

Sister Who's Perspective

Sister Who's Perspective, Issue #160, October 2012, 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 Godde 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

I try to view diverse elements in life as diverse colors dabbed across the surface of an artist's palette. As important as it is to have an adequate range of colors and to keep them distinct within their point of source on the palette, it is expected that they will be mixed in various ways when applied to the stretched but unframed canvas, in order to create hundreds (if not thousands) of new and different tints and shades. Sometimes, to take advantage of the opportunity, I select the two most opposite colors I can find and then explore their interaction, in order to discover what else may be possible, which I'd never previously considered.

I hope that the painting of ideas which this month's newsletter includes, proves inspirational to your own explorations of the ways that fantasy and reality can constructively shape each other.

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

Distinguishing Both Fantasy and Reality

As much as it is generally agreed that fantasy and reality are two distinctly different things, the precise definition of reality seems to be more of a spectrum of possibilities and contributing influences than a specific combination of circumstances, components, and/or events. An interesting dynamic I have noticed within all the descriptions I've ever heard, however, is that reality is always specifically limited, while fantasy is generally regarded as being without limits. Additionally, reality generally requires hard work while fantasy is somehow always much easier to engage. Our interactions related to fantasy and reality are therefore one more area of life within which the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal, and the particular and the universal can have a mutually beneficial relationship in spite of their radical contrasts.

From a certain perspective, this is analogous to voting within elections. Citizens must ultimately select from those that are actually available, but generally envision much more ideal laws and

candidates. Afterward, they must also accept that the candidates which were chosen are still frequently more human than the ideal one might prefer. Negatively this means allowing for the occurrence of mistakes and creating sufficient accountability to quickly detect and correct such errors whenever and however they occur. Positively, however, it is simultaneously our humanness which provides us with imagination, adaptability, and ever-evolving relationships.

It would be very difficult to be fully human without the ability to conceive of ideal things which may not yet have ever actually existed. It is equally important, however, to pay attention to what's right in front of us, perhaps even (metaphorically or literally) right under our noses. The constellation of relationships within which we each exist, very much includes both the earth upon which we stand and the air (or water) through which we move, speak, and perhaps even sing. One is limited and concrete while the other is expansive and fluid. Being fully human means being able to deal with both.

It is specifically fantasy which fuels the pursuit of our dreams, imagining things as we would like them to be. This vision can then be passed to the mind with an invitation to find a way to make it actually happen, no matter how long it takes to do so. In many cases, the pursuit of such manifestation may include an invitation to rediscover community as well.

The old saying, "it takes a village to raise a child," is just as true when applied metaphorically. That is, it takes a village to nurture the beginnings of any new form or expression of life. It takes a village to nurture and bring out each individual's greatest potential, greatest faith in him or herself, or greatest manifestation of any creative work.

Journeying through the darkness of our sometimes child-like naivete and ignorance, fantasies, like stars overhead, can guide each step upon the reality of solid earth beneath our feet, toward ever greater wisdom and love.

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

Integrating Both Fantasy and Reality

I have occasionally met individuals who seem to have gotten stuck in one mode of being or behavior. A common example of this is the one who adopts certain behavioral patterns while at work, but has great difficulty leaving those patterns at the office (or wherever) at the end of the work day, instead of applying them to situations of home or personal life within which the patterns are far less effective. Conversely, a person's mind may be more occupied with situations and possibilities at home in ways that make him or her less effective at work. The challenge in both cases is to become more fully present and responsive to wherever one is, finding ways to act and interact that are most effective within the particular moment's place and time.

Some have responded to this challenge by "demonizing" one or the other. That is, the preferred way of being is described in grand and glowing terms while the alternative is blamed for every misfortune that occurs, whether or not it is actually even related to whatever did in fact occur.

Similarly, one may exaggerate the effectiveness of a particular way of being, so much so that it begins to fill the role of a panacea (something which is regarded as capable of solving every real or conceivable problem or challenge of life). Experience has taught me, however, that panaceas are creations of human imagination which do not have a counterpart within the more concrete world of reality. It is specifically the discovery (which occurs over and over within various situations and circumstances throughout life) that panaceas are not true, which forms an invitation to rediscover life's diversity of forms and methods. The blessing is that more than one way of resolving challenges is available; there is no true monopoly which subjects all of life to any particular person or entity's control. There are always alternatives available, if we can find them.

Similarly, the more colors available to the creation of a drawing or a painting, the more multi-dimensional, emotional, visionary, and life-empowering the work can become. The more emotions and thoughts available within the living of daily life, the more diversely, deeply, and richly the experiences of each day can be experienced—perhaps even leading to the transformation of the human spirit itself.

What is at the center of all such transformations is the challenge of integrating reality and fantasy, physical and spiritual, voice

and thought—and understanding that no moment is complete without including both.

An obsession with reality at the expense of fantasy is a common tendency within positive-thinking and spiritually oriented presentations that recommend a formulaic approach to life, acting as if the accomplishment of an allegedly successful life were a matter of following a recipe instead of developing a relationship. Whether or not we are willing to recognize it, we each live within a constellation of relationships that are shaped and influenced by the internal relationships we have with our fantasies and perceptions of reality. All things considered, we have the option of either regarding fantasy and reality as guardian angels able to guide us through the spectrum of our lives' experiences, or, conversely, of regarding them as competitive and polarized—regarding one as right and the other as wrong, one as true and the other as false, or one as good and the other as bad

I suggest that all things can be either, depending upon how we interact with them. Specifically because positive potential can be found even within the worst things and negative potential can be found even within the best things, the three-part invitation that is eternally available is that of making choices, of learning, and of growing within every experience that ever happens.

It is an ongoing quirk of live theater that one can never be absolutely certain of what will happen within a particular performance. Ultimately, it is the unexpected moments which are not specified by the script but which most often happen serendipitously, which bring the greatest power and life to a particular performance. A central belief ever since the very first performance of any kind is that "the show must go on." The realization in this is that life is unpredictable and that our best resources arise from within ourselves and from within each other; we ourselves are what empower the show to go on.

Just as humanity encompasses a virtually infinite spectrum of diversity within personality and individuality, the integration of fantasy and reality encompasses a similar infinite spectrum of potential actors and performers who can empower the show to go on in a virtually infinite variety of ways. What is nevertheless essential, is for everyone who is able, to actively participate.

We may contribute reality; we may contribute fantasy; what is most important is that we contribute our best to the world around us.

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

Empowering Both Fantasy and Reality

A common complaint within the current era is that people have forgotten how to imagine, how to believe, or perhaps even how to have faith (in themselves or in anything else). There is a sense in which the brain (and by association the mind) is a muscle and like any other muscle within the body, if it is not intelligently exercised, it atrophies or remains in a limited and weakened state. The wonderful thing about atrophied muscles, however, is that they generally respond to intelligent therapy.

Exercising the muscle of one's imagination and thereby empowering one's ability to constructively fantasize is actually a complex juxtaposition of a number of things. Just to specifically name one, what one imagines as an ideal scenario or form, directly reflects qualities embodying one's values and perceptions. Imagining the perfect vehicle to own and drive, for example, may include fuel-efficiency, nostalgia, style, speed, size, and possible application (distinguishing between a car, a truck, or a motorcycle, for instance). What your fantasy or ideal specifically includes, may be rich material for self-reflection, since each quality reveals an aspect of your personal values which you might not previously have recognized within yourself.

Recognizing qualities, aptitudes, and predispositions within one's self, however, is only the beginning. Having recognized some specific qualities, the next step would be to find ways to further develop them. Development relies as much upon one's own initiative as upon opportunities and resources provided by one's community, through one means or another.

Additionally, it may sometimes be possible to add a totally new element to one's life, which was not present within one's current or past configuration of aptitudes and predispositions. If I decided, for example, that, just for the fun of it, I

*"We must not neglect
that which we truly have
by wishing for something else;
for that which feels unwanted
may for that reason go away,
leaving us with even less."*

--Sister Who

wanted to learn Mandarin Chinese, the first most essential ingredient would be a competent tutor. In order to make the most of every opportunity and resource within the resulting learning environment, I would need to be open and attentive for unexpected discoveries—perhaps cross-cultural understandings or alternative perspectives of problem-solving or social evolution. My high school German language teacher once wisely advised that one never really understands a language until one understands the people among whom the language developed.

Beyond the discussion of fantasy and reality, virtually every form of empowerment includes some form of learning. At a very simplistic level, it was once pointed out to me that Godde, Mother Nature, Spirit, or the Universe (whichever term one prefers) made a very profound comment about the living of life by providing each person with twice as much ability to see and hear as to speak. The world would probably be a very different place, if everyone made a point of viewing and listening at least twice as much as speaking.

There is a sense in which each of us is every age we have ever been, even when much has apparently been forgotten. Similarly, every person whom we meet has also been a spectrum of different ages and may presently be at an age either long into our past or far ahead of us into the future. An important point to remember throughout such awareness is that the imagination and vision you possessed as a child were far less developed than that which you possessed during your late teenage years. I encourage you to extend to others the support you either received or wish you'd received when you were at whatever point of development in the past, or the support you hope you will receive at whatever point within the future.

It is probably also recommendable to be patient and compassionate toward yourself within the present, supporting your learning and your perhaps faltering integration of fantasy and reality with all the love and wisdom you can find. In doing so, you may be the best gift to yourself and to those around you that anyone could even suggest.

The present is after all the gift for which it is most important to be fully present, noting the fantasies and realities that are as interwoven as Autumn breezes and the fading fragrances of flowers, empowering them to linger and bless our lives by anchoring them within our memories and within our communities in whatever ways we can.

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

Embracing Both Fantasy and Reality

Life would certainly be less complicated if human beings were less multi-dimensional than they are, but there are wondrous yet also mysterious treasures hidden within each and every dimension, eagerly waiting to be discovered. An essential part of truly embracing anything or anyone, however, is coming to know as much of the truth of that thing or person as possible. Without openness and honesty, the true potential of the greatest blessings remains unknown.

An inescapable challenge of truly embracing anything, is that one's "arms" must be extended outward rather than crossed protectively over one's heart. More concisely, we must be willing to be vulnerable. Specifically because becoming vulnerable allows for as many negative possibilities as positive ones, this action is not something that should ever be done casually or carelessly. Approached wisely and reverently, however, an expression of vulnerability may become a doorway to empowering transformation.

For some, that is the heart of the challenge: becoming someone new and simultaneously being unable to ever go back again to what one previously was. Stagnating at the level of what one was, however, is synonymous with ceasing to truly live at all. I have found life to be far too precious to ever accept that course of action.

Embracing reality does not mean resigning one's self to it. Rather, by extending one's love and support around whatever reality one encounters, one contributes something positive to that reality and thereby transforms it. More concisely, by investments of love and wisdom, reality is changed for the better.

Similar, embracing fantasy does not mean getting lost within it, but rather using it as a sort of laboratory to develop tools and possibilities with which it would be unwise to experiment within any other context. The bridge between fantasy and reality, after all, is each one of us. What we learn, test, question, and prove within the laboratory, can be implemented outside when the time is right.

Every competent student and scientist knows, however, that a primary adversary of all learning is bias—those preconceived arrogant notions of acceptable results that make us blind to any other outcome. In remembering that we are reaching into that which is greater than ourselves, we have the opportunity to become greater also.

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

On a Personal Note

The fourth pre-dissertation doctoral paper, "The Essential Contribution of Spiritual Vocation," has been completed and is currently making its way through the a complex submission process.

A huge amount of used building materials has been transported from a residence near Idaho Springs to my home in the northwest Denver-metro area. Hopefully this project will be completed within the next week or two so that my hands can begin to heal. The radical increase hard work I've been doing with my hands in order to complete this project, has taken a nasty toll upon related nerves and muscles, resulting in a significant amount of pain and numbness in my fingers. Because financial resources are inadequate to immediately employ a massage therapist or reflexologist to address this condition, I have made attempts to find such a practitioner who is willing to engage in an exchange of services of some kind, but have thus far not been able to find anyone able to help me.

An attempt was made with generous cooperation from the South Broadway Christian Church, to record video and audio of performance of the award-winning modern morality play entitled, "A Circuitous Journey," but camera problems prevented all necessary video and audio material from being recorded, so this project is currently on hold, while a decision is made of how to proceed (whether to start over from the beginning in a new place or whether to return to the church, erect the entire set again, and record the missing sequences. There are advantages and disadvantages for each possibility.

The appearance of the portable chapel at the Pagan Pride Day celebration in Civic Park in central Denver, Colorado, is scheduled to occur tomorrow and I still need to finish making the shade covering to go onto the roof of the structure.

Ah, sigh, never enough hours in the day nor enough of me to go around!

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 empower the work to continue. (Make checks payable to Denver NeVaar).

Sister Who a/k/a Rev. Denver NeVaar, MTS
3170 West Longfellow Place, Denver, CO 80221

Email: dn@SisterWho.com

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