

Sister Who's Perspective

Sister Who's Perspective, Issue #129, March 2010, 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

It seems that it's the obvious that always somehow escapes our attention.

That apparently being generally the case, this month's newsletter offers some reminders and thoughts of various kinds of invitations, opportunities, possibilities, and potentialities that can often be found within each and every day of our lives--things which may be right under our noses, so to speak, but somehow go unnoticed.

In learning to live life with more awareness, it seems to me, the difficult moments do not seem quite so confining when I am mindful that they are part of a larger spectrum. The happy moments, similarly, do not seem so much like naive balloons blown this or that way by every passing breeze, but rather become the summertime shade or the wintertime wind-break, making each moment somehow more manageable.

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

Invitations

The sun came up again this morning. This happens so regularly that's it's easy to overlook the fact that each time it does, it's an invitation to create a brand new day that is perhaps in various ways unlike any preceding day. I get to choose whether this day is merely a response to whatever came before, the continuation of established patterns, or the first step in a completely new direction.

I may meet someone today whom I've never before met, or I may reconnect with someone whom I've not seen in a long time, or I may just stay home with my dogs and continue the creation of monthly newsletters, doctoral writing, and various other correspondence--all of which are forms of interactive relationship. Any opportunity for interaction can also be interpreted as an invitation to take that interaction in new and even more positive directions.

Sometimes, while sitting at my desk or doing my daily workout on my Bowflex in order to prepare for next summer's bodybuilding competition at the Gay Games celebration in Cologne, Germany,

ideas come to me. From one perspective, the interruptions are completely inconvenient. Why couldn't they arrive in an orderly and logical fashion while I'm sitting at my desk or during times when I decide that the moment is appropriate for new literary composition? Past experience has proven, however, that if I do not momentarily stop what I'm doing and write it down (whatever it is), it usually does not give me a second chance to capture the thought as powerfully as it first presented itself to me. This too is an invitation to participate in a deeper and more genuine experience of multi-dimensional life--the life which is not *either* this *or* that, but rather *both* physical *and* spiritual (*and* emotional *and* social *and*...).

In a sense, all of these invitations may also be moments when that which is truly God is wishing and wanting to be lovingly included within our individual lives. So often, in general, humanity remains completely mindless of simultaneously existing spiritual reality, skating along through the shallow surface of appearances and sensations; content with superficial happiness and temporary fulfillment. The standing invitation from the Divine, is for us to be more than that--to embody life in a way that is compelling and inspiring to everyone we meet or touch within each day we live.

It is not necessary to already be an extraordinary person to do this. In fact, many of those whom public media consider to be extraordinary, are so busy being admired by the general public that they fail to discover the depths and potentialities of their individual souls.

Living life as an integration of human and Divine, however, will make one extraordinary--even if the world fails to ever notice. A sparrow, a song, or a sunset is no less beautiful, simply because no one is paying attention.

If beauty exists anywhere--in one's soul, appearance, or actions--it is certain that God is paying attention and smiling. What other validation or approval is more worth having?

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

Opportunities

I stumbled upon a quote attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe many years ago and have wondered what was the original German text that was translated into English as "Whatever you do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius and power and magic in it." For me, this means that life is not about being good enough; it's about doing whatever one has opportunity to do.

Within many ancient writings is a great striving with destiny or fate, questioning in what ways or to what degree the events and development of our lives is predetermined. I'm skeptical that any unanimous agreement about this has ever occurred. As with most things, the truth seems to lie somewhere in the mysterious middle, between the polarized extremes of either "yes" or "no." Those who wish to know the truth, therefore, must be content to wrestle with the issue, perhaps indefinitely. I suspect within such continuous wrestling, however, they will find the opportunity to be more alive than probably the majority of people throughout history.

I recall reading many years ago of a man's travels through Asia and of his astonishment that when a small child fell into a river, no one attempted to save the child, fearing that they might thereby interfere with the child's predestined fate. Having grown up within more western cultural perspectives, I suggest that the opportunity to save such a child, may also be one's predestined contribution to that child's life, teaching that little one compassion in a way that will not be forgotten.

In similar fashion, opportunities to make a difference within the lives of others, are abundant within each day each of us lives. A phone call to a friend, a smile to a cashier before leaving a store, a courteous demeanor while driving through rush-hour traffic, or a donation of time, money, or resources to another may constitute the sometimes revolutionary statement, "I care."

Most of us are quite familiar with a world that doesn't seem to care at all whether we live or die, whether we are healthy or sick, whether we are rich or poor, or whether we are empowered to love or reduced to hate. Loving a stranger, loving a friend, or even loving a member of one's own family may be the most radical thing one can do--and it may be exactly what makes the positive and healing difference that distinguishes a greater success from a more common failure.

Taking yet another step deeper into our

understanding of opportunity, verifiable possibilities exist within each day to develop abilities and understanding within ourselves. Learning even a few basic gestures of sign language a number of years ago seemed interesting but unimportant to me--until I met someone within an airport who was deaf. Four years of studying German throughout high school was simply a way to satisfy graduation requirements--until while living in New York City a year or so afterwards, I met three German businessmen who didn't know a single word of English and needed someone's assistance to make a phone call to a loved one at home.

When we have built new abilities and understanding within ourselves, life responds with unannounced moments of opportunity to utilize those resources and to openly be the more empowered persons we have become. When others begin to know me as a person who genuinely cares, it has seemed to me on many occasions that they consider my presence to be a precious opportunity for meaningful conversation. When God knows that we have learned how to listen, to love, and to be wise, it seems that God is more inclined to seize the opportunity to speak.

On a similar but contrasting note, however, when all the words have been said, all the work has been done, or even when a brief moment of rest is especially needed, we can embrace the opportunity to simply be quiet--by ourselves, with others, or with God. Sitting within our own, within each others', or within God's presence with no need to speak, is the opportunity to reach deep within our spirits and sense the interconnection created by the presence of abiding love.

As phrased by the author, David Brudnoy, "Life is Not a Rehearsal." Limited as its experiences may sometimes be and within its context framed by physical birth and death, I believe that everything in life is real. The opportunity that abides throughout every joyous, tragic, or mundane moment of its spectrum, is to make every moment we get, into a moment of transforming that raw material into the most beautiful and meaningful creation possible. Our abilities in this regard may not be the same, but we are not required by God or the universe to be the same or to satisfy others' expectations; rather, we are given the opportunity to be the best individuals that we can individually and collectively be.

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

Possibilities

In the ancient words of Aristotle, "That which is impossible and probable is better than that which is possible and improbable." In addressing possibilities, therefore, it is important that we also distinguish what is probable (or not) and why. There are many things I can or could do, but it is also helpful to know myself well enough to know what is personally probable or improbable--and to consider whether those things which I place on either list, belong (according to whatever wisdom I possess or can acquire) on the other list.

Similarly, when numerous individuals come together, communities are formed and decisions are made collectively. Specifically because some individuals tend to speak up more or less than others within communal situations, a community is not simply the average of its individuals' opinions. As long as unique individuals exist within communities, a far wider range of possibilities exist. What all too often goes unnoticed by the community, is what has been made probable or improbable by patterns of societal interaction which are either tolerated or encouraged.

To the extent that a community encourages free expression, tolerates disagreement, and requires civility, diversity can be one of that community's greatest resources. The possibility which arises from such societal orientation, is that of continual renewal and positive development.

To the extent that a community requires conformity and fails to nurture its individuals, what becomes most probable is social stagnation. A corollary to this is that the community will most likely never know any more than it already does, nor be able to do any more than it already can.

Within both scenarios, however, one could consider it divine intervention that anomalous individuals continue to be born, with insights, characteristics, and aptitudes which challenge the surrounding community to once again venture out into the unknown and reinvent itself as necessary, as new discoveries are made.

*"Life is often unfair
because it is not life's job
to be fair--
it is ours."*

--Sister Who

This is God giving humanity another chance, individually and collectively; that is, giving each person and also all of us together the possibility of becoming more than we have been. As the embodiment of greatest wisdom and love, God remains very real to me, beckoning me onward toward ever greater possibilities. For me, God is sometimes like a horizon that both beckons toward me and recedes from me, with each new valley I cross and ridge that I climb--always providing yet another new horizon in the distance, by which to continue my journey.

So what are the possibilities? Can we name them? Perhaps the better question is whether or not we can name all of them. Clearly it is not enough that they are possibilities. We must also work individually and collectively to make desirable ones probable and undesirable ones improbable.

Every criminal action, it is generally later discovered, is the result of some undiagnosed, ignored, or otherwise unmet need. By apathy and neglect, negative outcomes are made probable.

Every virtuous action, conversely, it can generally later be discovered, is the result of past experiences of love, nurturing care, and wise attentiveness. None of this happens by accident.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out which we should be doing, if we want the world within which we individually and collectively live to be one of peace, fulfillment, and prosperity.

Unfortunately we also live with the possibilities (or perhaps probabilities) that politicians lie, doctors are more motivated by financial concerns than compassionate ones, teachers are more concerned about test scores than the development of wisdom, economic obsession can render our individual lives worthless, and bureaucracy can rob us of our very best otherwise-available time and energy.

The chance and hope which (perhaps by the grace of God) remains completely possible, however, is that we can individually and collectively work to make a better world probable.

In remembering the possibility that people are worth more than profit, that love is more valuable than legislation, and that civility is more rewarding than conflict, we have the ability to collectively recreate the world within which we live with better probabilities than are currently generally known. We can begin that work today.

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

Potentialities

Within science classes of my childhood, numerous experiments were assigned, which explored the distinctions between different forms of energy. Among these, the two most common forms explored were potential and kinetic energy. The highest reading of all among the various measurements of energy we did, interestingly, was that of potential energy during the precise moment which preceeded its transformation into kinetic energy. More concisely, the moment immediately preceeding an action has more energy within it than when the energy is either resting or already in motion. This to me, remains the distinction between potentiality and possibility. Possibility is energy at rest. Potentiality is energy which is on verge of beginning to move.

In exploring our individual and collective potentiality, therefore, we are exploring the action or actions we are now--one split-second or so in the future--ready to do; we are aware of the action that we now have both the opportunity and the commitment to actually do and we are simultaneously as completely alive as we can be.

Potentiality left to rest within us for some future time, contains less energy--and less life--than potentiality that is ready to act. Time is short and life is fleeting, however, so opportunity and invitation are limited. If we spend too many minutes, hours, days, or even years attempting to do only those things which cannot fail, the sculpting and carving of our own souls developing form and expression will remain undiscovered and unknown--to others and to ourselves, but perhaps not to God, whom we can only hope will give us yet one more chance to make everything right.

It is not necessary that we know ahead of time everything there is to know about God or about ourselves. Living does not require that we have mastered all life skills before we begin; what is required is that we are willing to learn while doing. More often than not, life will surprise us with unexpected insights and unanticipated dimensions, to the extent that we are willing to embrace life in all of its wondrous mystery.

Life, by its very nature, has potentiality. Ready to move through invitations, opportunities, and possibilities, all that is required is the decision within each moment to join hands with ourselves, with others, and with Divine Mystery.

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

On a Personal Note

Celebration! The third album is finally finished and initial copies are being produced for distribution, even as I finish the composition of this newsletter. Within the few who have already heard bits and pieces of the collective work, there seems to be unanimous agreement that this is my best album yet. It is now possible to purchase copies of this recording through my website, www.sisterwho.com, on the "Songs" page or one can also directly send a check for \$18 (made payable to Denver NeVaar) to the mailing address at the bottom of this page, which includes all related costs (obviously be certain to tell me the address to which I should send the album).

Later today, I anticipate submitting six new episodes of "Sister Who Presents" to the local public access television organization for cablecasting locally and over the Internet. Twelve more episodes have been scheduled for production in late March and early April.

My doctoral writing is progressing, but I do my best to be patient and remember that the pursuit of such an academic degree is nearly always a very lengthy process (although I would really love to have all of this tediously formal writing behind me).

In more mundane matters, the motorcycle is still not running and my Toyota 4Runner continues to operate but always in a worrisome manner, but my daily Bowflex workouts to prepare for next summer's bodybuilding competition at the international Gay Games in Cologne, Germany seem to be on track and proceeding well.

Gareth is not thrilled with his muzzle (to prevent injury to uppity dachshunds on those rare occasions when he loses his temper with them), but, all things considered, my furry family seems to be doing well of late and very much hoping for abundant opportunities to go hiking during the warmer months ahead. I know I would enjoy that also. Time will tell.

May God's blessings, love, and peace be with you now and always, *Sister Who*

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