

sister who's perspective

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Overview

A reason we sometimes do not find needed insights for specific challenges, is that they hide where we least expect them to be.

In direct correlation to this is that pivotal discoveries throughout human history often occur at that point that one looks where no one has previously looked—and frequently this is within the problem itself, suggesting that problems and solutions often travel together.

What we need to learn is to see both.

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

Wisdom from Madness

When the something hurts, it is easy and unfortunately common for the pain to be blinding, bringing a sort of amnesia about every other good thing we have ever felt. It is sadly also in the very nature of madness and brokenness to reproduce themselves wherever they can. Only love and wisdom can break the destructive cycles and deny them continuance.

An essential quality of wisdom that is often overlooked is that it arises only from conscious awareness and never by accident or mere serendipity. The one without awareness, is like he who slept through his own coronation and consequently was never made king. We are all potentially kings/queens, heroes, and miracle-workers, but never against our will.

In a very real sense, we are additionally also invited to be alchemists—changing mundane substances into gold. In those times when madness presents itself to us without explanation, we can interpret that it is merely intent upon replicating itself—but we can also interpret that it is presenting itself to a great wizard specifically because it wants to be healed and transformed. What is uncertain is how successfully we will individually and collectively respond to this task.

Some tasks can be done by individual

wizards acting alone; others require effort that is collaborative. Perhaps from the wizard's perspective the work can be scientifically explained, but the explanations may be incomprehensible, since they may rely upon a holistic integration of material and immaterial realms that is currently incomprehensible.

In addition to holistic integration, wisdom requires personal investment. We must look madness in the eyes and begin to know its soul (without placing ourselves within reach of its claws). In knowing its soul, we may recognize what sort of love is needed for healing. If no one will look, however, no one will know the particular remedy to use and no healing will subsequently occur.

The magic, nonetheless, is the ability to recognize that the potential is there—even within madness and brokenness. Without language, perception, and understanding, however, the potential remains untapped. That which the alchemists of past eras truthfully sought, therefore, was the acquisition of new languages capable of transforming life.

Each person we meet is a hidden treasure. Especially during transitional times of dysfunctional competition, it is our inner treasure that has the ability to fund our growth into a new and better humanity than any we have thus far known. Considering how unprecedented such collaboration and growth are, they may even look like madness to those with insufficient faith to give them a chance.

Indeed, wisdom engaged in a figurative sort of test flight may often appear to be a sort of madness. Artists and innovators have, in fact, often been accused of being mentally and/or emotionally unbalanced. As real as their genius may be at the beginning, it is often only seen as such in retrospect. The difference between madness and wisdom is ultimately that wisdom reaches for beauty and the empowerment of life—if we give it a chance.

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

Honesty from Lies

It would be remarkably convenient if there were a quick and easy way to detect deception or to ensure honesty (since Wonder Woman's golden lasso of truth is usually not available). What is often overlooked are the ways that the characteristics of particular lies actually point to the truth they are trying to conceal. One perspective could interpret from this that even lies themselves are trying to convey truth, but in a reversed sort of way.

As an autistic, my attention naturally runs toward details and sometimes also the complex relationships between them. In noticing subtle nuances thereby revealed, a deeper understanding of communication and relationship is sometimes revealed. It is important to remember, however, that contrasting interpretations are available within every sentence.

For example, "I'm sorry to hear that," may be someone's reply to a negative report, but it is just as possible that the particular individual's word-choice is inaccurately and hastily chosen, as that he or she really doesn't care and didn't want to hear about the problem mentioned. For those who genuinely care, "I'm sorry that happened to you," is a more accurate expression, but because of the speed at which word selection occurs in order for spoken language to happen, we cannot expect everyone to use language perfectly.

In a sense, for the person who does genuinely care, "I'm sorry to hear that," is a lie that does not convey their true feelings. The hearing of a phrase would actually mean nothing to that person, one way or another, if they did not also interpret that the phrase symbolized the occurrence of an undesirable event. The process of extracting honesty from lies is thus a matter of recognizing more completely what is being communicated and that what is actually said is only a small part.

Similarly, the lies of others may even indirectly reveal the truth of one's self. In pursuing an answer to the question of whether or not I am autistic, I reflected upon many early childhood experiences and memories and noticed for the first time the myriad of interactions within which I could tell that adults

of that time were speaking in strangely contrived ways, as if attempting to protect me from the truth of myself. More accurately, it is extremely probable that although they knew I was different, they themselves did not have answers to the complex package of questions my existence and functioning included.

Seen from such a perspective, my entire childhood is saturated with lies. Within the investigation of whether or not autism is an accurate descriptive dynamic within my life, however, I found that these lies functioned as signposts, pointing to omissions and invisible or unspoken influences. I noticed, for example, when adults would avoid certain topics, as if tip-toeing around a landmine. Yet another demonstration of a this principle can be found in observing the surface contours of a river, which will be smooth or uneven according to the depth and placement of unseen objects lying below the water's surface.

The surface contours may superficially insist that nothing exists beneath their appearance, but there is no uncaused effect and much more is consequently revealed than may be intended. Interpreting exactly what does lie below the surface, however, is the ongoing sort of investigation of which the living of life is composed. When all is ultimately revealed, truth always has far more substance than dishonesty or deception, thereby advising us to build our lives upon the solidness of truth rather than the instability of deception.

To build a solid friendship, familial relationship, or any other kind of relationship is consequently a matter of reaching for the truth of ourselves, of each other, and of the universe within which we live. Nonetheless, if at the beginning of our search we only have lies from which to proceed, many valuable questions are therein available and many empowering aspects of truth can still be discovered. All that is needed is that we look, that we look very closely, and that we keep on looking until as much truth has been learned as we have the (ever-increasing) ability to embrace.

All that being said, lying is clearly a waste of time, delaying our accomplishment of wonderfully empowering inter-relationship.

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

Hope from Despair

Within every loss is the creation of space for something new. This does not mean, however, that mourning is not an essential step within whatever transition is involved. What must be remembered is that mourning is not the final step.

On a similar note, I have met many people over the years who would like to fast-forward (so to speak) through the times of difficulty, loss, and mourning, in order to more quickly return to times of at least superficial happiness. To do so, however, trivializes the significant amounts of feeling, meaning, and, yes, even empowerment that hard times typically contain. While it is not necessary or even effective to pursue hard times in order to create additional feeling, meaning, and empowerment, we also do not need to avoid such times when they come.

It may be that our times of strength and happiness are specifically provided so that we have the resources to assist those with contrasting current life experiences. Certainly there will be other times in the future when roles are reversed and we are reminded that "life is a collaborative effort: we all take turns being the one in need." Through whatever sort of times occur within our individual and collective lives, hope is essential to perseverance. If someone has run out of hope, therefore, we may need to share some of ours; we may in fact be the reason that certain others are able to maintain hope for better days ahead at all.

A principle dynamic within experiences of despair is that one's focus is fixated upon what has been lost, rather than upon abilities

*"Doing the right thing
is sometimes the only choice
that makes any sense,
specifically because
I have committed my soul
to love and wisdom."*

-- Sister Who

and resources that have simultaneously been gained. As much as appropriate mourning is recommendable, fixation is not. Within virtually every example of appropriate mourning, however, is also the raw material for defeating fixation and stagnation. A loss or a defeat is consequently not an end, but rather a change of course, as we continue to navigate our ways through complex circumstances.

Many people seem intent upon construing virtually everything as simple and thereafter declaring whatever it is to be so, but the terms "simple" and "complex" are really only descriptive of human perception. The more pieces and parts of which we are aware, the more likely we are to use the word "complex." The more pieces and parts are ignored in order to focus upon a limited number of pieces, parts, and dynamics, the more likely we are to use the word "simple." The number of pieces, parts, and dynamics which an object, person, or issue actually contains, however, remains unchanged.

A very important part of moving from despair to hope, in any case, is recognizing that doing so is a verb; that this transition requires moving. Although there may externally be quietness, stillness, and waiting, this is only so that the spirit may internally engage in profound shifts in perception, understanding, interpretation, and aspiration. There were many things to which I aspired at earlier times within my life, to which I no longer aspire.

I do not, however, consider this to be a loss of dreams as much as a refinement of life purpose, specifically guided by the acquisition of particular perception, understanding, and interpretative ability. My childhood hopes were built upon very limited perceptions, understandings, and interpretations. The hopes which have arisen through enduring various crucibles of despair during the past five decades, have broader parameters and more far-reaching implications than anything my childhood mind could have grasped.

Like the oscillations of summer and winter, hope and despair have jointly created an ongoing sense of life more wondrous than perpetual happiness ever could.

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

Joy from Pain

Nothing I can say will make pain hurt any less than it does. Whether any particular pain can be ignored by focusing awareness upon something even more important, is a determination that no one can legitimately make on behalf of another. With or without pain, one's own life experience is and remains one's own life experience.

All that being said, in those moments when I am able to remember that pain is not all there is, the pain that I am feeling within that moment seems a little less important to the overall picture of my life. Could I stay within that remembrance indefinitely so that painful experiences would be always diminished? I think I'm a little too human for that.

Nevertheless, I do think it is significant that no amount of pain can completely prevent or exclude experiences of joy. Any pain which claims omnipotence is therefore lying. For me to believe such a lie, I must become small enough to fit exclusively within that moment, essentially denying the existence of every other moment my life has actually encompassed.

A particular available joy within such challenging moments, therefore, is that the pain testifies to the facts that I am still alive, that many more wonderful things may follow, and that—apparently against its will—the pain may be forced to serve a greater step of personal growth and development. Even while in the grip of the pain, therefore, I can truly and genuinely define myself as being greater than the pain itself. The pain cannot deny me the ability to go on being myself—with all of the multi-dimensional possibilities that being fully and holistically myself includes.

Ultimately, the pain will end, but—whether as eternal conscious energy, as memories, or as effects upon the lives of others—I will not. In truth, I've already won—yet how easily and quickly within the chaos of life's unfolding I forget this.

Yet the awareness returns, like the sun in the morning and the moon in the night. This too may be an effect of the Divine's presence—mysterious yet real and enduring.

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

On a Personal Note

This past month has included production of yet another twelve new episodes of "Sister Who Presents." During times when nothing else seems to be working and in spite of the fact that there is no financial profit to be made within public access television production, this activity persists in providing at least a minimal sense of purpose to my life.

My doctoral program has become especially problematic as its conclusion appears upon the horizon, specifically because of a dramatic increase in interconnectedness between the pieces and processes to be addressed. Any and all prayers for effective collaboration between myself and various administrators are very much appreciated.

I am extremely grateful to a few friends who have been remarkably supportive during the past few weeks, but I'm still struggling each day not to feel overwhelmed by the number of challenges with which I'm confronted. Car repairs, seasonal bills, and other unexpected demands are more than my current resources can answer, but I've often said that I'm better than anyone I know, at living on less than anyone believes is possible.

On a positive note, the next Metaphysical Fair is a couple of weeks away and I will once again be available there within my portable chapel (I could definitely use some assistance—please tell me if you are interested and available) as well as within a presentation on utilizing symbolism and metaphor.

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

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*Sister Who a/k/a Rev. Denver NeVaar, MTS
3170 West Longfellow Pl., Denver, CO 80221
email: dn@SisterWho.com*

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

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