

sister who's perspective

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Overview

It is often said that one should not judge a book by its cover, but this does not mean that one should pay no attention to the cover, because the outside may in fact reveal far more than is initially obvious, in relationship to the particular book's contents and potential applications. Going one step further, it is often the case that the greater the contrast, the more one can learn from whatever one takes the time to fully perceive.

Peace within a Context of Violence

As much as I love the witty update of The Serenity Prayer which states, "I am finding the courage to change the things I cannot accept," life experiences sometimes rudely interrupt with some version of "reality check!" when more than courage is required to make the desired constructive changes. As often as one hears such things as "we all need to work together on this to get the job done," a deplorable volume of narcissistic dynamics persist throughout our communities and our world. It is not always adequate to remind myself that it would be even worse, if there were not at least a minority of the population still infusing love and kindness in any and every possible way they can.

With or without any recognition, thanks, or reward, it is this minority that holds (and maintains) hope that the future really will be better than the present, keeping wonderful possibilities alive whenever giving up would make so much more sense. An additional particularly obnoxious element is that nearly every person this minority encounters is all too eager to tell them how they are doing it wrong and need to lower their expectations to what is more within reach. For the person with vision, however, there is an additional flip at such points, because at the heart of

the ideological struggle, is understanding the ways that much more is within reach than most people seem to realize.

I once commented that, from a certain perspective, life is about learning to perceive and understand all that is available to human observation and experience. So very much slips by unnoticed. Among these are some very important distinctions.

A peaceful person may choose not to engage in a particular conflict in order to more effectively utilize available resources, while a narcissistic person may choose to avoid conflict simply because there is no obvious personal consequence. On the surface, the lack of response to communal challenges looks exactly the same, but in actuality the essences of the two are completely opposite. Innumerable military battles for worthy common causes have been, from a certain perspective, won by flooding the field with too many targets and thus overwhelming the opponent.

If soldiers were instead sent out one by one, no one would be left to tell the story of the battle and the number of casualties would correspond to the number of bullets the enemy had available. Even individuals working behind the scenes within war zones must have collaborators in order to be anything more than martyrs--although, if that is one's calling, it is fairly well known that the voices of true martyrs can never be silenced, but rather inspire exponentially greater resistance. What is then essential is that the martyrdom be adequately reported to others.

Ultimately there is no single way that is best, to engage with evil and its effects throughout our diverse world. What remains nonetheless essential, is to share in pushing circumstances in positive directions. One is not truly judged for what one cannot do, but rather for what one can do but does not.

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

Violence within a Context of Peace

Perhaps the most insidious violence is that which manages to avoid being messy, apparent, or obvious, but is nonetheless devastating to the spirit of life within any person or creature. It is not at all difficult for the eyes of compassion to see that cutting someone's finger is far less damaging than stripping a spirit of meaning and purpose throughout ongoing struggles of daily life, yet because the latter involves no obvious loss of blood, such injury is often overlooked. If one cannot learn to see such violence, however, one will have no part in ending its discouragingly pervasive presence.

Of the primary areas within which such violence commonly occurs, I would nominate religious abuse for immediate proactive attention. I long ago lost count of those whom I meet, who struggle first of all to distinguish what is truly divine from peculiar notions embraced by religious communities, organizations, and perspectives. Within any time or circumstance that one's inherent consciousness and/or self-agency is being subverted, however, there is little reason to doubt that abuse is absolutely being done.

The original focus of spirituality was the growth of any and every spirit, in wisdom and in love. As this became standardized from one person to the next, societal religious practices evolved and formed. When the focus shifted from inner essence to outer form, however, true wisdom and love were quickly compromised and even left behind.

An example of this could be charitable giving and allegedly altruistic works. I have observed that shifting focus from the persons being served to the forms and methods which are employed, ultimately feeds selfish and narcissistic dynamics and creates a form of snobbish exclusivity that is adversarial to practices of unconditional love and genuinely empowering interconnection. When degrees of effectiveness begin to wane (sometimes not even then), the loss of the original goal slowly becomes more obvious--at least, to those with eyes that truly see.

I have often wondered about the alleged rule of karma, which purports that bad

actions have consequences while good ones receive rewards. Like virtually every other spiritual or philosophical system, however, manifestations are often inconsistent. For the Christians this is expressed within the words, "Sometimes Godde says 'no,'" for the Pagan it would be, "Sometimes the magic doesn't work," and for many others the anomalous results simply go unnoticed and undocumented, specifically so that the ideology can endure as it is rather than being refined and integrated with new information.

Ignoring the suffering of others both enables and is itself in fact an act of violence that allows societal brokenness to extend its reach and encompass ever greater numbers of victims. While on one hand I recognize that some battles will never be successfully fought all alone, defeatist notions such as "you can't go against city hall" ignores the inescapable reality that "city hall" is composed of individuals who have arisen from within the community. It is not just basic moral principles from which many have thus become estranged; it is equally themselves and their abilities to each be a light to the surrounding world.

To the extent that one embraces greater awareness of both the darkness and one's own ability to bestow light, therefore, the occurrence of violence within a context imagined to be peaceful, is not so much a discouragement as it is an opportunity. Here at last is something good to do; a chance to be a co-creator of love and wisdom, the effects of which may echo all the way into eternity. Being shocked that violence could occur within contexts one imagined to be thoroughly peaceful, is a waste of time, because the potential for both resides within every living creature and person.

The unfolding of life is the sequential and randomly alternating selection of which part of one's self will be shared and expressed within each subsequent moment. Violence that is ignored, cannot be addressed. Peace which is not meticulously cultivated but rather taken for granted, is unlikely to survive long enough for love to genuinely take root.

In both word and deed, may one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

Accepting the Spectrum

Possibilities of birth may be accidental or intentional and the corresponding ending of life may be similarly so. Failing to appreciate the uncertainty with which each life unfolds, encourages a sort of self-imposed blindness or perceptual impairment. A common theme throughout the education of my youth was that choices are much more likely to be wise if they are as well-informed as possible.

I suppose it could be argued that one cannot fully appreciate life unless one has in some way faced the possibility of death, but I'm inclined to wait for such confrontation to occur naturally, however, rather than recklessly or naively provoking such a turning point. That would seem too much like an elementary school student charging into a high school office and demanding to be admitted. Ideally, the preparatory studies of elementary school need to be done first.

Unfortunately within the 'school' of life, no syllabus has been distributed that clearly identifies the content, sequence, and grading criteria related to any particular course. Be that as it may, nothing is gained by being shocked whenever objectionable challenges and topics are brought up for discussion or actual engagement. A topic which seems perhaps understandably common within the current severely dysfunctional age, which may fall into this category, is that of physical suicide (leaving for another time, discussion of equally damaging but usually less apparent incidences of psychological and emotional suicide).

I'm not sure psychiatrists have any more answers than anyone else and fussing about professional responsibilities really doesn't resolve anything. At the heart of the matter is a real person--not merely an intellectual or ideological construct--who is feeling radically disempowered and totally victimized; so

much so that a sort of tunnel-vision has begun to set in. A lot depends upon how well one knows this person and what s/he enjoys enough to find refreshing.

For myself, a good suggestion would be "let's go hike a mountain, even if it's the last thing you ever do." Anyone who knows me, knows that I will feel better about life when I get back. Tunnel vision of any sort, however, reduces awareness of the spectrum of life's diverse and sometimes amazing possibilities.

In some cases, what needs addressing is environmental; what the person needs is not drugs but rather an effective way to get out of an abusive situation. In other cases, it's a question of connecting the person with educational or professional opportunities that will surmount current challenges. In a few cases, it really is chemical imbalance (whether innate or created) and this must be considered and investigated if no other causative factors can be identified.

In all cases, the problem doesn't start when the person says, "I feel suicidal." No one gets to that place without having been neglected or rejected in a long list of previous instances. Helping each person find legitimate ways to get needs met and expand personal empowerment is the suicide prevention that must be employed every time there is an opportunity to do so--because in the final analysis, everyone really does matter.

If the spectrums of experience, method, and possibility are ignored, however, it will be analogous to going through life while standing on one leg. It may be possible, but it is inescapably exhausting, predisposed to imbalance and injury, and often negligent in its use of other available resources. To be one's self truthfully, is to be one's self fully, completely, and honestly, rather than only partially because of whatever dangers the surrounding world may include.

As a child I learned the song, "This Little Light of Mine," which included the verse "Hide it under a bushel--no! I'm going to let it shine." Specifically because the darkness is threatening, the spectrum's light is essential.

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

*"The reality of relationships
within each moment of life,
links individuality to action."*

-- Sister Who

Honestly Embracing Diversity

From a capitalistic perspective, examples of diversity are too often seen as nothing more than resources to be exploited. Even Plato's notions of community presumed that there would always be someone else's resources to steal, without consideration for the welfare of those who thereafter would have less. To embrace diversity, however, includes discovery and recognition of the symbiotic dynamics by which everything one encounters, can be ultimately empowering.

Unfortunately this also must include a certain patience if it is only one's self and not both one's self and the other who recognize important symbiotic interactions. No human is born knowing everything that s/he needs to know. Learning is inseparable from physical existence and whatever diversity is immediately available constitutes the faculty provided for one's education.

Feigning such embrace creates a social mask without the substance to deliver the rewards that only genuine truth can provide to the one in need. In truth, we are all people in need, whether or not we are willing to acknowledge this to anyone else or even to ourselves. Honest embrace of that which is different from one's self thus requires humility that is not, in and of itself, devaluing.

One is not less because one is an opportunity for others to learn practices of generosity and kindness. One is not less simply because one holds the titles of ownership for fewer possessions. What makes one less, is being closed to the light, the beauty, and the contributions of others.

Dismissing diversity as being unneeded, unhelpful, and without value, simply because one has insufficient information about the examples of diversity which are available, identifies one's self at the very least as a lazy student and at the most as an adversary of life. Failing to listen is synonymous with failing to learn; one's own confidence may be the chief obstacle rather than being one's contribution to the conversation. Love, conversely, can open the door to more.

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

On a Personal Note

My search for a stable, safe, supportive, and enduring home is ongoing. A couple of possibilities have been eliminated, but a couple of new ones have also been added. I can only hope that this search will reach a positive conclusion very, very soon.

All necessary props have either been collected or ordered, so I am hoping that two major photo-shoots can be scheduled within the next four weeks, bringing *The Tarot of Sister Who* to four-fifths completion.

I suppose it is probably time for me to begin brainstorming a theme and related ideas for the 2019 calendar.

I continue to respond to emails from all over the world as well, sent by individuals who have viewed one or more episodes of "Sister Who Presents..." through the Internet website of YouTube.com/DenverNeVaar, among whom is a student at Oxford University in England, who would like to do a more substantial interview within the near future. I remain hopeful also, in relation to the young filmmaker who indicated an interest in creating a documentary of this ministry, beginning in August. Perhaps all of this will lead to new and better resources and opportunities, expanding ministerial activities in directions that not even I have imagined.

Life is often discouraging for me of late, but thankfully not so much that I am unable to continue doing whatever good I am able.

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

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