

sister who's perspective

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Overview

Within Romanticist-era paintings, a primary quality is the dramatic interplay of light and shadow--with understandings to convey, which are diverse and unique within each observer. Indeed, if artistic works do not change and/or inspire us, then they have not truly done their work at all. It is likewise my hope that the words of this month's newsletter will empower you to be more than you were before reading them.

Broken Promises

There seems to be no lack of agreement that certain things should never happen, yet also an overabundance of paralysis and a most disturbing silence whenever they do. I would even suggest that this conspicuous lack of response is synonymous with the sort of soul-damning hypocrisy against which the biblical Jesus incessantly railed. In words attributed to Martin Luther King, Jr., "Never, never be afraid to do what's right, especially if the well-being of a person or animal is at stake. Society's punishments are small compared to the wounds we inflict on our soul when we look the other way."

In regard to the specific issue of promises made that are not kept, some respond to the dilemma by refusing to ever again make promises, forge commitments, or align with principles and values otherwise described as eternally enduring and priceless in worth. It is also a legitimate question to ask within the moment of formation of a so-called promise, whether the speaker does in fact have the ability to ever deliver that which was perhaps too quickly or too zealously spoken. What is conspicuously *missing* is not any sort of hesitancy about speaking, but rather a deep appreciation of particular words' meaning.

The freedom to speak one's mind should

always be tempered by sufficient knowledge and wisdom related to the actual meaning of the words which are chosen. In some cases, such understandings are limited by nothing more than insufficient experience. In other cases, however, the essential point is that the tool of language can be carelessly used.

On a similar note, I cringe whenever I hear someone refer to material resources as being "just stuff." What often hides within such rash conclusions, is an inability to love in the way that the Velveteen Rabbit was loved. One needs to respect that genuinely loving any particular thing--for a long time--does have the ability to render that thing alive or "real," in one way or another.

Yet none of this answers what to do when promises are broken; to prevent that moment of pain from invisibly becoming "the wound that never heals." Life will most certainly continue in whatever ways it can, but the results will be unavoidably worse than they could otherwise have been. It thus remains one of my unspoken assumptions of faith, that good things do not accidentally happen.

It may be that while no specific verbal promise is made, one's own actions and choices confirm that a commitment or promise of some sort was truly made. Like Kermit the Frog's conversation with himself late within *The Muppet Movie* concludes, therefore, "It is not true that I didn't promise anyone anything; I promised myself." In that fact specifically, may be found the inspiration and strength to persist and refuse to give up.

Ultimately, it does not matter who made promises and broke them--friends, family, or even Godde. What matters is finding any way whatsoever to keep going. All the good possibilities of the future depend upon it.

Is that "blind optimism" (as someone recently accused) or a recognition of what life needs in order to live? I choose to live.

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

Betrayed Trust

It has been well-known for much longer than I have been alive, that healing and rebuilding trust that has been broken, is one of the most difficult tasks anyone might ever attempt. It is perhaps less mentioned that restoring trust is equally one of the most essential ingredients to positive collaboration throughout all of the years of life that will follow. It is not something that the wounded should be expected to do all on their own.

When humanity disregards (individually and collectively) the mental and emotional health of its members, its ability to function is sabotaged and all generations that follow will pay a price for this negligence, whether or not they consciously realize that they are doing so. Until they understand not only that they *are* paying a price but also why, various kinds of suffering will continue. Like pain within any human body, therefore, suffering anywhere within the collective experience of humanity is not so much something to be repressed or ignored, as it is a signpost pointing to where a correction is needed.

Continuing with the same metaphor, pain and suffering which are ignored can fester and create opportunity for infections with far more serious consequences (i.e. gangrene, etc.). The limits of current medical science attempt to resolve such dilemmas by the perhaps extreme measure of amputation, which within metaphorical applications to societal challenges might be equivalent to exile or capital punishment. The resulting problem in both cases, is no longer having the contributions that part of the "body" would otherwise have made--which may be most essential to resolving future challenges, as illustrated within the movie, *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*.

I often feel challenged by the ways that it seems I am to live my life in full view of others, who derive insight, understanding, and growth from the mental and emotional pain I experience and (eventually, I hope) overcome. As frustrated as I often feel about the lack of intervention demonstrated by my observers, I must consider that this dynamic of being "Godde's visual aid," might in fact

be central to my life's primary purpose. The central and most fundamental purpose of life and the conclusion of literally decades of deep contemplation (at least for me), is that life is primarily concerned with the growth of the soul (of each of us individually and/or of all of us collectively, I'm not entirely sure), which my unique existence seems to serve--but only if it is characterized by honesty and integrity, every step of the way.

Among the challenges of doing this, is that I must discern the source of any broken promise or betrayal of trust. Was it the other who made that promise or was it an unstated expectation that I projected--or was it both? I must remember also, that there is no "one-size-fits-all" answer; that every occurrence is a unique and individual manifestation.

In practice, therefore, there may be little difference between difficulties in trusting Godde and in trusting myself. Both are invisible and obstinately difficult to measure, yet persistent within each moment of life, no matter what definition of "That Which is Truly Godde" one may employ. The definitions offered by various religious and spiritual perspectives are most often inadequate, but the persistence of invisible and paranormal experiences throughout human history is undeniable, mysterious, and intriguing--calling humanity to become more than it is.

With or without trust and in spite of how very many times this has been betrayed, life demands continuing growth. That any and all such growth will reflect the challenges it has survived, is unavoidable. Specifically because that is so, the only reasonable and intelligent response is to ever and always infuse as much love and wisdom as one can.

Only by doing so can the self-sacrifice, pain, and suffering of any particular life be justified. The greatest offense to the giver of any gift, is failing to utilize or learn from what has been given. If a person or event has thus filled the role of being "a wake-up call," the greatest gratitude one can express is to truly and completely wake up.

It is not at all difficult to argue that to be fully alive, one must be fully awake.

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

Disappointed Expectations

I read years ago a recommendation of Buddhist philosophy to, as much as possible, have no expectations, but to be fully present in the unfolding of life in ways that allow everything to be whatever it truly is. More comically stated by perhaps the first openly gay man I ever met, whom I will always regard as a sort of older brother, "Never should on yourself." As much as I have attempted to integrate such advice, however, perhaps because of how very human I still am, I always seem to be surprised by any and all instances in which people behave in ways that are less than the best of which I clearly see them to be capable.

Perhaps they do not see themselves in the ways that I see them, although I imagine the same is true of myself. I note, print, frame, and display the compliments others extend to me, specifically because--in spite of considerable effort--I do not see myself as others apparently see me. In a similar way, I sometimes take a moment to consider the various ways I have disappointed parents, family, friends, teachers, administrators, and even strangers--none of whom know me in sufficient detail for any of their expectations to have been truly legitimate.

The question toward which that pushes me, therefore, is whether every instance of disappointment is inseparable from having inadequate information or understanding. If I had more fully known a particular person or situation, I would of course have acted in a different way. It was long ago established within my mind that the best choices are usually the most well-informed ones and that poorly informed choices are likewise more susceptible to being the wrong ones.

What confounds this overall challenge, is that so much of life--I would estimate over half, at least--is invisible, immaterial,

spiritual, emotional, mental, or otherwise stubbornly resistant to accurate measure. If it cannot be measured, however, even by the most subjective or tentative criteria, it is highly questionable whether anything of any sort can in fact ever be truly known.

Perhaps the most positive aspect of disappointed expectations, is nonetheless that the experience is not usually--in and of itself--fatal, but rather creates the opportunity to rethink, regroup, and re-strategize one's constructive engagement with a particular challenge. As often stated, "Winners never quit and quitters never win." If giving up were simply not an option--no matter how much time was required to find an effective solution--even the termination of one's own life would not matter, as long as clear and coherent notes were left, to empower ongoing research by others.

As much as one could ask whether any particular thing will ever be known, one could equally ponder whether any specific person will ever fully know him or her self. As vast as the universe is around us, inner space and unimagined dimensions remain virtually untouched by human inquiry. The most vital activity of any day of any life, therefore, may be the time spent pondering the mysterious.

Central to disappointed expectations, is thus the realization that even after so many years of human growth and inquiry on this planet, far more remains unknown, than all that is thus far known. In facing the unique disappointments of one's daily life, one can thus take a moment to consider how the one who thinks s/he controls one's destiny by granting food, employment, or whatever other resources are needed, in truth controls nothing of significance at all. As intense as such needs feel to me when I am standing far too close to them, they are equally doors to alternative perspectives and opportunities.

If my body is ultimately destroyed by not having a particular need met, if the world thinks I am too optional to be important, and if I must learn from pain rather than joy, all of these may be merely the doors by which I become more than I ever imagined possible.

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

"Arguing for an ideology without embodying the practice, is the epitome of hypocrisy."

-- Sister Who

Spiritual Alignment

It is a most perplexing phenomenon to be a spiritually oriented person within a very material world, which is also currently beset by epidemics of narcissism and greed--both of which are adversarial to any sort of faith or sense of higher purpose within whatever challenges and opportunities daily life may include. I try to remember, however, that when certain individuals attack my faith in love and wisdom as being irrational and as justifying the victim-blaming in which they engage, such actions really only reveal just how much disappointment and betrayal they have previously experienced. It is not that wisdom, love, and the Divine have ceased to exist, but rather only that current events demand an expansion of definitions and of personal and communal understanding.

Maintaining spiritual alignment while living in the midst of contrary forces, is no easy task. Unfortunately there is no corresponding financial compensation, which is appropriate in amount to how essential this is. Without such alignment, however, the soul is vulnerable to greater sadness and despair than any should ever know.

Pragmatically, one might ask the benefit of investing one's self in maintaining that invisible alignment which has the ability to produce peace, hope, and love, but not necessarily any profit. For that, one would have to decide the value of peace, hope, and love. The inescapable fact of physical life being finite, may be all the reason needed.

It is only by spiritual alignment, that the limitations of physical life are transcended and the energy and strength derived from having a sense of purpose are available. If nothing beyond mere physicality exists and all spiritual alignment is forsaken, the life experiences which follow will be hollow, sad, and meaningless at best.

"Does anyone know they live, while they do it?" Only by faith, hope, and love, is this possible. It is no exaggeration to say that the life of the world, depends upon these.

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

On a Personal Note

Through a very peculiar and complex set of circumstances and developments, I am once again living in Trinidad, Colorado. The entire relocation unfolded in an unexpected blur during the last two weeks. It seemed like the best option available to me, in light of other challenges, but I am sadly once again facing a possibility of being victimized by dishonestly administered small-town social services systems, without the support or advocacy of the caseworker who was so helpful to me while living in Loveland.

I was unable to fit all ministerial resources into the moving truck, however, so I will need to make a few more trips with my utility trailer in order to move such things as the portable chapel, which is currently still in storage in Loveland. Hopefully this will be at least partially resolved this coming weekend.

I was additionally told that a legal entity would provide guidance in a couple of very important areas, but my initial inquiry was rudely rebuffed--so I'm attempting to regroup and to also discover other options. As the old saying goes, "winners never quit and quitters never win. I intend to win.

I am equally striving to be open to the possibility of there being some higher purpose in returning me to this location and to serve whatever opportunities to do good I encounter within the days and weeks ahead.

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

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*Sister Who a/k/a Rev. Denver NeVaar, MTS
POB 16074, Golden, CO 80402
email: dn@SisterWho.com*

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

Additional Informational Internet Websites:

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