

SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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Overview

While there have been innumerable conversations about distinctions between a human being and a human doing, expressions of the former make the latter's reality fairly inescapable. A fascinating aspect of any human being, however, are the myriad of multi-dimensional ways and expressions that can manifest--all of which can be utilized to far greater advantage if we are aware of them. I hope these words are thus helpful to you.

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

Being Marginalized

Is there any intentional or unintentional action that identifies a person or group as less important, that is not also narcissistic to some degree or another? Phrased a little differently, is it possible to treat someone as less without simultaneously being so preoccupied with one's self and one's own experience that one neglects the relationships and interdependency upon which all of life is, in fact, dependent?

The blunt description of such a dynamic is that it is suicidal. The less-provocative description is that the particular action is self-sabotaging. The distinction between these two, is the speed at which the termination of life (in one or more ways) follows.

An often overlooked peculiarity of such isolation, however, is that it can be viewed in multiple ways. In marginalizing an anomalous person, the initiators of such action are so preoccupied with excluding that of which they disapprove, that they fail to recognize that the positive contributions of such individuals are no longer available. Furthermore, since the universe is far larger than the space defined and legitimately claimed by any identifiable social group, the persons excluded have been blessed with a virtually infinite and completely open and free space within which to live, grow,

and develop. Indeed, who is more free than one who is no longer subject to society's dictatorial requirements? Does it really make any sense to complain about not being able to stand within a particular square foot of space in the middle of an open field?

It could also be that by marginalizing incongruous people, the contrasting population has in effect quarantined itself and all of its dogmatic and judgmental attitudes and actions, thereby indirectly inviting the marginalized population to form a new and better world.

Some of the opportunities of being marginalized being thus noted, the word is nonetheless used most often when being marginalized results in an experience of loss or of disempowerment. There is something very painful about being excluded or shunned, specifically because of how strong the desire within virtually every living thing is, to belong or feel connected to other examples of life. Being marginalized is painful specifically because of how inter-relational and interconnected life is.

There is, however, more than one way to cheat pain out of its victory and to redefine one's self as something other than merely a victim of pain. Similarly, a most defiant and rebellious action against a person or thing with an apparent intention of reducing one's self to despair, is to rejoice, to begin singing, or to even begin dancing as if the oppression didn't matter--not because it doesn't hurt and not as an example of being in psychological denial, but rather as a consciously chosen response of the spirit that affirms the existence of that which is greater than the immediate reality.

The complete truth of a life is always greater than the smallness of the present moment. When we forget this, we react to the present moment and become as small as that moment. When we remember that which is greater, that greater reality is able to fill us and carry us to where the smallness never could.

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Being Awakened

Perhaps the most basic thing to notice within this experience, is that perception is radically altered: at one moment, everything appears in a particular way; within the very next moment, absolutely everything appears in a different way--that may be neither more nor less valuable and beautiful, but simply offers its own unique constellation of resources, abilities, and opportunities.

From a perhaps contrasting perspective, however, one could also wonder which state was most awakened. When I close my eyes each night, I awaken to a world of dreams unencumbered by the restrictions of my material world (i.e. predominant economic, political, and social systems; gravity; etc.). The freedom the dream world includes, gives my mind the ability to work out challenges using ways and methods which are (for all essential purposes) impossible within my daily life.

When I leave the world of dreaming and awaken to the social, political, emotional, and physical world, I am besieged by choices and consequences--not all of which originate within myself. The world is, always, has been, and presumably always will be a shared space. In awakening to this reality fully, it is imperative that I recognize both the advantages and disadvantages this dual reality creates.

The more one awakens, however, the more it becomes clear that the differences between advantages and disadvantages may be less significant than previously imagined--specifically because of the ability of the human mind and spirit to transform and (hopefully constructively) alter everything encountered.

Perhaps the most serious trap to avoid along the way, is that of confusing contribution with control. My tentative conclusion, after literally years of contemplation, is that complete control may be far less essential than many wish to believe. To the extent that I learn to wisely extend or withhold trust, I am also able to share control of my life experience with others. The other side of that, of course, is the continual task of being trustworthy.

It is not just the infinite realities of the universe around me (and all of the other residents it encompasses) to which I must

awaken, but also the virtually infinite realities within myself. More concisely, I will never know myself so well that there is nothing more to learn and to the degree that particular new discoveries have extensive influence upon all life experience ever after, those discoveries may feel and function as an awakening. If I persist in being honest with myself and others, I am well on the way to remaining trustworthy.

A central challenge within more radical changes, is to welcome rather than fear them, even if their changes are extensive and the effects of those changes far-reaching. I recall hearing once the suggestion of imagining that everything within one's life experience is conspiring to bring the greatest success: blocking the way to things that would ultimately turn out badly and opening sometimes peculiar doors to things that offer more promising ends.

A central challenge of virtually any and all faith, is that of believing in a genuinely infinite spectrum of possibilities. The very best is just as possible as the worst thing we can imagine. Insisting upon patience within such moments has always struck me as a bit lame, specifically because the moment may instead be inviting a response and be unwilling to move or evolve until a response is given.

Closely aligned with honesty, it should also be noted, is humility. As I wrote many years ago, "within each moment of life is both a lesson to learn and a ministry to perform." In serving rather than attempting to control life experiences, I provide opportunity for whatever is greater and wiser than myself to also have a voice. Awakening always begins with humility, specifically because awakening involves seeing what was not previously seen. Arrogant overconfidence, conversely, always creates some form of blindness or self-deception.

A perhaps unfortunate reality of not being awake, is that the body continues to age; too much sleep and the number of hours spent in conscious remembrance of life's lessons and experiences, dwindles to a weak shadow of what might otherwise have been. Too little time spent in sleep, however, and the world of dreams may quickly become a fading memory, unable to guide one's spirit to limitless being.

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Being Integrated

Long before I read of learning to take turns within one of Temple Grandin's books about autism, I knew that many things must wait for their turn to participate in whatever particular unfolding of life their circumstances and resources offered. Whether as children on a school playground, adults collaborating in the creation of a social activity, or even just a stack of playing cards on a table, a wise and sequential order is essential to peaceful and constructively collaborative actions and events.

Even a small amount of self-reflection easily and quickly reveals many diverse and sometimes competing needs and interests within any individual mind and body. In eating a delicious meal, for example, I must decide whether to make a priority of being physically healthy and eat the vegetables first or conversely whether to nurture psychological health on a difficult day by eating dessert first instead. If everything in life metaphorically has a bitter taste at the moment, a modest amount of dessert can serve as a reminder that better possibilities still exist.

As written by an elderly retired school teacher who was also a good friend during my last years of high school, "life is short; eat dessert first." Her encouragement I interpreted as not delaying enjoyment for later, specifically because one may run out of time before there is ever time enough to do what one has really wanted to do all along. Among specific

***"To build a better world
for one's own people,
one must build a better world
for all people;
to do anything less
is a revival of nationalism
that sows the seeds
of future competition
and adversarial conflict."***

-- Sister Who

examples of enjoyment are the relationships with others that have the ability to bring meaning, purpose, beauty, and new opportunities and resources to our lives.

Yet they must all take turns, because every moment of life within this world can only be used once. I noticed some years ago that one of the unusual curses inherent within our basic humanity may be that we always have more opportunities than the number to which we could ever respond. As much as I truly believe that everything is possible, there simply isn't time enough to do it all. Even if I were physically immortal, I still couldn't be in two places at once and experience any particular moment from all possible perspectives.

Nonetheless, I am the one inescapably in charge of ordering the selection, sequence, and amount of time and energy that each person or thing which crosses my path will receive within my life experience. I may wish for other things to cross my path that remain stubbornly absent, but this does not diminish my ability to respond to whatever does in fact cross my path. I once described life's primary objective as a persistent attempt "to live each day so proactively that I would experience no regrets." Needless to say, after more than five decades of life, there are plenty of things which I regret, but holding myself to a high standard of response-ability has nonetheless proved to be holistically empowering.

A principle challenge of integration is that it is inseparable from collaboration. My actual experience is absolutely dependent not only upon my response, but also upon the opportunities and contributions which others are willing to extend. More concisely, genuine living is impossible to do alone.

Being integrated consequently requires each of us to walk the paths of our daily lives with an awareness that transcends the shallow superficiality of logistical, functional, and pragmatic exchanges. It is consequently by being specifically multi-dimensional (that is, by being an integration of body, spirit, and socially oriented mind), that life becomes miraculous, magical, and--within each moment--more than merely the sum of its parts.

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Being Whole

Life, by its very nature, strives toward wholeness and thereby embraces growth. Any other action can thus only be interpreted as a pursuit of self-destruction and death. As safe as such an ideological statement may feel, there seems to be no argument that the world within which we all live is oriented toward brokenness, isolation, and disconnection to such an extreme that such undesirables are far more rewarded than demonstrations of wisdom, love, and wholeness.

While being whole seems to imply a state of inactivity, like a bird soaring through the sky without moving its wings, it is actually a very dynamic struggle with a myriad of variables, requiring innumerable tiny adjustments to posture, attention, response, and awareness within each and every passing moment. It is all of these considered as an interconnected and interdependent system that ultimately constitutes what is so easily and perhaps lightly labeled, "wholeness."

If we remain unaware of both the specific identities and the specific experience of each constitutive component of wholeness, we make ourselves vulnerable to failing to notice when a particular individual piece is struggling, in pain, or missing altogether--and we thereby become collaborators with the particular oppression being experienced, instead of conversely doing what we can to empower dynamics of healing.

From an alternative perspective, however, if one is waiting for someone else to be one's healer, valuable time and passing opportunities may be wasted. One could thus be complicit in losing what one cannot afford to lose. The available tools may be ill-suited to the particular challenge, the available skills may be inadequately trained, and the available collaborators may be profoundly uninterested in investing essential time and energy. None of that needs to become the measure of that moment, however, specifically because love and faith are the constant companions of all true wholeness, with the sometimes quiet and hidden strength necessary to get things going.

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On a Personal Note

My doctoral program has been stalled by adversarial actions and attitudes of faculty and administration. Specifically because this program has indirectly satisfied housing needs for the past six years, my ability to retain my current home is very questionable--which is why I have explored other options, such as moving to a distant rural location. The end of world as I have known it, seems immanent.

I had anticipated finishing my doctoral degree and using that to acquire the income necessary to ultimately pay off my current residence, but if a doctoral degree for me is to ever happen, it appears that it will have to find a different way into my life. Regardless, to the very best of my ability, this unique ministerial work will continue in whatever ways and places that it can, hopefully including more TV shows, newsletters, and monthly website updates.

Next year's calendar, "Measuring Life in 2015, is now available on my website, located at www.SisterWho.com/calendar.htm. I am also happy to print and deliver copies of the calendar by postal mail, upon request.

Additionally, all songs and accompanying music for a fourth album entitled, "Stones and Seeds," have now been finished and production of all vocals is anticipated within the next two to three weeks.

In between all of the above, there's a whole lot of packing going on and I could definitely use all the help I can get--but nothing is certain in relation to dates, times, or actions.

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