

What is a woman? A woman is part of what each of us is, in different quantity and quality perhaps, but nevertheless a vital ingredient. May each and all and everything blessed and loved be.



Recommended Reading:

Beyond Codependency by Melody Beatty. This book begins where **Codependent No More** ends, offering some initial replies to the question, "so what do I do now?" It isn't enough to eliminate bad habits; the void left by their removal needs to be filled with good habits. I suggest that much of the struggle involved in these sorts of changes, has to do with how unfamiliar the new good habits may be. Nevertheless, this book is a reassuring encouragement that not only does life go on, but life really can get much better than it's ever been also.

The Art of Joyful Living by Pierre Roche de Coppens and Jacques Peze. I suppose it's always the obvious that is just about the last thing we see. The authors present that life is meant to be continually oscillating and that a fair amount of current mental, emotional, and social problems are the nearly direct result of a failure to practice alternance--that is, alternating between one thing and another. Much as there is inhaling and exhaling, day and night, winter and summer, there is also a need for the mind, emotions, and spirit of each person to breathe in and out also. In clear and immediately applicable ways, this book offers a pattern for beginning to live in harmony with yourself.

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Sister Who's Perspective

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Life is a collaborative effort, encompassing more than we know. In a time of "information overload," news, communication, and travel across great distances is common, yet 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.

Recommended Movies:

"How to Make an American Quilt"

A young woman writing a college thesis learns the wildly diverse stories behind the matriarchs of her family, the ways that each of them coped with life's challenges, and how incongruous things add up to the totality of a life and are still able (within the context of the totality) to be beautiful. Was it John Lennon who first said, "Life is what happens when you're making other plans"? This movie encourages each of us to honestly and compassionately accept whatever has actually happened, and to move beyond into the realization of each thing's inherent (if also unusual) beauty.

"Mr. Holland's Opus"

This overview of a person's entire life reminds of how little we know the distant impact of our life's events, and of how easy it is to think of mundane daily tasks as meaningless. Yet the sum of each person's life is staggering, if ever viewed in both its detail and its entirety. Through a fascinating range of experience, this movie encourages all to be faithful in playing whatever part they've been given to play, that the symphony of life may turn out to be more beautiful and expansive than any of us have ever dared to imagine.

Ownership of the Soul

In response to the suggestion from a number of people over the years, that I would become a very public personality and thus have a much more extensive ministry much more quickly if I was willing to engage in a bit more controversy and sensationalism, I have often responded that it is my intention to get through life honestly and thereby retain ownership of my own soul.

It is quite astonishing actually, how much of the current world's functioning almost seems to depend upon psychological and social games and strategies. Where I grew up frequently hearing that "honesty is the best policy," it now seems that life is more of a poker game in which one should never betray the particular cards one is holding. Unfortunately I learned honesty too well, to ever be any good at poker.

Honesty is hardly boring, however, considering the vast amount of symbolic and poetic interpretation that is available to every creative mind and heart. While I would agree that some may have more aptitude, I do not concede for one moment that anyone is incapable of creativity--especially if creativity is (and I believe it is) the voice of the soul.

It would be interesting, if such things could be easily measured, to take a survey comparing obvious creativity with the degree to which the particular person still retains ownership of their own soul. Have those who've actually "sold their souls" to particular companies or interests also become less creative, and have those who've not done so maintained a high level of creativity?

I often read folk tales and listened to songs on the radio during childhood, that spoke of someone competing with the devil for the ownership of his or her own soul. In that this warning was subtly so common, it surprised me to find when I grew up that it was actually very difficult to provide one's self with basic necessities without resorting to some form of the pattern of prostitution: "Even if I don't feel like it, I will give you what you want in exchange for money. I will practice dishonesty for the sake of economic gain."

I suppose there are some people who actually are happy doing whatever it is that they do, to the extent that no dishonesty is necessary, but I doubt very much that anyone would argue that such people are the exception rather than the rule.

My intention in bringing this up, however, is not discourage everyone by announcing that we're all practicing some form or degree of slavery, but rather to have each and every person look more carefully at the kind of world we're creating around us. What do we require of those around us and do we really need to require whatever it is?

Is it possible to simply give to everyone in need, as we are enabled to give, if for no other reason than just because we all take turns being the one in need?

It reminds me of a childhood game often played in the wintertime where I grew up, called "king of the hill." The target was usually the summit of a large pile of snow. Accomplishing the challenge of becoming "king of the hill," however, only meant that everyone else was now an adversary interested only in removing you from the top of the pile.

What an accurate and appalling metaphor this is for so much of our world today, fighting for positions of prominence in situations that melt like snow as soon as the weather changes. I much prefer the annual television Christmas special of the children who joined forces to Create a person Unlike any person who'd ever lived before--a person made

**"I think God has given
a past to remember
and a future to envision,
because I am too often standing
too close to the present,
to be able to see what it is
that I am actually doing."**

---Sister Who

of snow, who subsequently magically came to life and went on to find ways of surviving despite his unique vulnerabilities.

Yet I think there is more of the magical snowman within each of us than the competitive wintertime monarch. Vulnerabilities, uniqueness, blind innocence, and dependence upon others, yes, but also a certain magical ability to find whatever answers we need and survive in spite of all that comes against us. And I believe that it is in just such honest and honorable survival that we retain ownership of our own souls. May each and all and everything blessed and loved be.

For Anyone Who's Interested and Happens to be in that Area:

Copies of all except the most recent television shows featuring Sister Who, the majority of my written correspondence, countless photographs, official records of the Sisters of Incessant Revelation, and even some personal journals, are now all the property of the Western History Department of the Denver Public Library, located at 10 West 14 Avenue Parkway, in Denver, Colorado. These materials cannot be removed from there, but can either be viewed there or copies can be made at whatever cost, for research or personal purposes. Perhaps someone may want to write a book about me someday. Considering how I continue daily to learn more about what it means to be Sister Who, however, I doubt that anyone will ever have the last word concerning the unique sacred clown that I am.

But then, doesn't every life have a story, and isn't the preservation of such stories the purpose for which libraries were created? In any case, it may have been immodest of me, but I thought it considerate to leave behind whatever insights I can, regarding the wondrous mystery that is the unfolding of life. (Also, I just got tired of dragging all that paperwork through life with me.)

What is a Woman?

Please remember as I begin to write this, that such definitions are never completed, as long as one example of such a person is still living and adding to the definition. Nevertheless, here's a perspective on the subject.

The first thing to remember when addressing such a subject as this, is what is apparent or obvious is never all there is to anyone or anything. The next thing is to remember that each person is more than the incarnation of any single quality he or she might possess. Someone who rescues a child from a burning building is more than just a hero or a heroine; he or she might also be someone who cuts others off in traffic or cheats on income tax. Each of us is a combination of good and bad qualities, and each day sees us expressing qualities from both categories. This might be a problem, except that life is about growing through experience and not about being perfect.

Being a woman is obviously not something I can describe from experience, but as a sacred clown my intention is only to encourage each of us to look a little further, listen a little closer, think a little deeper, and remember that each of us is more than just the obvious part of ourselves we already know (or think we know).

Ultimately, the question is more important than whatever answers we provide. In asking the question at all, we dispense with the idea that womanhood can be contained within being mother, daughter, or wife, and indirectly state that we expect something more. It also does not seem that a woman is not a woman without some other sort of comparative being next to her. Without a man, a woman would still be a woman. Without a child, a woman may still find herself being a mother, giving birth to some sort of new life. Without a husband, a woman may still find herself to be a wife to some other life or activity.

Even the body does not define womanhood, considering the growing number of surgical operations that have been done to create physical/psychological harmony. In one of my television shows, I interviewed a transgenderal person and was quite impressed with the calm sense of personal integrity that had been hammered out of the understandably confusing process of such radical self-discovery.

I suppose the conclusion for each of us is that we are whatever we are, and each of us is the only one who can really say whatever it is that he or she is. As Sister Who, my strongest conclusion is that a person is a person is a person--and that's the first thing I must always remember.

Beyond that, personal qualities are for identifying individual persons and not for placing negative judgements on others. Each description and aptitude of each person we ever meet contains volumes of metaphors and insights. One particular bible verse even says that people have sometimes entertained angels without being aware of it. Perhaps it is we ourselves who are a sort of angel with amnesia, not fully remembering the divine light in which we formerly lived and which now lives in hiding within us, waiting to shine again.

But what is a woman? It would not be original at all for me to say that we are all a part of each other. Drawing upon this ancient wisdom, however, it brings me face to face with the realization that there is something of woman within me. Perhaps due to my particular socialization, when I first thought of becoming Sister Who, I confess that I momentarily balked at the idea of using female pronouns in reference to myself. The voice within immediately prompted, "Why? Is there something wrong with being a woman? What if you had been born a woman--would that really be okay?" I confess that it took me a while to adjust to this, to be able to answer "Yes, it really would be okay."

Sister Who is not, in my opinion, female impersonation, but rather a deeper level of personhood where genders, orientations, and ways of being are integrated without being weakened. The same pattern presents itself to the human race, encouraging that fully embracing whatever womanhood one possesses individually, communally, nationally, or internationally, brings a unique and necessary strength to the body that is the human race, that is each land and nation, that is each city, that is each individual.