

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

It seems that in the negative sense of words deemed socially unacceptable, "work" has become a "four-letter word" which generally provokes a negative response. I suggest, however, that this is only because the work most people do, is not the work which their hearts and minds confirm as being consistent with their life purposes. By the simple fact of being born, we are given a certain importance and a sort of calling, to make whatever positive contribution we can.

When we are able to either perceive our work as being in some sense divine or to find that divine work that we can do which will bring integration and harmony to all of the multi-dimensional aspects of ourselves and others, life takes on an aura of love and wisdom that is truly awe-inspiring and we can yearn for no greater honor than that of serving such a magnificent work. In so doing, we become the hands of divine love.

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

School Work

For some of us, life is a busy blur of frenetic activity, within which we strive to satisfy one demand after another made upon us by a myriad of objects, environmental concerns, and people--"fix me, clean me, satisfy me, build me, maintain me, organize me, prepare me, present me, practice me, read me, write me, do me." The volume of such demands can be disorienting and discouraging.

For others, life is a slow-moving river of daily routines and long-standing expectations that cannot overflow its banks without causing us to panic--"but it's always been this way, I've never had to worry about that; this is how it is and no alternative exists; there is no need for anything to change anywhere I look, because everything is fine as it is."

What is generally missing from both is self-awareness, but this is a "catch 22" because of the conundrum of how to create awareness within people (whom we may love and respect) who are not aware of any lack of awareness.

Within this article, I can only scratch the

surface and encourage everyone who can, to give this dilemma some thought, because I do not have a perfect solution to this ongoing challenge of humanity. What is nevertheless vital, is to continue the search for any solution that genuinely proves itself to be effective.

In reflecting upon my own life experiences, one of the things which created awareness within me, was when I responded cooperatively to this or that teacher's request to make a list of every time I did this, felt that, or accomplished anything within a particular area of individual or communal involvement. Just as soon as I began looking for a particular common element (such as each time I said a certain phrase), my list began to grow, sometimes rapidly, sometimes slowly. Although I expected that I wouldn't have anything to write or that I would have lots of things to write, I was usually surprised by what my list ultimately did or did not include. Did I need to take the time to write it all down? Yes, apparently I did; it really did make a difference to see it all written down in black ink on a white page, in visible letters and words.

Having done so, I began to also notice that I didn't look at each moment of life in the same way anymore; that my way of noticing things was constructively different; that I was somehow seeing more than I had before; that I was no longer as blind to my own experience of life as I'd been. Why was this accomplished? Because the teacher said to do it and because I did do it.

Once I saw the increase in my abilities which resulted from this work, I chose to become my own teacher and give myself the assignment of creating other lists as well. I soon found that I was seeing many things which others generally failed to notice at all, that I was taking advantage of resources and opportunities I hadn't previously found to be even interesting, and that I was becoming more than I ever imagined I would become--and it all started with choosing to faithfully do my school work.

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

Homework

Perhaps it is not surprising to anyone to hear that I read literally thousands of books during my childhood. The rewards which can be produced by reading are often greatly underestimated and overlooked within the busy-ness of daily life. It's as if we're standing so close to what we're doing, that we cannot see the larger picture of our lives which is being created, one moment at a time. In choosing to read books, I was instilling into myself the understanding that the story of each of our lives is written one page at a time; that there is a beginning, a middle, and an end to each story; and that it sometimes takes a bit of perseverance and self-discipline to get through it.

Similarly, if I am writing the story of my life one page at a time, I must carefully choose what I will include within that page so that it has the most constructive relationships possible with all the other parts of my story. A lie or a poor choice on one page could limit the choices and possibilities available to me on some other page; an act of love or wisdom, conversely, could open a door of opportunity later in my story, which would have otherwise remained painfully closed.

All of this is the ongoing homework of my life--those activities during which no teacher is apparently present (except myself, if I am willing to perform that role for myself). The added challenge of homework is that a myriad of distractions and a less-supportive environment often work against my choice to do what needs to be done if I am to successfully learn anything.

Neither the distractions nor the environment are necessarily bad, in and of themselves, but they may be more concerned with their own needs than with my need to learn and to thereby grow. One of the primary components of learning, therefore, is my commitment to making choices--moment by moment--which will make that learning happen. If I make other choices, sadly but obviously, much less will ultimately be accomplished and I will later find myself to be significantly impoverished, weak, limited, incapable, and perhaps even dependent in ways that create even more limitation.

Within each of us is a spirit, a curiosity, or a passion which cries out for the resources, the abilities, and the opportunities to make life bigger. Those who find the unpredictability of such growth frightening, call out to us to make our lives smaller, more conventional, and more safe. To the extent that we fail to nurture that expansive spirit within

each of us, regardless of what physical or biological age we may be, we begin to die.

Doing homework is thus ultimately about choosing life over death, although it seems silly to think of something so mundane being so important. Why? Perhaps because one seems so large and the other so small, that the relationship and interconnection seems completely implausible at best. When the one who is affected by the larger question of life and death is one's self, however, it's suddenly not so trivial. Just because we do not personally know the affected one, does not make the struggle less important to that person. "As long as it only happens to someone else other than me," I've heard it said. The truth which remains is that sometimes we are someone else's "someone else."

When I do my homework, I plant something even greater than a seed within my mind and heart: I plant a possibility. What will come from any particular possibility, only time will tell. To have a mind and heart which have no significant possibilities, however, is a tragic waste of life. That most of us are not aware of this tragedy does not, unfortunately, make it less real.

Similarly, one of the possibilities desperately needed by every mind and heart is that of loving and being loved. Certain homework is necessary to create and sustain this ability and the inability to love and to be loved is a terrible tragedy, but one that often goes unaddressed.

Trust is yet another possibility, desperately needed by every relationship, the absence of which is a tragedy that is also often unaddressed. All too often our attention goes only to superficial expressions of this deeper dynamic, being more concerned about a particular material resource or logistical action than about the deeper dynamics.

I recall reading an anecdote many years ago of a small boy selling berries by going from one house to the next. A woman agreed to buy some berries from him and took the pail from him to go from her front door to her kitchen, to transfer the agreed upon amount of berries to another container. "Don't you want to follow me to be sure I don't take more than the amount for which I'm paying?" she asked the boy. He shrugged and responded, "I'd only lose a few berries. You would make yourself a thief."

In doing homework--or anything else--what kind of persons will we show ourselves to be?

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

Professional Work

The distinction between the amateur and the professional is often given as being the question of whether or not the activity produces compensation. If, for example, one does theatrical performance within a community theater production and is not paid for the performance, the person is considered to be an amateur, regardless of whatever mastery of the craft of performance was demonstrated. If, on the other hand, one is paid for one's demonstration, the performer is considered to be a professional, regardless of badly the performance may have been done.

Similarly, religious institutions and to some extent society at-large as well, hold certain opinions about the criteria essential to being designated a professional minister. Having seen literally hundreds if not thousands of examples of the sort of ministry that is thereby condoned, however, I find such opinions unreliable at best.

At the more basic level of common sense, the expertise of a practitioner of any sort is more correctly to be found within examples of the work the particular practitioner has done. That being the case, I know I am a minister whenever someone expresses gratitude for my contribution or invites my future participation in a clearly ministerial event such as a wedding, memorial service, discussion of spiritual issues, or presentation of anything that empowers personal or spiritual growth. All that is needed at that point is my sincere commitment and active dedication to serving the work as well as I possibly can.

Professional work is therefore not a question of one's identity, of the recognition or certifications one has received, but of activity which can actually be documented, evaluated, questioned, and confirmed. It is not concerned

with the ego, but with interaction--the actual doing of the particular work, using whatever resources and means are available.

The challenge to each and every practitioner who wishes to truly be an exceptional professional--with or without public acknowledgement--is to engage in not only service but also continuous ongoing development of skills and understanding. There is no final word or activity, after which there is nothing more to learn and no greater expertise to develop. When all is said and done, life invites all of us to be continually learning and growing, through whatever blessings or adversarial circumstances we encounter.

Similarly, we are all invited to become professional lovers of life; to be continually learning and growing, expanding our understanding and increasing our expertise in dealing with the wide spectrum of unpredictable events and circumstances any particular day may include. The true professional in this area is not the one who merely gloats over accomplishments, but rather the one who is engaged in processes of struggle, maintenance, accomplishment, and expansion--creating new horizons and new possibilities for those who will follow and perhaps carry the work even further.

Through ongoing study, contemplation, reflection, and ever-increasing self awareness (which is not the same as self pre-occupation), the mind and heart are taught to recognize and value many things which may have previously been completely overlooked. The spirit of the person thus begins to know with more than just the mind, to feel with more than just the heart, and to experience with more than just the body. In creating such interconnection with all surrounding life, one also inevitably becomes a more multi-dimensional person, capable of things previously written off as being miraculous impossibilities.

Professional work, therefore, is not something merely professed or economically acknowledged, but rather a complex bundle of capabilities one becomes; the transformation of an inexperienced seeker into one with experience and insight and a passion for what lies beyond common understandings. It is specifically because of this passion and ever-increasing volume of experience, that the true professional is ultimately, always, and most accurately a healer and a servant of humanity and of life itself.

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

*"No one else's awareness,
kindness, or love
can ever completely substitute
for my own;
certain acts of self-healing
or empowerment, therefore,
will be done by me or not at all."*

--Sister Who

Monetary Work

The words of Chief Seattle that "we do not inherit the land from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children" have much broader implications than mere real estate. This wisdom applies equally to the myriad of components inherent throughout the land of the [physically] living. All of humanity can be considered to be one very large and very diverse tribe. The earth's resources, if they are truly owned by anyone, are thus owned by the tribe as a whole and not exclusively by any individual member or subset of the tribe.

That we live within an economically obsessed age is rather obvious. Consider for a moment, however, that none of us owns any of the money. We do not bring any with us when we begin our physical lives and we do not take any with us when we end those lives and move back to spiritual realms of existence. Between these two points in time, we experience opportunities to learn and to practice managerial abilities.

The only right and good thing to do with money, therefore, is to accomplish the most good possible, with equal regard for ourselves, our tribe, and the world within which we physically live. Hoarding, withholding, or restricting whatever financial resources we have, from doing the most good that they could do, is a disgrace to ourselves, our abilities, and our interconnectedness with the rest of creation. Similarly, casting resources carelessly about as if those resources had no worth, no potential, and no power to heal, is also a disgrace, because it fails to utilize those resources toward their highest good.

By the resources we have received, we are invited to a ministry of healing and empowerment toward everything around us. Using such resources exclusively for unnecessary comforts or ego gratification, is a disgusting display of apathy if anyone around us is starving--physically, socially, psychologically, emotionally, or spiritually. In so doing, we disgrace both ourselves and the resources with which we've been entrusted.

It is not so much that we are judged by others or even by God, but rather that by our own actions we judge ourselves and can only expect to reap the consequences--good or bad--of whatever we do during the few short days of life on earth, with which we are entrusted. The judgment produced by actions of love is clearly preferable.

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

On a Personal Note

Sometimes my life seems too much like a bad country-western song. First there was the yet-unexplained pain in my left hip joint which grew increasingly severe over the course of six days, until it reached a maximum pain level of 9.9 out of 10. Because I have no health insurance or adequate financial resources, however, there was not a hospital, doctor, or clinic who was willing to effectively address the problem--because it was judged to be not life-threatening. I have never before experienced such extreme physical pain. Curiously, the pain seems to be finally subsiding, although its cause(s) remain a complete mystery.

Then, in spite of the huge effort I made last summer to completely resolve the problem, the roof began leaking again.

Then my Toyota pickup presented me with several hundred dollars of essential repairs which needed to be done more or less right away.

Thanks to an advance from a friend for whom I've done handyman work in the past, the mortgage was barely paid on time.

It would really help to know of a higher purpose within all of this misfortune.

Nevertheless, I continue to serve whatever ministerial opportunities arise, having recently uploaded numerous new episodes of "Sister Who Presents" to the Internet web site, www.youtube.com/denvernevaar. New shows continue to be produced monthly and poor audio within recordings has finally been resolved by the acquisition of better equipment.

Additionally, the majority of the translation of the website into a new and better software program was also recently completed.

As long as the nurturing of personal and spiritual growth continues, however, even so shall I strive to serve that work in any way I can. For every doubt I feel, I am also given a reminder that the inspirational and educational work is a blessing to countless individuals both near and far.

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

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