

# SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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## Overview

Living within an economically obsessed age unfolding within an extremely material and physical world, it is easy to be too distracted by that to which we are simply standing way too close, to notice or to embrace the collaboration that is inescapably essential to our individual and collective survival. I offer the words of this newsletter to encourage thoughts, words, and actions to emerge individually and collectively in healing and empowering ways.

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

## Interceding for Enemies

The line between self-awareness and societal awareness is very thin and perhaps determined by the presence or absence of open dialogue about challenges that affect both. Among the many descriptions that can be assigned to examples, is the current prevalence of (often subconscious) adversarial patterns. More specifically, a common initial stance is self-protection--even before any attack or threat of attack is present. The result is thus sometimes an entire population walking around "on guard" even when no threat exists.

A more positive and proactive stance, once it has been confirmed whether a threat exists and if so how serious it may be, is to concern one's self with the threats weighing upon the potential enemy. When one becomes concerned for a potential enemy's welfare and begins acting in ways that encourage the enemy to feel loved and supported, among the likely effects is that the enemy will have less reason to be an enemy.

From another perspective, there is also the important recognition that when one's intentions, objectives, and choices are perceived to have adversarial or negative effects upon another, one has in fact (but perhaps unintentionally) become an enemy.

All that being considered, intercession that can be offered for someone acting in an enemy-like fashion includes such things as "may he learn compassion," "may she find peace," and "may the needs which provoked this violent outburst be peacefully and legitimately met." Acting in a collaborative fashion in addition to offering up such prayerful intercession could include launching an open dialogue with respectful questions such as, "Why do you feel this action is necessary?" or "What other methods might satisfy the need?"

It is sometimes surprising how easy it is to meet certain needs, once one knows what they are. Attempting to guess all that has been left unsaid, however, makes inter-relationship many times more difficult than it needs to be.

It is ultimately not so important who wins or loses, as that legitimate ways are available for everyone to win. It is not so important who has more than he or she needs as long as everyone has at least enough. It is not so important who receives public recognition for personal contributions to society, if each and every person knows that he or she is both inherently valuable and also valued by others.

In the absence of such, however, it is quite difficult to avoid becoming an enemy--and what this additionally reveals is that the very action of identifying another or one's self as an enemy, is dependent upon varying degrees of ignorance instead of understanding.

Perhaps obviously, therefore, there is little difference between interceding for one's enemies and interceding for one's self and one's community; everything is inescapably interconnected. Understanding this does not necessarily provide any particular resolution, however, due to the inherently collaborative nature of resolutions. More directly, my understanding will not necessarily overcome your ignorance--or vice versa; the bridge between us must be built from both sides.

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

## Interceding for Friends

This is more difficult than it may sound, specifically because of the definitions, understandings, and expectations which immediately draw near to the surface, whenever the word "friend" is invoked. What one expects--consciously or unconsciously--whenever this understanding arises, affects the actions which follow in far-reaching ways.

When incongruity within such understandings arises, it sadly but frequently becomes the excuse for redefinition of the relationship altogether. It is consequently a bold action to intercede for a friend, because such risk is always unavoidably present.

It has been said that courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the awareness of something more important than the fear. In a similar way, confident action is not necessarily an absence of confusion, but rather an awareness of something far more important than the confusion, which must consequently be pursued at all costs. What is perhaps sometimes amazing, is how much is accomplished, even using the most unrefined methods. Using such accomplishments as an excuse to neglect wise pursuit of further developing skills, however, devalues ourselves and our lives, as being unworthy of any serious investment of time, energy, and resources.

Interceding for friends is a matter not only of listening--attentively and actively--to understand the other's needs as accurately and completely as possible, but also of taking a hard look in the mirror to see if we are truly being and doing all that our current state of development allows. Without the humility inseparable from such honest self-reflection, any contribution we make will be tainted by selfish definitions of what is to be considered normal and appropriate.

More directly, it is only when we recognize imperfection within ourselves that we are able to address it within others. Until that awareness is established, we are not truly servants of the work that really needs to be done, but rather are serving only the continued construction of elaborate illusions--a personal version of performing the fairy tale, "The Emperor's New Clothes."

From a different perspective, however, each of us is uniquely gifted to intercede for those who are truly our friends, specifically by being more familiar with their stories, their thought processes, and the peculiarities of how they make decisions. It is this specific absence of ignorance that also blurs the line between being friends and being true family. We must always remember, however, that each has his or her own life to lead, with whatever joyous or painful experiences are unavoidably included.

A paraplegic friend once confided that, in retrospect, the way he had chosen to live life before the accident (and to some extent since the accident as well), made the addition of his condition congruous within the overall picture of his life. That being the case, it is unlikely that anyone--no matter how much love was otherwise available--could have prevented the occurrence of the life-changing event. This is perhaps analogous to the plot constraint within H. G. Wells novel, "The Time Machine," that no matter how many times the protagonist returned to the past and attempted to save a loved one from being killed in an accident, the only thing he was able to change was which type of accident would be the cause.

In spite of all scientific, academic, medical, political, or social advances, life remains stubbornly beyond complete control by any human will. This does not need to be interpreted as defeat, however, if we remember that--standing together in love and wisdom--innumerable good things will continue to happen, even or especially within the worst of circumstances. As extensions of ourselves in some perhaps little-understood spiritual way, our friends are likely to contain the best and the worst of all that we find within ourselves. If we persist in nurturing the best and moderating the worst, that in itself is a form of intercession that makes the world a better place, one moment at a time.

To the extent that we develop the depth and greater interconnection necessary to legitimately use the word "friend" in describing another, we invite the emergence of a spiritual network or web that encircles the globe and leaves no one alone in his or her struggles.

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

## Interceding for Strangers

A primary initial challenge to any sort of involvement with strangers at all, especially if the methods and tools utilized are spiritual and/or mental in nature, is the enormous volume of ignorance that is logically present--which is only compounded by assumptions that one has knowledge one does not, in fact, have.

The first step of intercession for such, consequently, is to perform whatever research is necessary to begin transforming the stranger into at least an acquaintance and possibly also a friend. If we do not know the other's story, however, the response or contribution we offer has little hope of being appropriate and effective. We might thus inadvertently replicate past strategies which have already been tried and which failed dismally.

No volume of failed attempts, however, is any more able to prevent the next unique attempt from being successful, than all the darkness in the universe is able to put out the light of a single candle. If one is living in darkness, however, and a light approaches that is genuinely a light, does it really matter who's carrying that light as they enter the space where one is? If the invitation is to leave one's space for a very different space, however, that is a very different matter.

Intercession for another does not require such movement and may not require any significant amount of agreement either; all that is required, ideally, is unconditional love.

I say "ideally," because I have often heard people insist that genuine love cannot travel through one who is deficient in self-love; a dirty pipe, the reasoning asserts, cannot transport life-sustaining water. If the recipient

***"A generalization is a counterfeit summary, based upon speculation and ignorance, which is incapable of what only truth can do."***

*-- Sister Who*

has an effective filter, however, any water will do. It is not any less water, just because it needs to be filtered before drinking. I offer my apologies to anyone offended at this point, but if a perfect world were essential for survival, humanity would have died out thousands of years ago. That we have survived in spite of dysfunctional governmental, economic, social, and spiritual systems, is perhaps a testament to just how resilient, adaptable, and ingenious the human spirit inherently is.

Nonetheless, it is wise to do the best that one has the ability to do--even when interceding for strangers--and this will most assuredly include whatever wisdom one either possesses or is able to acquire. Interceding for strangers is thus an activity inseparable from personal growth and development. The stranger is something new and undefined which has entered the radius of our immediate life experience and we are invited to become more than we have ever been, within the process of integrating this newness.

One cannot legitimately presume, however, that direct intervention is always required. It is no secret how much damage becomes immediately possible (and perhaps even probable) when one person attempts (with only good intentions) to "fix" another. The opposite strategy, however, of avoiding any offer of assistance in order to refrain from committing the error of attempting to "fix" another, is, at best, devoid of love. The encounter is potentially a learning experience and the inherent invitation is to move toward mutual benefit instead of selfish gain.

Objectifying the stranger as the target of one's supposed generosity is the all the more reprehensible, because it ignores both the probability that at some point one could very well be the one in need of others' generosity, as well as the need to define the response according to the other's needs rather than one's own intentions.

Genuinely interceding for a stranger is thus an egalitarian rather than a hierarchical relationship. It is not a question of who is truly better or better off, but rather of how love can be expressed within that moment.

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

## On a Personal Note

It is uncertain at this point how much longer my current ministerial activities will continue, but rest assured that I will persevere as long as I have the ability to do so.

In spite of being so near to the completion of my doctoral degree, the program supervisor at Walden University has verbally encouraged me to withdraw. My interpretation of the vague reasons that have thus far been provided, suggests that the real reason is that certain persons within the administration of the university no longer wish to accommodate my experience of autism. Regardless, I am investigating numerous possible responses and potential outcomes. Considering the innumerable unnecessary delays that I have encountered during the past six years as a doctoral student, it is also a serious question whether or not sufficient funding is still available to finish the program. If not, I might be forced out due to an inability to pay (by means of federal educational loans) for continuation of doctoral student status. If all funding is terminated, a significant concern is whether there will be any way for me to maintain a residence in Colorado--or anywhere else at all, for that matter.

While I have recently been awarded a monthly amount of disability payments in relation to my official diagnosis of autism, all indications are that these would be inadequate to maintain residence within my current house and other affordable housing within the Denver-metro area is currently extremely difficult to find (four-year waiting lists, I'm told).

An alternative, if sufficient funds (\$130k, approximately) were donated, would be for God Space Sanctuary (a 501(c)3 religious non-profit organization) to purchase the home and designate me the live-in care-taker (all donations to God Space Sanctuary for this purpose would be completely tax-deductible).

Integral to consideration of the current major shift, of course, is both the welfare of my canine family and the ability of God Space Sanctuary to retain its existence as well. As my service dog, Bedivere would of course remain with me, but without at least Gawain (if not also Percival), I am very concerned that

Bedivere would return to a general state of severe depression, such as he demonstrated when Gareth died and the three dachshunds were moved to Montana for their own safety.

As for God Space Sanctuary, the central purpose of which is to provide sacred space without discrimination or dogma, especially for persons and small groups otherwise with no space available to them within which to engage in whatever spiritual practices are helpful, there would potentially be no space to offer if I lose my current residence.

While I have been striving with the assistance of disability-related organizations to find adequate employment for more than eighteen months at this point, being denied the ability to complete my doctoral degree would seriously alter the opportunities which could be realistically pursued. At the core of this very intense struggle is simply the pursuit of a sustainable way to meet basic needs and allow for continuance of the creative ministerial activity which is fundamental to the absolute core of my most enduring life purpose.

In summary, a threat of radical change has landed on my doorstep and I am uncertain that currently available resources are adequate to meet the challenges therein included. While I do persist in my belief that the Divine will have the final word about what will manifest, I do not presently know what that word will be, what circumstances will thereafter manifest, or which responses I will have the ability to offer.

As stated so often within past months, however, in one form or another, life goes on.

With or without me, may one and all and everything, blessed and loved ever be.

### **Subscription Information:**

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