

# Sister Who's Perspective

*Sister Who's Perspective, Issue #142, April 2011, 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

One of the challenges of being human is that our eyes are only on one side of our heads—leaving the majority of our surroundings unseen. We often see only one aspect of whatever it is at which we are looking. Thus to some extent, we really are dependent upon each other for complete perception of any object, circumstance, or event.

Within this month's essays, please consider other possible perspectives and interpretations for the blessings and burdens which fill your life—both of which might be able to serve purposes other than any previously imagined.

We live within a peculiar transitional time, but it may be that we are far better equipped for the questions and challenges of this time than we've thus far noticed—if we are willing to also grant the unknown future the possibility of undiscovered blessings (within each other?).

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

## When Life Gives Lemons

I've never liked the trite expression, "when life gives you lemons, make lemonade" because of the way it trivializes the pain of current struggles, disappointments, losses, and readjustments. What is frequently overlooked, is that in order to make lemonade from lemons, one also needs water, sugar, a knife, a cutting board or other work surface, a stirring utensil, and a suitable container within which to mix the prepared ingredients. When life provides only the lemons and leaves the search for additional ingredients to me, the lemonade sometimes doesn't get made at all.

The other essential ingredients I neglected to mention within the previous paragraph, however, are my own time, energy, and willingness to act. Sometimes, to be quite honest, time is not available. An excessive volume of competing demands for every minute of my day pretty much ensures that at each day's conclusion, in spite of all that has been accomplished, there will be a number of things which have not.

Thankfully, at least within my life experience, most of the things which remain undone are not sufficiently important to bring the rest of life to a screeching halt. If that does ever happen, however, I've already decided that as quickly as possible, I will simply search for a new beginning and start again to do all the good I can, with whatever resources are available.

Sometimes when life gives only lemons, this can also be a reminder of just how interconnected and interdependent everything is; of how nothing truly exists in isolation; and of how we need both individuality and relationship in order to make our best contributions. I cannot be all that I can be without you and neither of us can be all that we can be without opportunities to make our own unique contributions to the world within which we live.

To the extent that we provide each other with opportunities and encouragement, we participate in the healing and empowerment of the world within which we live. Likewise, to the extent that we act as restrictive gate-keepers and harsh critics, we participate in isolation, brokenness, and adversarial exclusion and we enable limitation's destructive oppression to enslave us.

News flash: we're the sugar. It is we ourselves who have the ability to act as sweetness within the presence of life's lemons. It is we ourselves who have the ability, in the words of Mahatmas Gandhi, to "be the change [we] wish to see within the world." It is we ourselves who can be, in the words of the cinematic presentation of Mary Poppins, the "spoon full of sugar [that] makes the medicine go down"—if we are willing to truly be there for each other whenever an opportunity arises. It is we ourselves who are the presence of love within circumstances otherwise dictated only by the presence or absence of money.

When life gives lemons, we are God's answer to oppose the brokenness that will otherwise occur every time we forget to love.

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

## When Life Gives Losses

If losses were confined to external circumstances and abilities, societal rituals of mourning would be enough. Specifically because losses are experienced both inwardly and outwardly, it is imperative that we remember that every unpleasant person we ever meet, has suffered a loss of some type and degree. A paradox within this recognition, however, is the realization that humanity often has a mysterious and perhaps even miraculous ability to give out of emptiness, to lead where we've never been, and even to know what we have never learned.

The possibility of such, however, does not mean that we should all begin expecting these things from each other. What this possibility does mean, is that there is always adequate reason to continue hoping, praying, and watching for unimagined miracles to occur. There is also the possibility that we ourselves, within the experience of a loss, may discover ourselves to be channels of miraculous new directions and ways in which to live and to grow. Often, however, these new directions and ways are without precedent and no mentor is available to instruct us in the correct or most effective way to do the task. Nonetheless, within such moments, the particular task presses itself upon our hearts and minds like a divine calling that will not go away until its purposes, goals, and beautiful dreams have been served.

None of the above should be interpreted, however, to even suggest that an appropriate process of mourning the particular loss is optional rather than essential. Failing to appropriately embrace mourning is generally adversarial to growth, but what is specifically appropriate can usually only be finally determined by the particular individual experiencing the particular loss.

Those who encourage dismissal of the emotional experience of loss, considering it to be unimportant and inconvenient, lack faith in the reality of the loss which is nevertheless experienced by the individual. How wonderfully convenient it would be, if someone else's lack of belief would in fact release an individual from the experience of pain. If any person could do that, it might be helpful to stand at the entrance to a hospital emergency department, proclaiming to every incoming patient, "I do not believe your pain is real," and instantly the pain would vanish—yeah, right; if only it were so. Then again, it seems to me that this does not happen because even pain has something more to teach us—as well as serving as

a signpost to medical professionals, hopefully guiding them to the source of the problem.

My first thought when experiencing a loss is to refrain from reactively running away from it. After careful consideration, I may choose to relocate myself, but it is virtually impossible to fearfully flee without leaving something of one's self behind—which must later be somehow reclaimed or revisited in order for complete healing to occur. Even years later, reactions to other incidents may still be affected. Until I have truthfully, lovingly, and effectively come to terms with any loss or injury of any experience, I am not truly free to continue with my life.

Some people may insist that they do not have the strength to face the particular difficulty alone—and they may be right. The invitation within such moments is to involve a supportive community of friends, family, or fellow members of a societal group. When no such group is available physically, it may be necessary to turn to members of a spiritual group. Calling out to God in any form or by any name is one example of that.

The point, in any case, within experiences of loss, is to maintain or (if necessary) to return to relationship with something or someone beyond one's self. The more one turns only inward, the more one builds a protective shell around the more or less unending presence of the pain of the loss. Love—which requires interactive relationship in order to exist—is ultimately the only light able to dispel the darkness which loss inevitably brings.

The first tasks of love within any encounter with loss, are to listen and to look until there is sufficient understanding to act effectively rather than in a way that is merely patronizing. Even in dealing with loss within my relationship to myself, I must first begin by listening to whatever my heart has to say and looking for whatever my reflection in a mirror has to show.

Sometimes the most helpful mirrors are the eyes of my friends, when I trust them enough to ask for their honest perception of myself and my situation. If they are able to respond with genuine love, there is often within their response an essential element of healing from the pain I experience—if only I am willing to receive it.

This is how the experience of loss can "come full circle": instead of less, there is more—within my relationships, my self-awareness, my understanding, and my ability to truly live.

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

## When Life Gives Roses

Roses have thorns and beautiful things have difficult things within them—it's one of the most over-used metaphors one could name. Perhaps a reason that it is so over-used is because virtually everything one can name has mixed qualities, yet humanity in general still seems rather addicted to deliberately overlooking any presence of thorns. Lying to one's self about the implications or presence of thorns, however, only pushes us further away from the truth and love of all that is sacred and divine (not to mention getting scratched and cut whenever the thorns we would rather ignore nevertheless lie within our path).

On a similar note, lying to one's self about the presence of roses is also destructive. Holistic health and relationship values the inclusion of both equally. Within the bigger picture of life and within myriads of interconnected relationships, both thorns and roses have empowering contributions to make. Pessimism refuses to see the roses; optimism refuses to see the thorns; either approach makes the journey more rather than less difficult, painful, and discouraging.

What is of primary importance, obviously, is doing the journey at all. Phrased another way, through whatever metaphorical roses or thorns are encountered, life is still primarily concerned with the growth of the soul—which is accomplished by journeying through various pleasant and unpleasant experiences within one's life journey. In both cases (the rose and ourselves), the journey does not happen in isolation.

The journey of the rose from a few cells of vegetation beneath the ground to a fragrance carried by the wind, must be attended by adequate sun, rain, and nutrient-rich soil. The journey of a soul from physical birth to physical death (and beyond), must be attended by dozens upon dozens of persons willing to perform familial and

*"Within every circumstance,  
what kind of person  
will I show myself to be?  
Anything less  
than empowering honesty  
leads only to slavery."*

--Sister Who

societal roles. Mutually empowering relationships are once again essential.

When we are given invitation, opportunity, or obligation to nurture another's life, therefore, and we also have the ability to do so, we are being given chances to be the hands of God within the unfolding lives of others. Going one step further, we may hear the invitation and resist it; we may see the opportunity and ignore it; and we may note the responsibility and neglect it. When we do not respond as constructively as we are able, however, it is not only that someone else's needs will not be met, but also that our own relationships and interactive capacities are weakened as well.

We are all parts of one another and being children of the Divine (of God, Goddess, the Universe, or whichever name you wish to employ), essentially means that to care for one another is to care for God's children. If the thorns have so ravaged a soul that no rose can any longer be seen, the person is not for that reason made less of a person—they are simply a person acting like one whose soul has been ravaged by thorns.

Sometimes we are the leather gloves, protecting others from injury within specific circumstances. If I were to try to repair my own automobile, injuries would abound. If my auto mechanic were to attempt to sew his own clothes, I suspect the results would be similar.

Injuries from thorns are not required. Collaboration between persons of diverse abilities and resources, are essential to joyful and holistically healthy community. It is not required that we misunderstand when we speak to each other in relation to certain differences. To avoid such visible and invisible injuries, however, we must respect the characteristics and dynamics that are individually unique and love each other enough to insist upon not only inclusion, but also mutually empowering integration.

The rose bud does not arise from the thorn itself, but rather from a stem upon which they both depend. Similarly, there may be a common element within both blessings and burdens, which connects us to the roots that provide nourishment and strength. As long as we see only the thorn, only the rose, or only the stem, we will never fully understand. When we see the three as an interdependent system and an interdependent embodiment of life, the beauty of the garden within which we live will at last be known.

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

## When Life Gives Limitations

Regardless of the number of times I've later discovered that my limitations actually protected me from greater problems, I still can't think of anything the least bit enjoyable about experiencing limitation. No matter how many times uncooperative circumstances have delayed my pace so that I arrived where I was going at the perfect moment to experience amazing collaboration, it seems there is still a certain amount of emotional frustration and aggravation to process—which I suppose confirms that I'm still human, regardless of whatever spiritual growth I've accomplished thus far.

Even as I type it, however, I realize how misleading that statement can be. The notion that being human and being spiritual are adversarially related is a common perception within western societies, but not one I wish to support. I have often found deeper spiritual insight within greater awareness of the ways within which my physical life unfolds. Being more fully human, therefore, could only encourage my spiritual health as well—if I truly understand and respect the paradoxical combinations of body, mind, and spirit which offer themselves for consideration within virtually every life experience.

In ways that perhaps only That Which Is Truly God understands, it is the limitations themselves which can become the constitutive materials essential to constructing a bridge between physical and spiritual realms. From the many high-mountain hikes I have done here in Colorado (and elsewhere), I know that a stone in my path can either cause me to trip and fall or be utilized as a stepping stone to cross a stream.

The limitation (inherent within the stone) is of sufficient density that it can both resist the force of the stream's currents and support my entire weight, allowing me to cross to the other side without getting dangerously wet and at risk for developing hypothermia (catching a chill, when I am perhaps hours away from any ability to get warm again).

So it is (when I remember this) that I can be grateful for my limitations and use them as an engineer uses heavy stone to build bridges, buildings, and roads. That which might have defeated me, instead becomes an essential component of my success—if I carefully watch where I am going and place my steps wisely.

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

## On a Personal Note

Episode #200 is now available for viewing over the Internet (through the link in the lower left area of the index page of [www.SisterWho.com](http://www.SisterWho.com)). Eighteen new shows have already been planned for recording in June or July.

After \$700 of repairs my Geo Tracker (which I named "Veli" which in the Albanian language means "guardian"), finally runs perfectly. I am grateful to a good friend for directing me to the better auto repair service responsible for this.

Due to recent financial arguments in Washington, D.C., my financial aid disbursement from Walden University was approximately two weeks late—which was nearly disastrous but circumstances are now mostly back on track.

After more than a \$150 of further repairs, my 1980 Suzuki motorcycle was still temperamental and unreliable. Consequently, when an opportunity presented itself, I traded for a much newer, safer, and better 2007 Yamaha. The monthly payment seems manageable, but I hope to pay off the loan early anyway, in order to be free from making such monthly payments as soon as possible.

A collaborator has been found for a live call-in public access television show to celebrate twenty years of doing this unconventional ministry. Details of the time and viewing options will be included within the May issue of "Sister Who's Perspective." The date of the show is June 7.

Inclusion of Sister Who within the annual "People's Fair," June 4-5, at Civic Center Park in Denver, Colorado, has been requested but not yet confirmed. Inclusion of Sister Who within the annual Pridefest celebration in late June at the same location would presumably cost \$400, but those funds are not presently available. Inclusion within the annual Pride parade would presumably require a similar fee.

All things considered, I go wherever I can, to do whatever good I can, hoping that my efforts will someone make a positive difference.

May one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be! *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](mailto:dn@sisterwho.com)

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