

# sister who's perspective

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## Overview

That language is a multidimensional tool inseparable from healthy relationships has always been obvious to me, but I have had to learn over the years that this is not the case for everyone else--that, in fact, we are each given unique perceptions and ways of perceiving, to share with others throughout our physical lives on Earth, so that life may move toward a collective reality larger than any individual part could ever encompass.

## Spoken Language

That which is spoken, fades to a memory as quickly as the sound itself. Yet just as much as within written language, additional complications arise from two common faults: unstated assumptions and unsupported statements. The former needs additional conditions to be true, while the latter needs what's beneath or behind the part that was heard, to be openly spoken.

It is not that what is not said does not exist, but rather only that it is hidden in silence. Obviously I prefer to be asked additional questions, but these seem to come only from those who are both teachable and interested in growth. In some cases, there is also fear to be dispelled.

If one only knows what worked in the past and has no way of adding and integrating new information, new and different future challenges are likely to bring a sense of powerlessness, despair, or frustration--making a rebirth or reinterpretation of some sort all the more essential. Yet even before speaking, it is once again a matter of shifting one's thinking from "either... or..." to "both... and..." In speech as well as in every other area of life, competition must give way to symbiotic collaboration if the collective life of humanity on earth is to grow.

As inherent as it may be, I cannot recall

ever hearing anyone describe spoken language as symbiotic. For minds and hearts that are fully alive, however, it remains ever and always that every answer is filled with potential questions and every question creates opportunity for multiple answers. Yet if one fails to also genuinely listen, that too will be an adversary to the symbiotic needs of spoken language.

In practice, spoken language is both active and passive, ideally inviting the best contributions of others rather than rewarding distracting over-statements such as typically constitute media headlines. On an individual level, one must similarly consider whether the words chosen are intended to educate or merely provoke a response. If others have not been adequately prepared to respond constructively, running ahead anyway will accomplish little more than dragging them, in ways likely to cause injury.

Yet preparation and opportunity need not be competitive, since both are essential to an alternating pattern--like oscillations between day and night, exhaling and inhaling, and speaking and silence.

Yet far more offensive than any unstated assumption or unsupported statement, is a false accusation. In a very real sense, it is an attack upon another person and is often done for very selfish reasons. Additionally, a significant part of the formative equation is usually a conspicuous absence of evidence.

My intent through all of this, however, is not to restrict, impede, or discourage any conversation, but rather to deepen it before we run out of time to do so. As I have been shifted throughout life from one context to another, unlikely to ever see the same individuals again, it could be described as leaving linguistic fingerprints upon the hearts and minds of others. My hope is simply that all such imprints are characterized by love.

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

## Cognitive Language

For everything I ever say, perhaps a thousand thoughts have raced through my head, seeking order, deeper understanding, and a most precise and effective form. The more languages I have learned, the more sequences, ideas, and expressions came within my reach. To give the most I can to you now, I must be willing and able to bear this sometimes overwhelming internal flood.

As much as various people may complain about the endless work of maintaining good grammar, spelling, and punctuation, linguistic effectiveness or ineffectiveness will be decided thereby. My thoughts may be only thoughts, but to the extent that I insist upon excellence within them, I establish the foundational practices by which my personal identity will become known to perhaps the entire world around me. What is perhaps a bit perplexing are the sharply contrasting ways that some thoughts seem to affect the ingredients and/or outcome of a particular situation while others do not.

While I do believe that miracles happen, I have never found that they occur predictably or in response to human demands. So it is that I strive to live out the distinction between settling for less and accepting that a higher and greater embodiment of wisdom and love may be directing the path of my life in ways I would never have chosen. Life is often wiser than one's self and many of the creative works I have served have made it clear at one point or another that what was needed was something different than what I planned.

The formation of each successive and unique moment in time has nonetheless begun as a long, complicated, and tightly interwoven fabric of thoughts, sensations, and intuitive impressions--from which I selected, improvised, or devised a particular (hopefully effective) response. As silent and still as I may thus appear on the outside, mental linguistic formulations are more often a mind-numbing blur of activity. If this were not the case, what emerges would be far easier for others to understand, who have no awareness of the individual identities of each

thoughtful ideas, which collectively create a sort of internal cerebral community.

Perhaps the greatest adversary to this essential internal phase of creativity, is the presumption by countless others that it does not exist--that there is no internal silent conversation occurring which would ideally be allowed to come to a point of completion before being interrupted. A more obvious example of this dynamic is the extremely common practice of formulating a response within one's mind, before the other person has even finished stating the question--such that one interrupts the statement and begins answering the question one *thought* was being asked, without waiting patiently to confirm precisely which question is in fact being asked. Like most languages, cognitive language may be so overlapping that more confusion than understanding results.

Within the house where I grew up, the practice of interrupting while someone was talking was common and never interpreted as rudeness, because waiting often resulted in forgetting precisely what it was that one wanted to add--especially when a series of statements linked too many contrasting and/or competing ideas together. What I had to learn was that it was not essential for each and every thought within my head to be shared with every other person. The path of life for every other person can still be very good, even without my contribution, because there are at least a hundred ways to address every problem one could ever name.

Yet I have met relatively few people over the years who address their internal "self talk" any better than they make a point of adhering to a healthy diet. What one tells one's self (silently and internally) about one's capabilities, about others, and even about all that is beyond one's self, has a profound effect (although not strict or complete control) upon all that will follow. As much as meaning is assigned, it is vital to each human mind to do the work of assigning value and meaning in order to make the most of however many or few moments one is given to live physically within this world.

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## Relational Language

I visited a church service recently and while I mean no offense nor have any wish to be judgmental, I was disappointed after a bit of careful contemplation, to come to the conclusion that it had once again been the familiar pattern of religious entertainment rather than holistic engagement. While I do understand that the current needs of humanity are more than any individual or solitary congregation has the ability to meet, I would never want this to be an excuse of not doing whatever one can. Religious practice that does not transcend the time of its occurrence and thereby be fully lived spirituality, does not have the ability to heal our broken and confused world.

That work must begin with a holistic kind of love that does not ask someone to pray when s/he has not been fed; that does not ask for being at peace, when s/he has been deprived of any sense of home; and that does not ask for being happy, light-hearted, or up-beat when s/he has legitimate reason to mourn. All such circumstances are an indictment against every spiritual and/or religious person who has turned only a blind eye to the reality of such problems.

As an autistic, I tend to be far more precise in my selection of language than most people I meet. On one hand, I definitely don't want to pressure others to be more like myself (I'm not sure anyone else could manage it without going crazy). Yet on the other hand, I am bothered by those who make no significant effort--stumbling awkwardly through life without any consideration for the unintentional trail of debris they leave behind them.

It seems the question my parents never

*"The heart gives reasons;  
the head gives strategies;  
collaboration and integration  
make miracles happen  
and dreams come true."*

-- Sister Who

wanted to answer was "why," perhaps because in most cases, they themselves had no answer. What makes this so perplexing now as an adult, is that I have grown to understand this as being perhaps the most important question of all. Without a sense of purpose--an answer to the question why--life loses the strength and energy it needs to keep going, regardless of the obstacles.

From a broader perspective, there may also be larger and more profound messages conveyed by individual lives, some of which are only understood after such persons are gone. It may be, for example, that the theme or common thread of a particular person's life is an appreciation for contemplative and quiet moments. It may be that another person's life speaks again and again to the necessity of seizing opportunities to share unusual or innovative creativity.

It may be that the one summary most make when the person is gone, is that the individual was forever in love with music or scientific discovery or defying personal and societal limitations. What would be tragic, is if that message is never heard at all. If the circumstances of one's life are a wake-up call to humanity, the overall life-work is only a success if people do indeed wake up--which, of course, is beyond the ability of the particular artist or inventor to control.

Being unheard, however, has no power to make one's presence or actions any less real. Yet the question which plagues every artist and inventor, is whether sufficient strength is available to endure the time of waiting for others to catch up. Specifically because those who do notice and catch up may be within a future generation that has not yet been born, however, it is imperative that every kind of empowering creativity continue for as long as it possibly can.

The work humanity has mostly neglected within the current era, is providing places and ways for such servants of life, love, and wisdom to simply be. If beauty has ever blessed one's life, therefore, it is imperative--a duty, even--to leave doors of opportunity open for future manifestations as well.

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

## Embodied Language

Beyond words--within my voice, within my head, or within my actions--I've been told that there are things I have communicated simply by being at all. In some instances, I concur that those were moments when I felt most alive, but had no idea that anyone was "listening" to me in that way. Perhaps it was Godde using me to speak to that person, to which I can only respond with the words of Robin Williams within *Bicentennial Man*, "One is glad to be of service."

What is problematic, is when being a presence is used as an excuse for not using every other available language as well. Of additional importance is striving for a certain consistency between all of one's personal languages. Nothing destroys integrity more quickly or more completely than hypocrisy.

Perhaps a better question is whether embodied language is the final litmus test for all of the others. As I am so fond of saying, "If you don't believe it enough to do it, I must wonder if you truly believe it at all." Still, if it is only an external action, that too can be an example of reprehensible hypocrisy.

To use the word "embody," however, is far more than merely an external action. A primary complaint regarding practitioners of Native American spirituality who have no such heritage is that while they may do the actions, they often do so without embodying the wholeness of the spirituality. Perhaps, but my recommendation would be for them to deepen their understandings rather than to withdraw from any spiritual practice they find to be genuinely empowering.

When my language is not merely spoken, thought, or acted, but also lived, it becomes inseparable from who and what I am. I may choose to share it, but it will only become someone else's to the extent that one invests the time and energy required to adapt my contribution to his or her own needs and dynamics. My language is likewise the result of integrating both my work and the diverse contributions of countless others--to whom I remain forever grateful.

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

## On a Personal Note

I learned recently that a dear friend, a talented artist, and a longtime supporter, died in mid-December within circumstances strongly suggesting suicide. I am deeply saddened yet also angry with the world that viable options were not available, leaving her nowhere to go except back to the realm of spirit. Her photo and an art print she purchased and gave me at the completion of my masters degree, hang near my bed.

Her life's goal and dream was the creation of an art sanctuary, but she was never blessed with the necessary resources and opportunities. She was the inspiration for the song on my second album, *Sacred Dreams*, which she requested one morning and I wrote in its entirety the same evening.

"The best is yet to come"--if I can find a way to survive the difficulties and struggles of the present so that I am available when the future finally gets here. I wish that my friend had been able to do so--as I wish also that my transwoman friend had been able, who left this world in a similar way. The world was impoverished by the passing of these two creative persons; I earnestly hope that the ways I remember them and utilize their contributions within my life, will bring honor to all that they were.

For now, that means twelve more videos, several book manuscripts, and more photo shoots; I certainly won't be sitting idle.

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