

Sister Who's Perspective

Sister Who's Perspective, Issue #91 January 2007, copyright

Life is a collaborative effort, encompassing more than we know. In a time of abundant "information overload," news, communication, and travel across great distances, we often talk at each other without listening, communicating, or understanding. Humanity needs its icons, but also its iconoclasts to grow beyond the good and bad qualities that now limit and describe us. The essences of both God and us remain, in the midst of questions, to be discovered, experienced, and expressed. Please share in this ongoing dialogue, remembering to indicate whether and how you wish to be identified. Blessings, love, and peace to you. ---Sister Who

Overview

We are neither the masters nor the slaves of Time, but rather are empowered to contribute as much as we must accept within the ongoing dance of our lives. Without a certain attention to our steps as well as to the movements of our dance partner, however, we will experience a greater amount of stumbling, stepping on each others' toes, and inability to move in harmony with the rhythm of whatever music surrounds us.

It is essential, therefore, to distinguish between making a living and making a life. Just as a U-Haul trailer has never been hitched to a hearse on its way to the cemetery, nothing is left but a memory of an experience, when the dance music has concluded. In creating memories with others on the dance floor, however, our lives may echo into eternity, within the greater expanse of human experience on earth. What ultimately matters most, is the life we create with each other.

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

One Year

A brand new year is before us, like a blank page upon which all of its events, emotions, struggles, and triumphs will be written--most often in moments of which we are not entirely conscious. Distractions, agendas, and desires--many of which are not inherently bad--may keep us running from one thing to the next until only a moment's pause to reflect will allow us to actually become aware of what has just happened.

To obsess about the passage of time, however, is equally unhelpful, encouraging a sort of paralysis if we become too concerned with not making any mistakes. Life has far too many variables to ever be that perfect.

In responding to the opportunity of a new year; of all of the accomplishments, mistakes, triumphs, and failures it will ultimately include; I am in somewhat of a dilemma. If I go forward with expectations, with an agenda of how things should be, or with rigid demands of the world around me, I

set my self up for more struggle and suffering than anyone should ever have to face.

Having expectations dictates that I will be disappointed, if things do not turn out as I wish. Although disappointment is rarely if ever fatal, it does cost a precious moment and a significant chunk of energy. My enthusiasm suddenly disappears with the wind and my feet feel unusually heavy. For a moment, I don't even know what it is that I should do next. Because I am distracted by my own emotional and psychological state, important opportunities may slip past me unseen and unheard.

Agendas arrogantly value certain portions of creation and the human population while devaluing others--sometimes the exact others whom God has provided to resolve one's life's challenges in ways one did not expect.

The maintenance of rigid demands must first be distinguished from being clear about one's aptitudes and abilities. While the latter guides us toward effective interaction and away from that which is ineffective, rigid demands build a box or a cage which decrees that all life which occurs outside of the enclosure is to be rejected and in various ways regarded as non-existent or at least not important. In that life extends to the farthest reaches of the universe and exists as (in the words of the Star Trek Vulcan concept) "infinite diversity in infinite combination," it is unbelievable that anyone would ever choose this approach, but in fact it happens quite frequently.

In contrast to all of the above, stand curiosity, openness, involvement, dialogue, and interconnectedness--all of which present the expanse of a new year as something loaded with possibilities and opportunities for everything to be better than it has ever been--if we are willing to welcome each moment with awareness and commitment to the best that can be within ourselves and within everyone and everything around us.

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

Twelve Months

An unbelievable amount of fuss (at least to me) has occurred throughout human history regarding the creation, imposition, and observance of a calendar of some sort, by which to coordinate human interaction. Once again, too much attention seems to have usually shifted to the process, allowing the goal to be forgotten (hopefully only temporarily).

The purpose of a calendar is to allow all of us to work together in relative harmony in the creation, functioning, and maintenance of our civilizations. What device we use to do that is far less important than that we do in fact find a way to do this that is mostly effective.

Part of the effectiveness of a calendar and one of its ongoing primary concerns, is the achievement of some degree of harmony with the natural cycles of seasonal weather patterns. In order to identify the details of challenges specifically, one needs to know which month it is.

For example, I very rarely go hiking in the mountains during the month of April because that is when ticks are most abundant, creating the possibility of everything from minor irritations to significant illness.

If I wish to hike to the summit of a particular mountain reaching above fourteen thousand feet, I wait until at least mid-June because the colder temperatures at such elevations keep the trails mostly covered with snow and ice until then.

Growing up in Wisconsin, attention to the calendar dictated when to plant gardens and when to harvest produce so that it would not be rendered more or less worthless by early frosts.

As thankful as I am for the full life with which I have been blessed, I am often struck by a feeling of what happened last month as having happened a long time ago. So much happens within a single month's time that it is difficult even for me to remember it all. In retrospect, a month's passage seems to have gone by so quickly.

Was it only last March that I performed "A Circuitous Journey" for the weekly chapel service at Iliff School of Theology? Was it only last May that I received an award for the excellence that performance demonstrated? I still remember the expression on the Academic Dean's face as he handed me the envelope and shook my hand. Was it only a month ago that I first met Michael and already we are both convinced that we will be together (in whatever ways we are able) for many

years to come? Was it only two years ago that I began a masters program at Iliff School of Theology and now it is 99% completed? The months seem to have all passed so quickly.

Now twelve months again line up ahead of me and I can only guess what transitions, challenges, and changes they will include. I hope that I have learned enough in months which have passed, to make the best of those ahead.

What is a month anyway? Just a measure of time--but oh, how powerfully those measures affect us by the associations we hold in regard to each of them!

Yet a month is also a more manageable chunk of time within which to try something new. If one can repeat an activity every day for a single month, the activity has a very real potential for becoming a life pattern.

I found this to be especially true in preparing for each of the four bodybuilding/physique competitions in which I participated. When I was finally awarded a silver medal for my efforts and various people described my accomplishment as exceptional, I didn't really know to what they were referring. By that time, it all seemed quite ordinary to me. "All you have to do," I explained, "is exercise wisely two hours per day, six days per week, for a year and a half"--though of course, my physical accomplishment was somewhat cumulative, each period of training building upon those which had come before it.

Life is also cumulative and months are cumulative, each one building upon those which have preceded it. Even when loss seems greatest, when leaves fall from trees in Autumn, it is not so much a loss as a transition to a preparatory state--gathering strength for the launch of a season of new growth yet to come.

So value each month as a time for laying down patterns of life, one day at a time.

Value the differences between months, understanding that each needs its own unique patterns of life as well.

Most especially, value the continuity of the months, which echo the interconnection of all life and being--physical, spiritual, psychological, emotional, and social--as unlimited diversity integrated and overlapping in limitless ways, but always with even more untapped potential for love, for wisdom, and for truly being alive in more ways than we ever imagined to be possible.

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

Fifty-Two Weeks

A single week can sometimes seem like a lifetime--a blur of events of such intensity and close proximity that it is difficult to comprehend that it all happened in only seven days' time.

Rather than focusing upon behavioral patterns, I am more often concerned with simply getting through it. For some, Wednesday is referred to as "hump day," by which they refer to crossing the hump, summit, or middle-point of the week, suggesting that everything after that point has a feeling of going downhill with less effort and increasing speed--all of which, of course, makes Monday morning into the unwelcome beginning of yet another climb.

In maintaining a focus upon "simply getting through it," however, it is all too easy for me to be tolerant of unhealthy circumstances rather than to address them in whatever ways I could. In some cases, I have tried to address such circumstances and all efforts have been ineffective. In such cases, I must wait until a more effective means or opportunity can be found.

One such challenge within my own life is the general rejection I experienced years ago from my biological family. The last thing I recall saying to them was that they should let me know if or when they were ready to integrate an openly gay person into their lives, because I was not prepared (nor do I ever expect to be) to be someone I am not, in order to gain superficial acceptance. I am content to be punished for what I am; I am not content to be rewarded for what I am not.

Like the mother and widow played by Marlowe Thomas toward the end of the movie, "Consenting Adult," however, I wonder whether time will run out for my parents and siblings before they ever reach that point of integration and

"There is not enough hatred in all of human history to prevent a single moment of love from happening, if even one person truly wants that moment to happen."

--Sister Who

acceptance of gay or lesbian people.

This is but one example of healing conversations which could happen, but more often do not, simply because we are preoccupied with "simply getting through it." Human life is finite and a week is finite. In each case, I believe there is life which follows, but the opportunities which preceded can only sometimes be revisited.

Perhaps an excellent way for a church or an individual to begin a Sunday morning meditation or worship activity, is to first acknowledge that God has entrusted each of us with yet another week of life. We can involve ourselves in various ways and encourage many different things to happen, while remaining faithful to other basic responsibilities as well. It is unlikely that we will do so, however, if we first fail to see the gift of a new week, of a new month, or of a new year as a divinely bestowed opportunity for life to grow and flourish in ways it has not previously grown or flourished.

A week is a more manageably sized chunk of time, something which is easier to plan and navigate than attempting to comprehend an entire month all at once. A week is usually something we can approach with positive intention, with the dedication of specific personal resources, and with loving vision of what it could be.

Whether you wish to consider each new week a gift from a divine being, from the universe, or from the scientific complexity and harmony of a vast universe, I urge you to make it a week worth remembering and also a week in which significant growth occurs. In doing so, you will arrive at the beginning of the next week knowing that you are more than you were only seven days earlier--wiser, stronger, more accepting of diversity, more able to love, more empowered to deal with whatever life experiences are yet to come.

If we do not find value within each week, it is unlikely that we will find value within the combined result of all of these weeks: a life which will ultimately have no more weeks to live; a life for which time has run out.

If we do find value within each week--partially because of each week's inherent opportunities and partially because of whatever value we put there--I believe we and everyone around us will find value within the combined result of all of these weeks: a life which has made the world a better place for millions of lives yet to come, even as it continues in a spiritual place.

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

Three Hundred Sixty-five Days

Counting days as they go by can sometimes feel like counting telephone poles as one speeds along an interstate highway: they pass in such rapid succession and quickly achieve such great numbers that it is difficult to fully appreciate each one before it is gone. To do that, I would need to somehow reduce my speed, to somehow slow things down a bit. Similarly, I recall a movie about a grandfather teaching his grandson about flying in an open-cockpit biplane, who while pointing out the beautiful expansive view of the world below commented, "jet planes fly too high."

Looking at days from the perspective of a year, it is sometimes difficult to remember which day was which. Even only a month later, I sometimes find myself wondering, "Was that on a Tuesday or a Thursday?" Does it matter which day it was? Perhaps not, but to suggest that such remembrance never matters trivializes to some degree the particular day I am trying to recall. The days of one's life may be many things, but they are never trivial.

From another perspective, a day is like a finite maze waiting to be navigated. We stumble through junctions, dead-ends, and occasionally retracing our steps in order to try a different approach--frequently not even fully knowing what the goal of all of this maze-travel is.

Why do we keep moving? Because we believe there is something desirable somewhere, which is not available right where we are currently standing. We aspire to become something or to find something or to acquire something that is somehow beyond what is currently available to us.

Along the way, however, we frequently pass those who through discouragement or some other sort of wounding, have lost that creative desire and no longer aspire to anything more than they already have.

Equally, we may pass those who have become so desperate for what they do not have that they resort to violent measures--which ironically separates them from their goals all the more.

Those who find their goals and receive them with true joy, however, do so because they have proceeded with love and wisdom each step of the way. Often, they have also brought others with them. May this be true of each of us today.

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

On a Personal Note

The past month has included a lot of work on the website (www.sisterwho.com), which will hopefully also soon include a weekly blog. A blog is an ongoing journal contained within a website which frequently also allows visitors to the website to add their comments as well. In this way, it offers the opportunity for visitors to engage in ongoing dialogue with the website's author.

The past month has included a great amount of searching for a "day-job" to cover expenses such as the mortgage on my "fixer-upper" house and basic utility bills. In spite of dozens of submissions of my resume, no positive response has yet been received and the next mortgage payment is only a month away. The one encouraging possibility is an interview next Tuesday for a company which prefers to begin with a face-to-face interview before receiving a resume. By the time the next newsletter is sent out, however, the challenge of financial survival will either have been satisfied or I will be once again facing the loss of a home. Either way, I know that God remains completely capable of bringing good out of whatever transpires. If the next year does include losing my house, while it would be a little nerve-wracking for me to go through this, it would not be indicative of disaster.

On a more positive note, a new cable-access TV station has been created entitled Denver Open Media, which is interested in recablecasting seventy six episodes of my TV show "Sister Who Presents..." to cable-television viewers in Denver, Colorado. Hopefully this will begin to be realized within the next few weeks.

Regardless of any of the above, however, it is imperative to me that the ministry of Sister Who continue in whatever ways it can, for as long as it can. The responses I continue to receive and the improbable synchronicities which continue to occur make it absolutely clear to me that this ministry is far from over.

May God's blessings, love, and peace be with you now and always, *Sister Who*

Subscription Information:

"Sister Who's Perspective" is a free monthly newsletter. If you have appreciated this newsletter, please consider making a donation to encourage production and distribution to continue. (Please make checks payable to Denver NeVaar and send to the postal address below).

Sister Who, PO Box 593, Westminster, CO 80036

Email: dn@sisterwho.com

Internet website: <http://www.sisterwho.com>