

# Sister Who's Perspective

*Sister Who's Perspective, Issue #104 February 2008, 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

The winds of change are once again swirling over the land like some sort of lingering tornado, ripping up structures we thought were immovable and in great contrast relocating vulnerable and delicate aspects of life with a care that seems almost deliberately compassionate.

There is a pervasive fear which is readily available to everyone everywhere, but equally an excitement perceived by some, at being participants within a time of individual and societal redefinition. It's been said that "the more things change, the more they stay the same"--or do they?

Here are some thoughts and reflections--some stones, some eggs, and some attempts to create meaning--which will hopefully inspire some of your own, by which to embrace this time and discover within the swirling air around us greater possibilities than we ever thought we'd live to see.

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

## Behavior versus Being

As important as it is to know who I am as an individual, there are times within life during which what is happening around me does not care who I am as an individual but rather has assigned to me--often erroneously--qualities which an observer associates with this or that general characteristic. My gender, race, or age, for example, may encourage certain observers to make assumptions about me which more accurately reflect the observers' past education and experience than such assumptions reflect the truth of who and what I am--and these observers may not be particularly inclined to allow me to be a new exception to the rules of interpretation they have developed.

Therefore, when I act in accordance with the truth of my being rather than the truth of their expectations, I am breaking their rules and am more likely to be regarded as a rule-breaker than as an innovator offering new perception and understanding about ways of addressing challenges or otherwise typical life experiences.

This is one of the reasons why I very much appreciate the advice of avoiding expectations; of making one's best contribution to each moment of life and allowing the outcome to express itself to me honestly rather than demanding that the outcome conform to some personal agenda.

Even the most unsuitable-looking tree may produce nourishing fruit, if I allow for such a possibility. If I do not allow for such a possibility, I may so frequently prune the tree, trying to improve its form, that it never has a chance to do the process which will make the unfamiliarity and irregularity of its form irrelevant.

An example of this could be the scientist, Stephen Hawking. His current physical condition is hardly what one would envision when imagining a great scientist and scholar. The fact that he is allowed by society to be exactly those things, is because certain key individuals and organizations were willing to set typical expectations aside; to allow behavior and being to be anomalous, unusual, atypical, unique, or just plain strange.

How impoverished the world would be if this allowance had not been granted to him and to a great number of other artists, scientists, writers, composers, theologians, and philosophers. The historical truth, however, is that such allowance has not always been granted and that humanity has indeed been impoverished within countless moments in which this lack of allowance, this adversarial attitude, grew to lethal or near-lethal intensity and voices which might have imparted wisdom were instead silenced.

This month's page of my 2008 calendar reminds of the importance of fully listening before speaking, which is also essential to harmonious relationship between behavior and being. If I do not listen to others, to my own thoughts and feelings, and also to whatever voice God seems inclined to use to communicate divine wisdom and love to me, the relationship between behavior and being will be unavoidably adversarial. Having listened, however, it will then be time for my being to decide what personal behavior will follow.

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

## Handling a Stone

On numerous occasions by now, I have constructed various retaining walls and flowerbeds using completely irregular rocks and stones of moderately to significantly large size. The dynamics necessary to the placement and arrangement of such building material are a curious blend of opposites. As much as I must apply great amounts of strength and force, I must also lower the stones into place gently and slowly to avoid chipping or fracturing the very heavy and awkward mass. Within one moment I may support the full weight of the object, while in the next I apply maximum force to minimize the gap between this stone and the one before it. Regardless of the shape and color of each, the smaller the gap between the stones, the greater their ability to retain the plant-nurturing soil behind them.

For certain stones, it has been most effective to work with bare hands, feeling the coolness or smoothness of the surface contours as I position the stone within the larger arrangement of the wall.

For others, thick leather gloves are essential because their surface is so very abrasive that my skin would be torn by the intensity of our interaction. Indeed, if such tests were performed, I suspect most of the landscaping projects I've accomplished would reveal traces of my blood on certain parts of their individual pieces.

Similarly, if such tests were performed, I suspect most of the lives any one of us has ever directly or indirectly touched would reveal traces of the spiritual, philosophical, emotional, or psychological combinations and patterns which are uniquely our own.

Within such revealing would hopefully be the recognition that what we have given, was given at a certain significant cost; that what others have received may have been freely given, but it was not without a price to be paid--hence the need for humility and gratitude, as one generation builds its experience of life upon all that has gone before.

Conversely but equally, however, there is a generation which will follow us; a new layer of stones which will stand upon our shoulders, sometimes with gratitude and awareness and sometimes without such qualities of respect. Just as we stand upon the shoulders and accomplishments of others, just as every cell within the human body arises from cells which preceded it, and just as every educational lesson

or experience is preceded by some other one which occurred earlier in time, we honor the past by going forward and we honor ourselves by giving our greatest contribution to whatever comes next.

So as I once again anticipate the construction of flowerbeds and retaining walls during the coming Spring and Summer months, I do so with a certain reverence for the ways in which I am passing a sort of torch from the past to the future, for the ways in which all that I learn needs to be wisely shared so that none of this light ends with me.

The stones, I've been told, will always remember, but unless or until I learn their language, I will not know what they know. Choosing to believe that they do indeed know things which I do not, provides a certain reverence and humility by which I can avoid taking the present moment too lightly.

At the same time, however, it is specifically the presence of stones beneath my feet which allows me to dance lightly across the river's current and safely reach a land from which I would otherwise be isolated and of which I would otherwise be ignorant.

In serving life, by the gifts of the abilities to remember and to relate, I am empowered both to transport ideas of great weight and to also place them gently within new arrangements.

This can be true of each and every one of us. Knowingly or unknowingly, often to persons who give no indication of how essential our contribution has been to them, we transport ideas, experiences, and feelings of great weight, hopefully also placing them with great care.

Stone by stone, the retaining wall grows higher and higher and the garden behind it more and more ready for countless harvests and limitless beauty yet to come.

This will only happen, however, if we persist in the pursuit of such integrated individuality rather than allowing each other to fall prey to erosion and apathy, tumbling into disarray, to be hidden from view by encroaching weeds. Within the construction of such a retaining wall, there is no stone which doesn't matter.

Likewise, within the ever expanding circle of interpersonal relationships and of individuals created by a very mysterious but wonderfully transcendent God, there is no one whose misfortune or welfare is no cause for concern.

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

## Handling an Egg

Perhaps the most wondrous and miraculous quality of an egg is its ability to serve as the vehicle--the magic pumpkin turned into Cinderella's coach--by which a spark of life can be transported to new ways and forms of being.

In one sense, an egg is remarkably strong and architecturally amazing in its structural dynamics and efficient use of space. As a container within which life persists, it can move between environments of water, air, and earth.

In another sense, an egg is remarkably fragile and it does not seem that a wise God would devise a mode of transportation for the holy divine spark of life which is so vulnerable to disaster. Too much heat or cold or too sudden a change in velocity of movement and the spark of life is snuffed out, prematurely terminated without hope of recovery. The egg does not, it must be remembered, have the ability to heal, as will the creature which would eventually otherwise form. Once it's broken, the spark of life within is terminated--or is it?

When an egg is prematurely broken open, the creature which would have otherwise formed will not be, but the contents of the egg do not just vaporize and cease to exist. As is the case within virtually every other circumstance, life refuses to be denied and instead changes form.

If the egg goes into the ground, its substance nurtures plants and animals yet to come. If the egg goes into the mix for a cake or

some other food, its contribution is unlike virtually every other culinary substance and in many cases absolutely essential to the creation of the dessert or entree. It doesn't "go away;" it simply changes form and function, usually in some way that allows life to go on.

In some cases, such changes are by accident--for example, a fall from a nest high in the branches of tree or a particularly violent storm which drops heavy branches or debris from somewhere above. If we value only one expression or outcome of the egg's potential and this particular expression or outcome is no longer possible, we will experience the loss to some degree as tragic.

In other cases, such changes are by choice--for example, placing one egg under an incubator and another in the refrigerator to use for a cake or a breakfast omelet. Both will serve an ongoing progression of life, but in very different ways. We may be able to choose the way, but we have little control over whether or not the egg will serve some progression of life.

This is something which I try to remember in those moments when I feel a little like a vulnerable egg, wishing for the incubator but finding myself instead relegated to the refrigerator. I recall a sacred dance in which I participated once, which began with the old English style phrase, "Use me for the purpose that Thy wisdom chooseth." A big part of being able to say such a prayer with sincerity, is accepting whatever unknown outcome God may be willing to allow for the sake of a higher goal, the value of which may not be humanly comprehensible.

A different and more negative employment of choice, however, is when the egg finds itself in the hands of a psychologically or emotionally wounded and broken person who wishes the egg to be a weapon or a tool for venting anger and objection. Even then, the spark of life within is not defeated, although the contents may be scattered either directly or through water courses, back to the earth from which it originally came.

Curiously, the needs of the egg and the one wielding it within such circumstances are very much the same. Each has needs which are calling out to be addressed; each has the potential to be so much more than the vulnerable and fragile form which is most apparent; and each can reach that potential through a holy transforming touch of love.

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

"When we do nothing  
while waiting  
for difficult times to pass,  
it is more often the case  
that we become numb,  
rather than seeing  
beneath the appearances  
an opportunity  
for healing and growth  
and for celebrating  
the miracle  
of being alive."

--Sister Who

## Becoming My Soul

In pondering the attainment of my academic BA and MTS degrees, I recently noticed that both times I struggled against systems of knowledge and education that didn't fit me very well, that in order to persevere I adopted a focus of allowing the present moment to contain my reasons for being there, and that I chose to believe that not finishing the program was not the same as failing. Additionally, I came to an understanding that it was not so much a question of what I did or didn't learn but rather of who and what I became, by the things which I endured. Needless to say, all of the above was quite disturbing to certain students and teachers I encountered along the way.

I also did a lot of complaining along the way. A stoic attitude has never been appealing to me because of its tendency to conceal rather than reveal truth. The question which obviously remains within specific examples of this, of course, is whether or not those around me could accept or at least tolerate the truth of my experience.

For myself, embracing and expressing the truth of my perception and experience allowed for the slow but steady construction of a much deeper integrity and a much broader understanding than was usually apparent within anyone around me who chose an interaction with the deepest reality of their experiences which was more altered by personal interpretations and choices.

In other words, when we "white-wash" our experiences, we cannot know what they truly are; when we cover every difficult edge with padding, we cannot know the edge's genuine shape or sharpness. I chose (and generally continue to choose) to know the shape, the sharpness, the taste, and perhaps even the smell of the edges where I often unintentionally find myself to be. It may be unpleasant, but there is a deep understanding to be gained thereby, which is both valuable and (to the best of my knowledge) inaccessible by any other means.

As often as I recommend awareness of past and future, I find myself needing to focus upon the present, when future struggles are too weighty to carry, taking one step at a time and concerning myself with nothing more--not even a future reward that supposedly justifies the struggle, if the future reward is simply too far away to appreciate. For now, for me, life simply needs to go on.

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

## On a Personal Note

Was it only a month ago I typed out some minimal description of a little more than four weeks' journey through time? Circumstances continue to encourage me to chuckle and remark, "life's pitching curve-balls again," but this is not necessarily a discouraged or negative remark. Sometimes things change for the better in quiet and unassuming ways that could easily go unnoticed or as I sometimes explain with a slightly mischievous grin to various friends who ask, "every now and then, things go magically right for a change, in spite of whatever negative probability otherwise exists."

With regard to certain developments, it's too soon to say for certain what the outcome will be, but a number of things within my life appear much more promising than they did only four weeks ago. Hopefully I will be able to say much more about those within next month's newsletter.

With regard to ongoing ministerial opportunities, the work continues to expand and it is difficult to keep up with all of the new opportunities and possibilities, especially considering ongoing economic limitations, but I imagine that I will someday understand the gifts which being continually under-funded has brought to my life and to the ongoing ministerial work too.

My third CD album of songs now seems likely to include more new songs than originally planned, many of which are still in various stages of composition. I am hoping to make a greater effort with regard to the music as well, but between fixing up my house, earning enough from various odd jobs to keep the bills paid on time, being faithful to exercise routines to prepare for the possibility of participation within future body-building events, and being a doctoral-level graduate student, there is never enough time or energy to get everything done.

As always, your prayers and loving support are most appreciated.

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](mailto:dn@sisterwho.com)

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