

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

There are moments which pass too quickly and others which seem like they will never end. It is vital to remember, however, that beyond ever end is the possibility of a new beginning. Countless examples of this populate our diverse life experiences.

In encountering each new beginning, however, it is equally important to remember that the new moment is a complex combination of the past and the present and that within the present, we are given opportunities to make our own contributions to the larger wholeness within which we live.

I offer this month's essays as food for thought, hoping that each of you will also find a larger and more expansive combination of circumstances within which to experience the magnitude of the wondrous persons we each are.

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

attempt to meet a need. Looking at the world around me, however, if everything I've just said is true, it seems that a lot of people have forgotten why they're here.

With the volume of available distractions all around us, it is easy to forget why we're here and it is also easy to forget that care-packages need care too. Practices of giving need to be circular rather than linear and sometimes to include as many participants as possible. The one who gives needs to receive. The apple tree bears minimal fruit if it is never watered. Poor and working class people cannot even consider serving the rich if the needs and life-experience of the poor and working class are ignored.

Whether in fact one is born into economically rich or poor surroundings or into a particular race, has often been described as the "accident of birth." One common phrase even goes a step further by saying, "there but for the grace of God go I." Many other sources speak of humanity as being one humongously vast yet very interconnected family. From whichever perspective one wants to choose, all of our fates and all of our life-journeys are extensively and inseparably intertwined.

Consequently, we would do well to quickly help anyone in need as wisely and compassionately as possible. Therein, however, lies the challenge. Wisdom and compassion, by their very nature, argue against enabling, trivializing, abusing, or objectifying each other. It may be convenient to do so, but it is never wise or loving. Life is about engaging in relationship rather than following a recipe.

Thankfully, alternatives to negative behaviors are available. The most obvious begins with the face within our own mirrors. Our own choices and our own dedication to love and wisdom may be the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, waiting to be both discovered and shared—if only we will finally see ourselves for what we are; the faults, yes, but also the virtues; the mistakes, yes, but also the touches of love.

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

Yet Another Care-Package

If each person is a care-package from God, the overpopulation by humanity suggests that we are drowning in too many blessings. Are this many care-packages truly needed? Well, if there's something really important to say and we're just not listening, what else could God do—except to send messenger after messenger, hoping that one will get through to us? Perhaps it's time we paid attention.

It is not difficult at all to surmise that we live within a very violent world. The curious thing I noticed about Violence this past week, is how consistently its traveling companion is Need—they seem to travel absolutely *everywhere* together! Wherever violence occurs, need follows. Wherever need occurs, violence eventually appears. The form may occasionally be psychological and emotional rather than physical—which may make the particular need or violence less visible, but this does not make the particular need or violence less real.

In being one of God's care-packages, therefore, each person may be interpreted as an

Yet Another Sunrise

If I stand facing toward the west on a high place just before dawn, all that is visible is darkness. If there is an audience of one or more people looking back at me, however, what they will also see is the emergence of light behind me. My efforts to create a memorable live television show approximately one month ago to celebrate twenty years of unconventional ministry using symbolism and metaphor were, from my perspective, darkness and disaster. From the perspective of viewers with whom I've spoken, however, there was an emergence of light. In front of my eyes was a scene of utter chaos within the studio. In front of their eyes was an unusual person sharing heartfelt insights, memories, lyrics, and dreams.

A particular challenge of most sunrises is that they are not seen. I do not get up before dawn every day and go out into my backyard to wait and watch for the sun appear above the eastern horizon. Similarly, there are many times when God quietly makes an entrance into the mundane and often frustrating events of my life, to effect a positive change that is so without fanfare that I sometimes fail to notice it happening at all.

Sometimes this is as it should be. As wonderful as it would be for me personally to watch the sunrise each morning, it is sometimes more important that I dedicate myself to serving others' personal and spiritual growth and turn to address them in whatever ways I can, wherever they may be standing, sitting, moving, or living. I must pay attention to the identity and language of those whom I am addressing, if I am to effectively communicate whatever intuitions or insights God has placed within my heart and mind. I must also take heed of how they respond—not in order to negatively judge what I have offered, but rather in order to continually improve my communication.

At other times, a lack of specific awareness is impoverishing and in its own indirect way may seek to serve as a wakeup call, inviting me to step beyond the familiar and do what I haven't done in order to see what I haven't seen—and hopefully to begin to understand what was previously not at all understood. When I later reflect upon the self-identity and self-awareness which preceded the experience, I find that I can no longer view myself, my life, others, or the lives of others in the same limited way as I previously did. The metaphorical sunrise has subtly and quietly changed everything.

The task of welcoming sunrises, therefore, is a task of welcoming constructive change and

the emergence of light within our lives. Illusions may rise in various ways within each day and fall within the next. The recurrence of sunrises assures us that this can be a good thing and encourages us to distinguish between that which is necessary to a day, to a night, and to a new day from that which is abiding continuously through all days, nights, and successive days.

Yet another sunrise is the rebirth of hope that wrong things can somehow be made right, that lies can be replaced with truth, and that death must always yield to new life. Drawing from biblical text, one could easily interpret that faith, hope, and love are three basic foundation stones of life—each one more essential than we sometimes realize. Within any occurrence of all three, however, the complete absence of the Divine is virtually impossible. Perhaps one of the gifts of human existence, however, is the infinite variety of ways and forms within which the Divine is able to manifest. Within every report of such that I've ever heard, however, is an experience of an all-encompassing awe—so pay attention whenever awe sweeps over you, rendering you speechless in wonder and admiration, because that which is truly God may be quietly tip-toeing across the stage, somewhere nearby.

As important as it therefore is to pay heed and give attention to literal sunrises from time to time, it is equally important that I remember to pause from time to time during any presentation, to at least momentarily re-identify with my audience, and to at least briefly turn around to see whatever it is that they see, before continuing with my acts of service. We are all learners. Rigidly and exclusively identifying myself as the teacher, the speaker, the presenter, the performer, or any similar designation, will impoverish and impede my own personal and spiritual growth, thereby restricting my ability to share with my audience anything more than I currently know and removing from me any ability to learn from my audience.

This is why I long ago concluded that hierarchical relationships (in anything more than a purely facilitative and pragmatically organizational sense) are adversarial to growth and therefore to life. The treasures of the Divine are hidden within each of us and—ideally—none of them should be overlooked. Figuring out how to continuously discover such treasures and how to effectively bring them out into the light, is ultimately the primary concern and action of each new sunrise.

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

Yet Another Chance

Polarized thinking insists that everything is either black or white, one way or the other, right or wrong—that there is no in-between, no shade of gray, and no room for potential or possibility. It is easy, therefore, to imagine that a mistake of any sort is in some way a permanent and fatal failure. If such a belief becomes entrenched within the heart, it is all the more difficult to eradicate.

Into this discouraging mix, however, God chose to introduce anomalous possibilities of forgiveness, reconstruction, restitution, and healing. It might even be said that the human body was designed and equipped to heal and that it is only our lack of understanding that prevents this, every time any injury occurs. Thankfully, bit by bit, we are learning more and more about the ability of the human body to heal. Within this and every other area, however, we would do well to do so holistically—intelligently integrating scientific, physical, and medical abilities with social, spiritual, psychological, and ethical principles.

All that being said, one of life's most marvelous qualities is its ability to persist by slipping through the cracks in the sidewalk, nurturing various species back from the brink of extinction, and taking on forms as incongruous as the platypus in order to deal with environmental circumstances and concerns. A question that remains, however, is whether given a choice between extinction and alteration, we would be willing to change our form in order to preserve our essence. Two considerations come to mind.

On one hand, I would need to be certain that the most important elements of my essence would survive the alteration with integrity; I would need to be sure that any changes that occurred would be only changes of form and not changes of essence. If all indications were that I would no longer be who I truly am, I would consider this to

*"Where need is ignored,
violence will follow.
Where violence occurs,
need will be present.
Those who desire peace,
must work to eradicate need."*

-- Sister Who

be a trap and not a step of growth and I would resist with everything I had available to me. Indeed, it could even be said that the particular life within me would be resisting its own demise.

To the extent that I am aware of being a life greater than my current form, however, I may not cling as tightly to the current form, without any additional concern for the current form's abilities and limitations. If it is the life of my soul and the life of my community which matter to me more than the physical life of my own body, then an act of self-sacrifice may be appropriate, but (perhaps because I am an American) I adamantly believe that such a choice can legitimately only be made by the individual directly affected and not by the individual's family, community, or government (for the simple reason that the particular individual will be the one most directly affected by the consequences of the particular individual's choice).

The wonder of life's unfolding, however, is that such opportunities, choices, and chances do exist. The challenge to our individual and collective awareness is that the true nature and future implications of these opportunities, choices, and chances is rarely obvious within their initial occurrence. Indeed, the most magical moments of life are rarely recognized as such when they occur.

What is not terribly difficult to show is that such chances are likely to occur within each and every moment of life. One could therefore conclude that we are much more blessed than we generally realize, but this does not justify being dictatorial or judgmental about attitudes, actions, or conversations. Rather, what we can draw from this is greater awareness of life's yet-undiscovered potential—that we are and perhaps always will be, more than we are currently aware of being.

The world is filled with broken and wounded people and I sometimes wonder whether some have broken beyond the current limits of our communal abilities to heal. Sometimes God makes up the difference between the end of our limitations and the particular individual's actual needs, but sometimes not. On this point I am thankful for a quote from a controversial faith-healer named Kathryn Kuhlman, "I don't know why God doesn't heal everyone, but I'm very afraid of those who say they do." I for one am content to do my best and leave that mystery in the hands of an infinitely wise and loving God—who seems eager to provide yet another chance, again and again, for me and for you, to grow in wisdom and love.

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

Yet Another Perspective

Logistical and logical reasons for exclusion are always available, but it is important to remember that exclusion virtually always includes limitation. Among the myriad of possible examples of this would be any extremely questionable attempt to tell the story of humanity's musical evolution while excluding all mention of people of diverse or contrasting ethnicities. Asians, Africans, Americans, Europeans—every category of humanity one can name has made a contribution. To omit any of them, is to tell an incomplete—and therefore inaccurate—story of the breadth, height, depth, and diversity of humanity's music.

The same could be said of spirituality, philosophy, sociology, or any other category of human experience. It is all of our perspectives and experiences intelligently integrated that provide the most complete and truthful presentation of humanity's past and present and give the greatest empowerment to humanity's future. It would be a form of self-sabotage or even suicide to do any less.

Ignorance and arrogance have persuaded many to pursue a more solitary existence, neglecting their relationships and interconnection with others and sometimes even resisting any knowledge that they have in fact thereby impoverished themselves. What they additionally fail to consider is that they are snubbing God by rejecting consideration of an alternative perspective and a potentially empowering relationship, essentially thereby building for themselves a cage within which there will never be adequate room to dance and to celebrate life as God intended.

We were not created for purposes of limitation, but rather to discover empowerment through relationship between a myriad of diverse examples. Each of us is an example of what sort of person God is able to create. By refusing to see each person as at least one tiny example of God's own inherent diversity, we essentially make God smaller (at least within our lives) as well.

The universe invites expansiveness of soul, of wisdom, and of love. Accomplishing this to any significant degree means welcoming as many perspectives as are available, at whatever rate we are able to absorb and to integrate the new understandings that each new perspective brings.

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

On a Personal Note

It is sometimes amusingly irritating that while I am attempting to lament a disastrous occurrence, I learn that God has used my experience of disaster to bless someone. In the ongoing experience of my humanity, mixtures of grief and gratitude are usually rather confusing—but I am nevertheless thankful that they are there.

As a similar example of the confusing experience of mixed emotions, I am thankful, excited, and intimidated that a meeting with three friends a couple of days ago resulted in a tentative plan for production of thirty-six more episodes of "Sister Who Presents" between now and the end of August. In eighteen years of public access television production, such an ambitious schedule has never before been attempted. On a related note, one of the three friends (who have all offered to do camera operation) is facing some health challenges currently and all prayers and positive thoughts for a swift and complete recovery are very much appreciated.

With regard to the ongoing development of my home into an interfaith spiritual center, I hope to make significant progress on an open structure around and above the sacred circle in the backyard this weekend, upon which vines will be encouraged to grow. This structure will include unseen amethyst crystals, which will hopefully empower the spiritual energy of the space. Once the construction has been completed, an updated photo will be posted on the Internet page of www.GodSpaceSanctuary.org/SacredCircle.html.

With regard to the annual Pridefest celebration here in Denver, Colorado, it was made clear to me by the organizers that I was not welcome so I did not attend, but I have tried to reframe this disappointment as reminder that the ministerial work that I do needs to be even more inclusive rather than focused upon any particular marginalized population. I do plan, however, to participate in the annual Pridefest celebration in Colorado Springs, Colorado in mid-July.

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

"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).

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