

Sister Who's Perspective

Sister Who's Perspective, Issue #122, August 2009, 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

From my first year of college to the present, I have been confronted with the subtle but nevertheless ongoing argument between the fields of sociology and psychology. In general, one sees only the societal categories and the other sees only the individuals. Which is more real or more important than the other? The answer depends upon whom one asks. For my part, I continue to strive toward integration, but confess to leaning toward psychology and individuality.

The divisive question at the heart of the argument, nevertheless, seems to be that of where to draw the line between "me" and "us"; what is inherently me and what is more than me? I have often been challenged by people wanting me to be more like "us" in ways that I found were not true for "me." Hopefully this newsletter offers some food for thought for your own discernment in this area.

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

Woundedness that is Mine

It is understandable if at first glance, we wish to be perpetually happy, healthy, wise, and wealthy. Once we understand what this generally produces, however, the uninterrupted maintenance of such states seems less appealing. As much as I would like to believe that having experienced such things, I would never need to do so again, I am repeatedly reminded by others around me, that humans are remarkably forgetful creatures.

To be a complete, whole, and holistic person, therefore, I must share in the task of keeping myself mindful--of remembering both the good and the bad that I have experienced and that I have done or been. If I ever forget that I too am capable of gross insensitivity, callous disregard, narcissistic preoccupation, and selfishly conspicuous consumption, I quickly and easily slip into habits of being condescending or judgmental toward others; I become oblivious to the fact that every time I point a finger at someone else, I have three more fingers

pointing back at myself.

As much as wallowing in woundedness denies the reality of our virtues and strips our souls of their wings, denying our woundedness severs our connections with our roots and leaves us as a balloon without a tether, blown about chaotically by every breeze that comes along. Every word we hear from any of a million possible sources, suddenly has us speaking, seeing, and behaving in some alternative manner. Who we ourselves really are, cannot be determined, because we spend all of our time mirroring or demonstrating some aspect of someone else, leaving us without integrity.

When I recognize the woundedness that has been my personal experience and that it is my experience and not someone else's, I move a little closer to transforming the dark and dirty twisted forms of my roots into branches and leaves bursting with life, sending out new leaves in the spring and releasing them to dance colorfully away in the wind when autumn comes.

At the same time, however, I am more than the sum of my roots, my painful past experiences, and the many things others intended to teach me. I am also partially a creature of my own making, one who makes choices and embraces the consequences of my choices responsibly, and a man continually engaged in further growth and development.

I can often be more than my wounds, but I cannot truly and completely be myself without their inclusion. As true as the branches and flowers are, the roots are equally as true and equally as essential to the ongoing life of any plant or tree. Within every tree is a miraculous presentation of the integration of life: higher vibrations of leaves swaying in the wind, lower vibrations of roots remaining almost completely motionless within the ground, and everything that can fill the spectrum in between--by God's grace, love, and wisdom, it is all me. To remain me, it must remain embraced and integrated.

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

Wholeness that is Mine

When the Titanic sailed across the northern Atlantic Ocean that fateful night, the captain had an intellectual understanding that the part of the iceberg which was visible above the surface of the water was the smallest part and also the least dangerous part. The reminder which was driven home in a tragic way that night, was that the unseen is often more substantial than the seen.

The same principle viewed from another perspective, however, instead of inspiring fear, may inspire gratitude. We can see a certain brightness upon objects that confirms the presence of sunlight, but the sunlight itself is invisible. Invisible or not, however, its resulting warmth and illumination are essential to the continuance of life on earth.

Similarly, each of us may be an iceberg with hidden points of sensitivity. Certain questions, words, or contexts may abruptly bring out into the open our most adversarial qualities, perhaps even in ways that are unintentionally but tragically wounding to others. We can only hope within such moments that those around us are sufficiently able to forgive and to also tolerate our imperfections, to give us another chance.

Conversely, certain questions, words, or contexts may abruptly bring out into the open our most noble qualities, perhaps even providing an opportunity to be a hero, to speak or act and make a positive difference within the unfolding of life.

Why would such qualities not be already known to coworkers, family, or friends? Because such qualities are more often invisible, hidden beneath surface appearances in such a way that even we ourselves sometimes believe the words, when we are told that certain actions or accomplishments are impossible for us to ever do. Until we try, we will never know for certain what our limits actually are.

In the words of T.S. Elliot which I read within a poster I saw many years ago, "Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go." Returning to the metaphor of the iceberg, only those who will dive deep and explore and measure whatever they find there, will ever begin to understand how much of who and what they are lies below the surface.

Considering the virtually limitless treasures therefore hidden within each of us, life has the potential to be a fascinating endless adventure of discovering ourselves, each other, and the

spectrum of relationships we can build between the two. Isolating one's self, however, produces ignorance and impotence, exposing us to the possibility of collisions such as the one which sent the Titanic to the bottom of the ocean and thousands of people to their deaths. How curious that even the ship itself was a metaphor of disconnected humanity, isolating individuals from one another by language and economic class, instead of making any real attempt to build bridges of understanding within the humanity onboard.

In a very real sense, humanity remains onboard the Titanic, headed toward a dreadfully large iceberg (berg, by the way, being the German word for mountain), having now (as they did then) the opportunity to meet and learn from each other so that greater collaboration may turn a disastrous collision into an awe-inspiring close encounter with a timeless natural wonder--something thousands of times larger than our vessel that, like us, floats along within an even larger sea.

When I remember my wholeness, that there is more to me than of which even I myself am presently aware, the word "impossible" becomes less a cause of fear and more of an invitation to find out whether or not, in fact, any particular thing is truly impossible.

When I remember my wholeness, that there is more to me than this present moment could ever encompass, there is no longer any need to feel trapped by present circumstances or cornered by oppressive forces; within the awareness of being larger than present appearances can ever show, I find myself to be bigger than any particular corner and too large to ever be truly trapped within any corner, except perhaps within the limited perceptions of my mind.

"I've got you cornered!" the oppressor calls, seeking a sense of power to defend against his or her own feelings of helplessness. What an absurd thing to say. How can one corner a spirit, corner a mind, corner and limit love or wisdom? To the extent that we have placed the true core essence of who and what we are, within love and wisdom and spirit, we can never truly be cornered; it's just not how God created us to be.

It is this call to greater wholeness, that beckons to us through various forms of spiritual or religious involvement. The particular form is not as important as that one respond in whatever empowering way one chooses, to the invitation.

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

Slavery that is Mine

In order to experience and to create true and good freedom within myself and within any society within which I will ever live, I need to understand the distinction between freedom and slavery and how subtle that distinction can sometimes be. If I fail to do so, I may find myself to have been enslaved without having noticed how or when it first happened.

So what makes slavery slavery? Is it the absence of choice? Is it that humans are objectified (treated as objects) and like any other object, can be bought and sold commercially? If slavery is not brutal and violent, is it any less slavery and therefore any less objectionable? Is it about not having any voice, any ability to speak for one's self or to be heard by those who have the ability to make a positive difference? Perhaps most importantly, has there ever been an example of slavery throughout human history which was not simultaneously accompanied by a general apathy within a dominant population regarding the individual and collective welfare and self-agency of those designated as slaves?

A person is a person is a person. Freedom and happiness are ideals which are being redefined by each successive generation of humanity. Slavery did not cease to exist when (within US history) the emancipation proclamation was signed. At a deeper level, until we are ready, willing, and able to embrace our shadow selves, neither we nor anyone we meet can be truly free.

Eliminating junk food from one's diet results only in starvation if healthy food is not simultaneously provided. Equally as important as political and legal freedom, is owning one's attitudes, actions, and choices, if one is to ever discover the freedom of being completely one's best and most beautiful self. Having a choice is

*"That which I am
is the punishment or the reward
for whatever amount
of unconditional love
and divine wisdom
I have been willing to embody."*

-- Sister Who

not necessarily helpful, if one has not learned how to wisely choose. Dumping freedom on someone who understands neither what it is nor what to do with it, only creates societal and political instability.

In the midst of all of this complex push and pull for control, we are individuals who exist in relationship, whether or not we wish to admit it.

Ignorance and Want are the names of the two gaunt children beneath the robes of Christmas Present within Charles Dicken's timeless classic, *A Christmas Carol*. What sometimes goes unnoticed is that these two are what often give rise to slavery (Want being further subdivided into contrasting elements of need and greed).

Those without knowledge are often enslaved and manipulated by those who have it. Indeed, any commodity which others need and which is unavailable from any other source, invites some form of slavery. What prevents slavery from happening within such circumstances, are love, wisdom, and generosity.

In the words of Jimi Hendrix, "when the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace." I would add that the peace the world will know at that point, specifically because of the presence of love, will be a peace that does not include any form of slavery.

It may be that slavery is presently inescapable and that none of us will live to see love's triumph. Nevertheless, we must keep the ideal and the vision alive. When humanity ceases to dream of a world in which freedom is guided by love, such a world will be less likely to ever come.

Hundreds of thousands of people were born, lived, and died within a context of political/societal slavery. Their precious gift to their children and grandchildren was a vision of a world within which slavery was no more. Without that gift, it is unlikely that humanity would have progressed this far. Without the maintenance of that gift, it is unlikely we will progress any further. By retaining an awareness of slavery as something societally imposed rather than individually inherent (like gender, ethnicity, or orientation), we create space for greater possibilities for ourselves and for countless generations to come.

The gift we can give to each other--today and every day--is the vision of a world in which oppression and slavery have been healed and washed away by flood-waters of love.

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

Freedom that is Mine

It seems that freedom that has been purchased by self-sacrifice and hard work nearly always has more substance and strength than that which is simply handed to persons whom the liberators consider to be deserving. The plaque on my desk reads, "For those who have had to fight for it, life has a meaning the protected shall never know." Almost by its very nature, life needs to be free, so it is difficult to speak of one without referencing the other.

I have often heard it said that one always has a choice, but I have on a number of occasions been presented with a choice within which either outcome was so undesirable, that it seemed abusive to regard the decision as a choice at all.

All that being said, I still have the freedom to choose. This was driven home to me a few weeks ago when a man with whom I had negotiated what I still believe to have been an equitable non-monetary exchange, became suddenly very dissatisfied by complications which had arisen within the work to be done, demanded an exorbitant sum, and informed me that if I couldn't pay, I would have to work off the difference over the course of the next year.

Faced with a choice between economic disaster and a relationship of oppressive tyranny, I chose economic disaster (perhaps not unlike the VonTrapps within the movie, "The Sound of Music," deciding to leave everything except the clothes they were wearing in order to flee from the Nazis' control of their lives). I may yet survive, but it's a little too soon to tell yet, what the consequences of this choice will be.

What I do know is that not now nor ever, is my soul for sale at any cost. What I don't know is how to relate effectively to a world that does not adequately value me or my contributions. I continue to believe, however, that in one form or another, life goes on and God has the final word.

I am also aware from the conversations, comments, and compliments I've received, that even if my life were to end tomorrow, I have already succeeded in leaving the world a better place than I found it. I can not fail because my life and work have already succeeded.

Whatever struggles life continues to throw at me, I've already won and in this I am free of any additional need to prove myself.

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

On a Personal Note

The first of six ninety-page papers within my doctoral program has been completed. The work is entitled, "The Development of Symbiotic Community." Work on the next paper has begun, which is entitled "The Development of Symbiotic Individuality." Included within this next paper will be the importance of distinguishing between narcissistic individuality and relational individuality.

In the interest of reducing fuel costs, I have acquired a motorcycle at a very modest cost and have also learned the basics of motorcycle safety. I may have even come up with a way to travel by motorcycle in costume, but I've not had opportunity to test this idea yet.

I find it curious how I seem to make progress even within the most adversarial of circumstances, but suffice to say that I was able to acquire a digital camera also, to allow for much higher quality within video recordings. Regular production of new episodes of "Sister Who Presents" is anticipated for late September. As always, anyone who is going to be in the Denver-metro area at any point and would like to be a future guest, is welcome to contact me.

(Goodness, one would think this work is well-funded, judging by the present list of accomplishments, but this is hardly the case, judging by the contents of my refrigerator).

The Autumn/Labor Day Metaphysical Fair at the Denver Merchandise Mart on September 4-6 will see the third appearance of the portable chapel there. Should you decide to attend, please do stop by and say hello. More information about this event is available on the Internet at <http://www.celebrationfair.com/denverld.shtml>.

The count of fourteeners climbed in full ritual garb is now fourteen, the most recent being Mount Evans--a wonderful but exhausting hike.

Hopefully within the next four weeks, photos for the 2010 calendar will be created and another hike or two would also be great. Time will tell.

May God's blessings, love, and peace be with you now and always, *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 allow the work to continue. (Make checks payable to Denver NeVaar).

Sister Who a/k/a Denver NeVaar, MTS
3170 West Longfellow Place, Denver, CO 80221

Email: dn@sisterwho.com

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