

sister who's perspective

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Overview

I maintain that the world is a shared space and thus by association that every moment of physical life within it is similarly so. If we do not respect the interconnection and interdependence of all things, positive collaboration and maximum fulfillment are rendered dubious possibilities. The power is within our hands, our feet, our minds, and our voices, to make a positive difference--especially if we all do it together.

Ownership Enslaved

From the very first year of formal classroom education to the very last, nearly every year included language instruction of one sort or another, for myself and my classmates. I interpreted that nearly all other children within this country had similar experiences. This is why it continues to puzzle me to no end, when I hear others using words in ways that make no sense.

Freedom is one such word. Everyone seems to want it, but virtually no one seems willing to do the work necessary to have or maintain it. Even worse, very few seem to even understand what it means.

While ownership might be a word linked to tyranny or conquest by a certain negative perspective, a contrasting view is able to recognize that this word could be equally associated with opportunities and the ability to make constructive choices. When various forms of bureaucratic administration meddle, however, and strip ownership of its ability to make wise (though perhaps unconventional) choices, any suggestion that ownership conveys freedom becomes a lie. We cannot live the truth of our individual lives while surrendering to demands for homogeneity and conformity.

Specifically because the details of our respective lives contrast and differ in very

significant ways, we cannot trade places and reasonably expect even the perhaps limited success thus far experienced. Even basic survival would be questionable, without the very specific configuration of aptitudes, interests, and receptivity which each individual inherently has. Without true ownership of all of these, however, it's as if our hands are chained and unable to do what they were created and designed to do.

When the ability to choose wisely has been taken away by presumptions of being smarter, of the one performing the action being uneducable, and of future outcomes being disallowed from ever transcending those of the past, these are forms of enslavement, of rape, and of suicide, finding opportunity through imbalances of power.

While some may complain of those who do not take ownership of their actions and influence, it must equally be considered to what extent this refusal is in truth a response to unwise limitations imposed upon personal choices. It makes no sense to act as if one's choices truly mattered, if those choices are not authentically one's own. Enslaving the creative choices of diverse individuals to serve stagnant societal agendas that otherwise grow and change with time, sabotages the ongoing renewal essential to maintaining true life within any community.

Instead of a living sociological entity, a community thereby becomes a corpse or a zombie, to use a currently popular term. The individuals of which such a community is composed have relinquished their own thoughts, feelings, and love of life and in truth no longer own even themselves.

True and regenerative life is thereby terminated. The most fundamental drive of life, however, is to go on. To truly live thus requires refusing to be enslaved by being stripped of the ability to make wise choices.

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

Ownership Pretended

An important distinction that needs to be immediately made, is that this dynamic of pretending can be just as easily imposed from without as initiated from within. In both cases, everything that follows is rendered a lie--destructive and dangerous. What varies, is whether or to what extent the lie is allowed to be recognized and addressed.

As much as I concede that it is often no longer practiced, I grew up being instructed that among the foundational principles of the nation in which I was born, was the notion that one is innocent until proven guilty. In those thankfully few instances within which ownership of a specific negative action or attitude has been erroneously assigned to me, I was not generally given any chance to tell the other half of the story. Judging by the reports of others with whom I have discussed such behavioral patterns throughout my undergraduate and graduate education, this seems to be a common experience.

What is far more astonishing, however, is the frequency with which the one who has negatively and preemptively judged me has simultaneously defined him or her self as a superior being. Perhaps it should not be surprising, though, if one considers the possibility of a deep inner insecurity within that person, regarding the negative report being made. It may in fact be nothing more than a minor personality conflict parading itself about in excessively dramatic robes.

Yet even if that is the case, another person pretending that I am the owner of actions or attitudes of which I am not, is an act of psychological and emotional assault and thus an act of violence. Naming this action as anything less, renders the healing process which should ideally follow, all the more difficult to accomplish. To the extent that communities not only allow but may even encourage such conduct, to support some hidden agenda or self-serving greed, a very peculiar and inverse result is created.

Those who in truth own perverse and reprehensible actions and attitudes deny any and all such ownership, while assigning that same (or similar) ownership to an innocent

who has been for whatever reason or by whatever process, selected to fill the role of scapegoat--perhaps to create sufficient distraction from the ownership the true owners are attempting to hide. They pretend to own virtue and wisdom, while to those with the eyes to see, they succeed only in making their vileness more obvious.

Virtue and wisdom are not the exclusive possession of any individual; they exist and are rediscovered at various intervals within every age, every land, and every people. If anyone pretends to own such intangibles, as if there were nothing more to learn and no more growing to do, any shred of ownership immediately fades to a ragged shadow. It is ultimately not a matter of owning or in any way possessing wisdom and virtue, but rather of being possessed by them.

We do not need to pretend to be wise or virtuous, if these qualities are embodied within our actions, thoughts, and words and guide us even to places we never imagined we'd go. Yet this is not an accomplishment in which to take pride or a hierarchical level of being to be possessed. Rather, it is a relationship with a mysterious embodiment of greatest wisdom and love spiritually present (some theologians would say immanent) throughout the universe, in the presence of which humility is the only intelligent posture.

On a side note, I encourage atheists not to be offended by such statements, because scientific inquiry has repeatedly bumped into awareness of such embodiment, although none of the existing theological constructions of humanity seem to effectively correlate to the new findings. Moving beyond all past and present forms of pretended ownership requires the maintenance of an open mind, but not--in the comical phrasing I heard many years ago within training for youth ministry--"so open that the brain fell out."

Whether falsely accused or falsely projected, ownership without truth leaves our hands empty of substance--granting opportunity to reach for something better.

Let's be sure that we do.

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

Ownership Claimed

A primary problem of claiming ownership is the question of whether one has sufficient resources to support or defend one's claim as necessary. Unfortunately, truth alone is rarely sufficient. This is why dealing with bullies--from school playgrounds to branches of national government--is a task of great importance within the current age.

Ownership of virtually anything may be absolutely true, but if an adversary of greater strength refuses to respect such truth and instead seeks to displace that truth with another one, an experience of tragic loss is probable. Any such displacement, however, judging by examples throughout human history, would be profoundly unwise, specifically because of the insights, abilities, and resources which the object of conquest encompasses. If a conquest proceeds, the best possibilities within the target are often destroyed--possibilities which may later be desperately needed.

If new ideas displace old ones through conquest, innumerable empowering qualities of human spirits will no longer be available to the present or any future generation. If, on the other hand, old ideas are loved and fondly remembered in ways that do not prevent the rise of new ones, much like the continual cycle of one generation of humanity nurturing and then yielding to the next, among the few things any could be said to own are ongoing commitments to wisdom and love.

I have noted in times past that "if we do not live for something greater than ourselves, our lives become small and petty." This is perhaps even more so in the case of bullies, who by definition have not accomplished any deep understanding of themselves, of others, or of life itself--because of which they

*"If we seek security
in anything other than truth,
the seeds of future adversity
are thereby sown."*

-- Sister Who

remain small; no bigger than the brief moment of their violence, instead of inspiring many generations yet to come and thereby making the world a more beautiful place.

All that being said, there is yet another perspective of claiming ownership to contemplate, which embodies the step of personal growth that must be taken when passing from infancy into adulthood. Within perhaps most human societies throughout recorded history, this transition would also correspond to having a voice within any or perhaps all communal decision-making. It is specifically with this future role in mind, that many tasks of nurturing the development of children is generally defined.

Even within numerous animal species around the world, the offspring depend upon the adults and their larger communities to teach them whatever they need to know to survive and perhaps even thrive. When that education does not happen, the survival of the young becomes questionable at best. If on the other hand the young of any species--including human--do not make the transition to adulthood, the future of all individuals and the species as a whole is questionable.

In considering the spiritual implications of such, claiming ownership of one's life may be an acceptance of an individually unique calling. Every life is ultimately a life of some sort of service, specifically because of how interdependent and interconnected all of life is. Recognizing which particular type of service will be one's contribution and the area within which one will thus persist in developing expertise throughout the rest of one's life, is a major element within every youth's transition to adulthood; within the claiming of ownership of each one's life.

Unfortunately not every life ends in prosperity and peace. Philosophically, there is comfort to be found in recognizing any and all areas within which defeat did not occur. I may not accomplish what everyone else has, for example, but I may count myself a winner by holding onto the dreams, the spirit, and the vision that are uniquely my own.

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

Ownership Realized

I think a lot more ministers, philosophers, and deep thinkers would have more joyful lives if it were true that good deeds are always rewarded and wrong-doing is consistently punished. Within my own life, my greatest struggles in New Hampshire began within the few weeks I responded to a woman in need, with compassionate assistance--and thereafter was mercilessly and endlessly attacked by her enemies. A time-worn witticism notes that "no good deed goes unpunished" and I'm sure there are many who wish it were not true.

My ownership of the house that was temporarily my home was nonetheless confirmed by the freedom I had to relinquish the property to another. No mere house is worth becoming a slave to the victimizing dictates of powerful but morally bankrupt administrators abusing their positions. For however many or few years I have left, I knew that I needed to find out whether something better might be possible--so I left.

In many ways, however, the ownership of freedom and of one's own spirit comes at a much higher cost than that of any house or property--which is perhaps why so many are willing to settle for less. Truly good and healthy relationships similarly require careful attention and continuous work, regardless of whether I refer to the relationship I have with my service dog or with another person. If the other refuses to respond, however, no good collaboration will result.

Realizing ownership of one's investments in relationships is thus also a matter of noting the limitations around which decisions must be made. How much is ultimately possible is not for any single individual to decide, because the world remains now and always a shared space. I can only hope that if I am displaced from one location, another is waiting to receive myself, my family, and our collective contributions.

Ownership is not, after all, a matter of anyone else's approval, but of giving positive expression to every moment of one's life.

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

On a Personal Note

Before I again forget to mention it, the new calendar ("Global Living in 2017") is now available on the Internet within my website (www.SisterWho.com) or by postal mail, in both desktop and wall-hanging forms. A small donation to cover printing and postage costs is appreciated, but not required. All of the photos utilized, were created within the state of New Hampshire.

With regard to my residential circumstances I've been informed that I have until the end of January to find some other place to call home. Miscommunications, misinterpretations, and unrealistic expectations seem to form the core of the conflict, but all dialogue and discussion of relevant information has been forbidden. It seems any truth that contradicts the negative characterization thus formed of me, has been categorically disallowed. I'm baffled and bewildered by all of this, wondering why being repeatedly victimized has been so inescapable during recent months.

Yet it is especially within such moments that it seems all the more important to me to cling to dreams, to hopes, and to faith that everything will find a way to better forms. I must persevere in doing whatever I can to serve those better possibilities, rather than surrendering to the most discouraging ones.

Throughout this new year of infinite possibility, may one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

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