

Sister Who's Perspective

Sister Who's Perspective, Issue #62, August 2004, 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

Finding my Orbit

It is often difficult to know where I should go and what I should do, considering that there is a ministry for Sister Who to do in all places and times where there are people, but also that the people within a specific time and place may not be willing or able to receive my contribution.

Like Copernicus and Galileo, I am trying to map the universe in which I live, to know what lies at the center of my life's unfolding, but there are so many other cosmic elements swirling around me that it's rather like the time I struggled to find my way out of Grand Central Station in New York City.

Literally thousands of people were moving rapidly around me toward dozens of different doorways and all I wanted to find, was a way out of the building to the street, so that I could once again orient myself. Within the churning waves of humanity inside the building, I had no idea which way was north, nor upon which level of the building I was standing, nor which of the thousands of other people was headed in the direction I wanted to go and therefore the best person to follow.

Whether by serendipity or divine providence, I did finally reach a level which included windows, indicating at the very least that I was above ground level again and my hope that where there was a window there would also be a door nearby, was thankfully rewarded.

The way this lesson came into play again just yesterday, was when in my continuing desire to live a full, rounded-out life, I decided to attend a political rally (I was not in costume, speculating that in this specific instance, Sister Who's attire would be more than the security staff could mentally handle).

Arriving early and being the sort of person who naturally likes to help, I volunteered to help out in whatever ways I could. After carrying in band equipment, handing out signs, and assisting several people in wheelchairs into the building, I stationed myself near the people in wheelchairs since they would be unable to move around once things got started and might nevertheless require some sort of assistance at any point during the long wait before the rally finally started or during the rally itself. The

people in the wheelchairs were grateful to have someone available but a particular volunteer staff member with no regard for any particular person's needs except her own, was for reasons unknown extremely determined to exclude me.

When she threatened an all-out argument which would have been extremely disruptive and escalated the situation in a very bad direction, I chose to leave in peace rather than accept her invitation for open conflict. This is not a completely accurate description, however, since it left an inordinate amount of conflict within myself, because of my commitment to being as inclusive as possible.

Perhaps it was simply her own control issues with which she was subconsciously dealing, finding herself in the midst of chaos and looking for something or someone she could in some small way control. Perhaps it was simply a projection of some time in the past when she had been excluded in exactly the same way. I doubt very much, in any case, that she gave it much conscious thought, but I have been unable to stop thinking about the incident, wishing I knew how I could have addressed the situation without either surrendering to her misguided will or accepting the invitation to open conflict.

My conclusion has mostly been that the situation was inherently self-sabotaging, since clear organizational relationships had not been defined. I could not go to her supervisor to address the situation, since neither she nor I had any clear understanding of who her supervisor was.

Adding to the confusion and chaos were at least three different security forces which were not in conscious collaboration with one another but rather attempting to operate in relatively parallel fashion. Local police, building security, and Secret Service personnel came and went without introducing themselves or even identifying themselves to each other, such that a breach of security could have been easily accomplished by simply wearing an official-looking uniform.

In the midst of the muddle, was me, trying

to maintain a certain peaceful centeredness and perform acts of service for people with certain limitations to their abilities, which most others there did not have; trying to find my own orbit around a belief in being an active responsible citizen of a supposedly democratic nation and feeling very wounded by this woman's determination to exclude me.

A different way to understand this challenge, however, is that I was somehow being guided to a better orbit than the one in which I found myself at that auditorium.

One possible conclusion, therefore, is that political rallies are simply not where I belong. If everyone jumped to this conclusion, however, any semblance of democracy would be a complete failure.

As Sister Who I feel a great responsibility to set the best possible example, so I am in no hurry to accept such a conclusion. Nevertheless, after much reflection and soul-searching (after, not before), it does seem that I am called to more fundamental aspects of life than the specifics of a political rally.

Part of my orbit is to encourage people to respect and include each other more. Rather than respond with an apathetic "I can't help you," to respond instead with "Let me see what I can find that might take care of that." Rather than resigning one's self to life being a difficult struggle, to respond instead with every possible act of kindness or encouragement. Life is hard enough; it doesn't need our help to make it even harder.

When we are given an organizational task and managerial responsibilities, it is essential that we do not abdicate our position to any available bully, which would allow the replication of mental and emotional baggage in others. Part of being healers of the world in which we live, means taking a stand whenever necessary and putting a halt to the cycles of brokenness with which human civilization is virtually inundated.

If we do not make ourselves available to peaceful confrontation, then the confrontation will express itself without peace. The issue or need from which the confrontation springs will nevertheless refuse to leave, until it has been fully satisfied.

Therefore, if I find a particular issue resurfacing, there is some aspect which has been overlooked and not received its complete healing.

Please, listen, look, take the time, and give the energy, to be healers of life today.

New Promotional Brochures

At long last a new promotional brochure has been created, which offers a concise phrasing of Sister Who's basic identity and the focus which has always been at the heart of this unique ministry.

If you would like to distribute any of these to any friends, professional colleagues, businesses, or non-profit organizations in your area, feel free to request as many copies of the brochure as you would like.

If you think there is an organization to which I should send a copy of the brochure, please provide with me with the name and address of the company and hopefully also the name of a specific contact person within the company.

I am planning to send one copy to each of you within the next week or so, to give you a first-hand view of this new resource material. Those of you who receive this newsletter electronically will receive the brochure as a two-page "pdf" (Adobe Acrobat) file. If you would like to receive one or a quantity in printed form, please tell me the address to which you would like them sent.

My hope is that this brochure will help to expand the ministry of Sister Who and also encourage the work toward being more financially self-sustaining.

Special thanks regarding the revision of this brochure goes to my friend, Sunny Griffin, the CEO of Astar Skin Care (www.astaraskincare.com), whom I first met through Sister Who's involvement in the Steps to Awareness Festival in Telluride, Colorado. The content and layout of the brochure improved dramatically, after receiving her expert evaluation.

Blessings, love, and peace to each and every one of you, now and always,

Sister Who

"No commitment to violence
will ever negate the effect
of a single act of kindness."

--Sister Who

Relational Gravity

I've often muttered that it's always the obvious which escapes our attention, though I rather doubt that I'm the first one to ever express that idea. What comes to mind at the moment is the perhaps most fundamental aspect of our relationship with the planet upon which we live--gravity.

Were it not for this inherent downward pull, a leap for joy would be a leap into the suffocation of outer space, drifting away into the void as we protest, "This is not what I had in mind." Gravity sustains our relationship with the planet earth and in providing just the right amount of force, allows us to run, dance, jump, and move with relative precision and predictability. Too much force and we would collapse on the ground, unable to breathe, gather food, or interact with our environment; too little force and our muscles would be weak and undeveloped.

Of late, I've noticed that nearly all of my phone calls and letters go unanswered. The faces and names of many dear friends cross my mind dozens of times throughout each day, but I am at a loss to know whether they are okay, whether they are in trouble and if there's anything I can do to help, and most especially when or whether I will hear from them next. Was the last time we saw each other, obviously unknown to either of us at the time, the last time we ever would see each other?

Were it just a specific friend or two or even a specific group, I would be more inclined to think there might be something amiss between me and that specific person or group. In that this same pattern is being repeated by large numbers of people who are not (to the best of my knowledge) involved or interactive in any way with each other, I have to wonder whether there's something much bigger going on, perhaps related to some sort of cosmic shift or leap of evolution, such as my New Age friends are often suggesting.

More within our reach is the possibility of societal evolution. In that societal evolution is the sum of all of our individual contributions, it is both something which we can influence by working together and something which we are generally unable to influence as solitary individuals.

The theme which once again recurs within such a possibility is the challenge of creating a collaborative global community. It seems life is presenting this challenge to the current generation

in more ways than anyone has counted.

When attempting anything new and unprecedented, it becomes vital to "ground" one's self in past experience, spiritual and emotional centeredness, and strong familial or community relationships. All of these together comprise a worthy launching pad from which to explore what lies ahead, above, within, or around which is specifically unfamiliar.

Without a certain kind of gravity, our journey loses the ability to be intentional and is little more than a balloon drifting in the wind, supported or victimized by whatever is encountered but unable to make any choices regarding any of its experiences.

Within many systems of spirituality, it is customary to form a circle and hold hands. I suggest that by doing so, we are creating a sort of gravity for each other, helping each other to maintain focus, clear thinking, and the ability to move in a specifically constructive or positive fashion rather than inadvertently and unintentionally becoming each others' adversaries.

I am not in favor of viewing life as inherently adversarial, but I sometimes wonder if life is taking a divide and conquer strategy. Everywhere I look, people are racing to keep up, looking for faster and faster machines to support their participation.

Many if not most of the people I know have lately gotten so caught up in the race to keep up with life's increasing pace that more and more phone calls, conversations, and letters simply never happen. What will we give up next? Regular eating and sleeping habits? Some already have and of those who have, the lucky ones get by while others pay an increasingly high price of diminished mental, physical, and emotional health.

In a very real sense, communication lines are being cut, societal gravity is failing, and we are drifting off into a suffocating space.

The time has come to do the ritual of initiating global community and the first requirement is that we must all open our eyes, come to the circle, and join hands.

Then we can sing again the oldest of songs, calling for the love and unity of diversity which were essential to the first human civilization so very long ago. Then whether we have the trained feet of a ballerina or the misshapen feet of John Merrick, the so-called Elephant Man, we will begin to dance together the Dance of Life and we will dance it with joy, as it was done so long ago at the rising of the sun on the very first day--and we shall be reborn.

Rodeo Collaboration

I am happy to assist others with their events which somehow celebrate or expand life experience, specifically because in some way or another, all experience of life affects the growth and development of souls in some way or another.

As a recent example, I provided assistance as what one might call "backstage security" for the Rocky Mountain Regional Rodeo, facilitated by the Colorado Gay Rodeo Association.

As I contemplated the relationships and events occurring around me, I became increasingly amazed at the way animals and people were continuously challenging each other to do better than they'd ever done before; to even perhaps do the very best that could be done within any specific set of circumstances.

In a curious sort of adversarial harmony, each sought to surprise the other with some circumstance the other was not expecting, only to find as often as not, that the other immediately adapted and thereby successfully met the challenge.

The thrill and victory of the overall event was therefore demonstrated most effectively within a particular moment when a rider and a bull put on an impressive display--without any prior planning or communication--for a very long ten seconds.

As the bull leapt about the show ring, jumping and twisting in a wild sort of dance, the rider was able to match the dance, step for step, for a longer time than anyone else that day had so far been succeeded in doing. With each passing second, the crowd cheered louder at the burst of energy and vitality which filled the show ring.

A bull that failed to jump and twist with any enthusiasm would have been disappointing. A rider who was unable to harmonize with the bulls' movements and therefore was quickly unseated, generally showed obvious signs of disappointment also. For the most part, no abilities were increased by such an occurrence.

The point of doing the rodeo was specifically to challenge one's self to do more than had previously been done and also to show those in the audience new examples of human and animal potential and capabilities--perhaps beyond what anyone in the audience would have otherwise even imagined.

Yet while the audience was having its individual and collective minds expanded, and riders were expanding both minds and bodies by direct engagement with an adversarial force, it was also

everyone's concern that there be (as much as possible) no injuries. Paramedics, veterinarians, and rodeo clowns were all close at hand, occasionally risking their own lives, should any event take an undesired and destructive turn.

Perhaps the most amusing event, peculiar to gay rodeos, was the "Wild Drag Race." A wild steer would be released with a long rope tied around its horns, the other end of which was held by a woman. A man standing a short distance away would run to help hold the rope and then to drag the steer across a line in the center of the arena. At this point, a person in drag (usually just a dress and a wig) was supposed to get on the steer and ride it back across the center line. More difficult than it might sound, only a few competitors succeeded.

An additional reminder I found within observing the mostly friendly dance with challenges and adversarial circumstances, was the need to remain mentally and spiritually focused upon deeper causes of behavior and circumstances. An inadequate knowledge of why circumstances and challenges turned out as they did, could prevent a rodeo participant from successfully anticipating the next adversarial movement with which to harmonize.

A successful bull-ride, for example, would not be accomplished by focusing upon a particular way that a particular bull jumped upon a particular occasion, because the bull might not jump that way during its next turn in the ring with yet another rider seeking to establish a new personal-best in this category of competition.

Rather, the rider would become more experienced and thus able to handle more diverse challenges by becoming more aware of all of the different ways the bull was able to jump and how a rider would be able to harmonize with each specific contrasting movement.

I do not mean, however, that the rider therefore carries a mental dictionary of possibilities during each ride. An intuitive and perhaps even spiritual communication seemed to be occurring.

In any case, the rodeo was one more place in which relationships could be expanded and spirits could grow, so I was happy to be a part of it.

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