

Sister Who's Perspective

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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

Distinctions between truth and lies go far beyond words and conversations and have been a major concern of ministers, philosophers, teachers, and parents for literally thousands of years. Certainly there is no reason to think that the final answers are contained within this month's newsletter, but perhaps what I have offered here is a worthy contribution. I hope, in any case, that my thoughts offered within this month's essays will inspire your own thoughts and conclusions within this and other related areas. I hope also that such thoughts and conclusions will have an ultimately empowering effect within each of your lives, perhaps putting a smile onto your face, a good energy into your steps, and a new and even greater clarity into your perception of and participation in, the various relationships which populate your life.

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

White Lies

"Things always work out somehow," I've often been told, but I continue to encounter circumstances and events within which the way things work out happens to include experiences of loss and pain. While in some instances, the loss is later perceived as a being a blessing in disguise, it is no less difficult to endure while it is initially occurring. Deciding what one should say or do within such circumstances can be even more perplexing, in direct proportion to how extensively one is able to see the implications and long-term effects of the decision about to be made.

Rather than be paralyzed by some sort of intellectual/moral straitjacket of questions, however, the deadlock can be broken by a return to the pursuit of unconditional love and wisdom. There may still be discomfort and even pain to endure, but there is much less chance of a mental or emotional wrestling match with regret--and there is a much greater likelihood of significant personal and/or spiritual growth. When we are content to wrestle

with difficulty rather than to run away from it, in ways that are almost imperceptible at the time, we are like a bodybuilder lifting weights and thereby developing muscles with which to address future challenges with more strength and ability. Curiously, when a particular future challenge is not so difficult as it would have otherwise been, we often fail to notice, specifically we do not experience the weakness we would have otherwise had.

By taking refuge in "little white lies," therefore, we empower our weakness to limit our future abilities and opportunities; we do not become the problem-solvers and the victorious warriors we were intended to become; we do not bring honor to ourselves, our families, or the Divine whom we claim to love.

Because of the ways in which trust is eroded, we also risk weakening or fracturing our relationships, isolating ourselves, and isolating others from the positive contributions we would have otherwise been able to make to their lives.

Is any lie worth all of that? If the opportunity to deceive is not before us, however, but already behind us in the past, where it cannot be undone, we are still not abandoned by opportunities for the pursuit of unconditional love and divine wisdom.

Perhaps this is the greatest ongoing demonstration of forgiveness within our world--that no matter how much we have polluted the earth, polluted the lives of others, and polluted ourselves, the sun continues to rise each morning to give us new opportunities to do better than we have previously done, to transform the ultimate effects of the past, and to embark upon adventures of empowerment within every opportunity or resource which crosses our respective paths.

I don't know what opportunities or synchronicities will illuminate my path today, tomorrow, or any other day in the future. I do know, however, that there is wisdom and love to be discovered and embraced within them.

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

Black Deceptions

It has often been noted that one can be sincere, but nevertheless sincerely wrong. The darkness of (for whatever reason) not having access to essential information steers us into wrong thinking, wrong speech, and wrong behavior--and we don't even know that any of it is wrong until the particular essential information finally appears, at which point there may be a sudden silence and finally an apologetic, "Oh, well that makes things different."

Yes, a little insight, a little genuinely effective and applicable information, and suddenly even the most adversarial circumstance looks completely different and our internal emotions and passions generally undergo an immediate shift also, allowing us (perhaps) to return to a place of wise centeredness and emotional balance. Indeed, most emotional manipulation is based upon the omission or addition of specific information at auspicious points in time. Avoiding being the victim of such manipulation, often begins with the simple response, "Perhaps, but not necessarily." What one needs to consider within such moments, is the question of what it would take to accomplish a more desirable outcome and whether the resources essential to that desirable outcome are either available or easily acquired.

The darkest and most oppressive circumstance, therefore, is the one within which we believe ourselves to be powerless. The liberating truth, however, is that we are never completely powerless, but we may need to first take inventory of specifically where within a particular circumstance our power actually resides.

We are not omnipotent; we do not have control or possession of all of the power that exists within any particular circumstance, but we can utilize whatever power we do have, if we also have the wisdom and self-awareness to do so. More importantly, God may have provided us with just enough power to make whatever positive shift would be most helpful to the growth of our souls.

When such moments of shift occur, the darkness of oppression, ignorance, and victimization is pushed backward, forced to retreat, and made smaller than the gigantic monster we imagined to be towering over us. Suddenly, we are in some way or another the ones towering over the oppressive force; we become the light and the truth which drive back the darkness.

In thereby serving the advance of light and

truth, the advance of darkness and deception is terminated, stopped in its tracks, and brought to a screeching halt. This really is possible, if we will rise to our feet, find our voices, and calmly face our fears with the simple word, "no."

The first challenge, of course, is seeing such dark deceptions when they first occur, rather than waiting in distraction and preoccupation with other affairs until the dark deception has had time to expand to more intimidating dimensions. How sad that a blindfold commonly used by evil to accomplish such distraction and preoccupation is the otherwise commendable quality of sincerity.

What is more evil than the evil which masquerades as truth? Even so, we do not need to become evil in order to battle evil; we simply need to consistently, publicly, and firmly be what evil is not: wise, loving, and good.

Fear is a common and--within its appropriate context--healthy human emotion. Unfortunately it is also that member of our internal community of emotions which is most easily manipulated by the generally hidden agendas of evil. The sensitivity of fear is commendable, being able to detect even the faintest tremor within the ground of one's being, but a major jump on our internal emotional seismograph is no cause for panic; rather it invites intelligent response. All too often we've been conditioned to think of the repression of fear as an indication of strength, when in fact it is a weakness. Engaging in such repression is self-chosen blindness which leaves us vulnerable to forms of negative exploitation.

At our best, we live within the tension between fear and courage, making the best choices we can, moment by moment throughout our lives. At our best, we also live within the tension between knowledge and ignorance, informing our choices as well as we can, as new information and insight become available. At our best, we reach beyond ourselves, what we already know, and what we've experienced, to other persons, knowledge, and experiences that may empower us to expand and to embody still more divine qualities within ourselves.

Neither black deceptions nor white lies need to be the primary agents within the stories of our individual lives nor within our collective life together. Denying them such a role, however, remains a matter of the choices and actions each of make each and every day.

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

Gray Honesty

Understanding one's self is easy if one is a robot with specifically preprogrammed processes and predictable characteristics. Even the best computers and robots, however, sometimes fail to give consistent or congruent responses. A momentary power-surge, a worn and unreliable internal component, or a rarely utilized conditional programming statement, and suddenly the thinking machine renders an anomalous response.

Being fully human is an extremely difficult undertaking, requiring constant and extensive vigilance. Being fully honest, therefore, (no offense intended toward people such as Diogenes, who allegedly spent his life wandering through the streets with a lamp during the daytime, looking for an honest man) is a matter of remaining conscious, vigilant, and proactive in embracing whatever subjective decisions confront us--and allowing for the absence of certainty.

It is specifically because certainty is so elusive that honesty generally resides within an enduring grayness also, adapting itself to the acquisition of new information and the occurrence of additional formative events. If we would be honest persons, we must be willing to live within such grayness, learning and adapting within each ongoing moment as much as we are able.

It is specifically because such residence within grayness ultimately brings out the best in each of us, that it is in both our individual and our collective best interests to support and nurture such residence within each other in whatever ways we can; it all adds up to a better world in which to live, a world which no individual regardless of monetary resources can create in isolation.

The grayness of honesty requires ongoing relationship--with our individual and collective pasts, with our individual and collective futures, and with our individual and collective present experiences and environments. The grayness of

*"Between 'yes' and 'no,'
within a momentary 'maybe,'
are the freedoms
to perceive alternatives
and thereafter to choose."*

--Sister Who

honesty requires relationship of some kind with all of the persons and entities that each of those three include as well. In some cases, the relationship may be one of closure and completion, serving now primarily as reference material rather than ongoing primary influence. In other cases, the relationship may be one which serves as a portal for new (and hopefully ultimately empowering) questions and areas of ongoing investigation. In still other instances, the relationship may be one of collaboration within which continuing dialogue and mutual collaboration in spite of certain disagreements allow for ongoing construction of an ever-better world within which all can truly live.

Gray honesty is also about choosing one's orbits. Unlike the planets, in most instances we do have the ability to choose our orbits as well as the ability to change our orbits whenever it seems wise to do so. We can change jobs, move to a different geographical region, move in and out of social circles by choosing to join or resign from various clubs or associations, or alter the names which are included within the list of those to whose letters and phone calls we respond. We can even alter the identity or extent of interaction with any "significant other," spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, or confidante with whom we choose to associate.

Around whom or what am I building my life, one day or one moment at a time? This is an important question to revisit--annually, monthly, weekly, daily, or perhaps even from one moment to the next, during times of more constant transition. At some point, life will be over and there will no longer be any opportunity for such choices. This awareness need not be depressing, however, if one is utilizing the moments of one's life as quickly as they unfold--if one is (to use a common expression) "living life to the fullest."

Perhaps the greatest empowerment of grayness is that anything and everything is possible. A friend recently sent me a card with a wonderful quote from the author, Emily Dickinson: "I dwell in possibilities." Curiously or appropriately perhaps, the primary color throughout the design on the front of the card, was gray.

An additional instruction of grayness is that it is not the absence of lighter and darker shades, but rather it is the integration of them. It is, after all, all of the joys and sorrows of my life, which together contribute to the wisdom available within each present moment.

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

Love's Twilight

Twilight--that curious time between day and night when it is not completely either and all you really know is that the very foundation of all perception is radically shifting. Somehow, if love is there, I know that everything is going to be okay, no matter what the specific outcome turns out to be. The darkness filled with love, the light filled with love, and the transition between the two in either direction, when filled with love--all of these invite a deeper awareness, awe, and appreciation for being surrounded by transcendent processes and forces which empower life to be what it is.

All of which results in a time that is frequently confusing. The sharp outlines of shadows are gone; concrete objects are either fading to invisibility while remaining as concrete as they ever were, or gradually fading into view out of receding darkness, giving us ever greater perception of their details and characteristics.

Even our definitions of what is true and what is a lie may be shifting, perhaps inviting us to write new definitions of what love is or of how it works. We might also begin to write new definitions of love's possible forms, as the forms of the past seem less and less able to satisfy or meet the challenges of the present and future.

Will the light that is love evolve into starlight or the light of a new sun? It seems that only Time will tell, but what Time will tell will be largely an integration of our individual decisions, numerous and diverse though they may be. Either way, however, there will be light by which to navigate the uncharted waters of future oceans toward undiscovered lands and countries. Perhaps this too is an expression of divine love, that we are never left without any guidance whatsoever, in the ongoing exploration, formation, and development of our individual and collective lives.

Even within the dim glow of twilight there is abiding truth, some of it universal but perhaps more of it contextual, remaining like the sturdy floorboards of a ship's deck, upon which we can stand, walk, and at times even dance with each other, accompanied by the music of bird calls, the rhythm of pounding waves, and the singing of our fellow passengers. The joy we collaboratively create within such moments, I must believe, was seen by God on creation's first day and inspired the declaration that--ultimately--it is all good.

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

On a Personal Note

Celebrations: calendars for both 2010 and 2011 have been completed and are now available free of charge (although donations are much appreciated, since each one requires two stamps) by request (please include a postal mailing address). The 2012 calendar is half-completed also. After literally hundreds of hours of work, the new introduction for the ongoing TV series "Sister Who Presents..." has been completed and looks very good indeed. The new introduction will be used for episodes #140 and higher. Production of episodes #140-143 is scheduled for November 29. With regard to the ongoing renovation of my home into a genuinely interfaith spiritual retreat and small conference center entitled "God Space," one of two attic storage spaces has been insulated, sheet-rocked, and plastered.

Tribulations: after numerous repairs my motorcycle is still not running dependably, I was informed by a new mechanic at a much more professional shop that my Toyota 4Runner's engine that was supposedly rebuilt three times within the past year, was not in fact rebuilt at all and that a new rebuilt engine from a reputable national company offering a three-year/100,000-mile warranty would cost in excess of six thousand dollars (Anyone want to buy a fixer-upper Toyota 4Runner?). Doctoral writing has been severely hampered by bureaucracy and meaningless busy-work, but I was thereby inspired to craft a comprehensive overview of my doctoral program which will be invaluable within the remaining years of accomplishing this academic degree.

Aspirations: at the top of the list is resumption of work on the third album of original songs and the submission of episodes #140-143 to new broadcasting/cablecasting entities, so that this ministry may begin to reach new and larger audiences. Your continued prayers and support are appreciated, as I continue to dedicate myself to the personal and spiritual growth of others.

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

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