in on my awareness is that everything is a mixed quantity: people who encompass both good and bad qualities, solutions that are really only solutions for certain people, and diverse resources that each have a unique set of pros and cons associated with their use. As much as I might prefer a genuinely and uniformly good or perhaps even ideal answer to every question, such pure examples don't seem to exist. From one perspective, I could view this as the essential raw material by which our souls grow and develop, but from a distinctly human perspective during more challenging moments, in all honesty, all I can say is that "sometimes life really sucks."

There have been a great many struggles in my life that could only be painted with a more compassionate brush, years after the particular events have happened. While it may be true that "hindsight is 20/20," the part upon which I need to focus in order to keep going, is the happy ending I'm still striving to write. The most essential ingredient is thus that I never give up; that no matter what, I keep going in whatever ways I can.

In some ways, humanity may be the very embodiment of duplicity, expressing this quality in more ways than anyone could easily name. The point nonetheless remains that this too may be essential to our growth.

So let's get growing, eh?

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

Duplicity in Unity

While the title may seem oxymoronic, I find unity to be an unstable concept requiring careful maintenance which can't be ordered, imposed, or enforced, but only cultivated with love and wisdom. "Duplicity" may also not be an adequate description for something so multi-faceted and diverse in manifestation and expression. My own perception is a symbiotically interwoven configuration of a virtually infinite number of individuals and relationships--singular only in the sense of its interconnectedness and inclusivity.

The danger is in becoming comfortable with the unity to the point that the constitutive details blur out of view and are neglected rather than maintained. An analogy of that would be driving an automobile for as long and as far as it required no attention--no oil changes, no inspections, no rotation of tires, no renewal of operating fluids, and so on. In a similar way, no wisdom is found within neglecting care of one's teeth until after a painful cavity has formed.

It is specifically because of the inherent duplicity within unity, that it has no true argument with individuality; that the two exist in symbiotic, interdependent relationship. All too often, an adversarial rather than integrative relationship is presumed. As an anecdote I read many years ago instructed, "the creation of the orchestra does not require the annihilation of violins."

In raising one's awareness of unity to the level of including individuality, unity itself becomes stronger--just as when I carefully examine each tire, fluid, and component of my car, in order to ensure reliable operation.

If unity is the exclusive focus of one's attention, awareness of developing problems may be non-existent until the entire symbiotic system implodes. If, conversely, individuality is the exclusive focus, genuinely greater accomplishments will remain undone, for no greater reason than that some tasks require combined efforts in order to be successful.

Win or lose, we must do it together.

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

On a Personal Note

There are far too many days of late during which my current life experience makes no sense to me, so I try to reassure myself that even if everything were to end right now, I have already succeeded in making a positive difference within the lives of people all over the world. Specifically because I also persist in my belief in infinite possibilities, I know it is equally possible that the best is yet to come. Only time will tell.

On a positive note, astonishing progress has been made on the construction of a video production studio within the first floor of my house. The challenge that unfortunately remains, however, is finding a camera operator who is willing and able to assist with six days of recording new episodes and several more days of recording footage for a new introduction to the show--as well as the photos for the 2017 calendar.

On a more worrisome note, one of my dogs (not my service dog) has developed a problem with the knee joint of his left hind leg. I have been unable to find a good local veterinarian, so I phoned his previous doctor in Colorado. She suggested acupuncture instead of surgery, which would cost more than I could afford anyway. Either way, a solution must be found as soon as possible--especially since we live on the second and third floors of the house.

Nonetheless, may one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

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