

Living Transcendently

Such a vast topic to cover in such a small space, but perhaps this can serve as an introduction to a larger article in the next newsletter.

In confronting traditional employment while establishing my financial independence, I keep wondering how to avoid leaving behind whatever spiritual wisdom I may have. The situations I face each day don't usually invite discussion of multi-dimensional life issues.

What keeps coming to mind in response to this questioning of my heart, is to look for the multi-dimensional reality of each person or thing I meet, just beyond the obvious physical reality.

Invisibility does not make the spiritual reality less significant, however, and I've been amazed at the greater richness of feeling that life offers when I remember in every moment that there's more than meets the eye. Each person I meet is a collection of dreams, hopes, disappointments, and beautiful qualities--most of which I will unfortunately not get a chance to discover. Knowing that this is true, however, allows me to see more than just someone who did something that I don't like.

I don't need to ignore my own hurt feelings, but I also don't need to stop there. I can acknowledge the feelings and then move on to redeem the situation. A gift of clothing that's the wrong size doesn't end with the disappointment that I'll never be able to wear the gift; it becomes an opportunity to give to someone who is the right size for the particular piece of clothing. A person who recklessly passes me while I'm driving my car on the highway isn't just an inconsiderate driver, but a human being experiencing the pressure of limited time and the frustration of not being able to accomplish everything the person wants to accomplish.

Life and I are in the process of creative transformation. May you be blessed in all of your transformation also.

Recommended Reading:

The Summer of the Great-Grandmother by Madeliene L'Engle.

I recall reading somewhere years ago that the biggest problem with life is that it's so daily. We don't get to skip through the highlights, as we do when reminiscing with others concerning all that we've been through. Each day must be lived one at a time with whatever mundane or unusual experiences the particular day includes. In that we live in a time of great changes, I found this book particularly inspirational and insightful in its focus upon major changes in one's closest relationships, and all of the deep qualities of life and understanding that become glaringly apparent during such times of transition.

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Sister Who's Perspective

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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

Recommended Movies:

"Short Circuit 2." The robot who has come to life has now taken on the name of Johnny Five and is faced with issues of friendship, personal uniqueness, and most especially surviving a frequently dishonest and untrustworthy world. The presentation is a masterpiece of integration of hilarious comedy and deep insight. The final spoken sentence of this second chapter of his life is as simple and as potent as was the theme of the first movie, that "Life is not a malfunction."

"Ordinary People." I've lost count of the number of times I have viewed this movie, each time trying to more fully understand the main characters, since they seem so similar to so many people in my past and present life, as well as embodying many of my own numerous and diverse qualities. The most pivotal challenge of this movie, to me, is the question of just how honest each of us can be with ourselves and how accepting we can be of the necessary struggles of personal growth--some of our own choosing and some that are thrust upon us.

An Extended Reflection on Personal Life Changes

In the current day and age (and possibly in many others as well), the wholeness of life has been very fractured into areas labeled "personal and private matters," "public matters," "social issues," "spirituality," and many other things. Even from just my own limited experience I readily concede that integrated wholeness is a daunting challenge, just as much as achieving and maintaining such wholeness is among the greatest rewards for simply being alive.

Among the common self-deceptions of humanity is the notion that all things are not interconnected, that what I am publicly can be separated from what I am privately and vice versa. I do not want to engage in such self-deception, but prefer to rather serve whatever creative and educational work the unfolding of my own life is. Thus I offer the following glimpse of recent personal matters.

After eight and a half years, my life-partner and I came to the realization last Spring (on Good Friday, just two days before Easter) that our lives were growing in different directions and that the time had come to separate. The process since that time has been remarkable in that no hostility toward each other has ever occurred. Actually, we will probably be very supportive good friends to each other for the rest of our lives. He, however, has found a sense of home in Montana while for me home is to be apparently found in Colorado. His social involvements seem to be subtle and quiet, while mine obviously tend toward being very public (television shows, newsletters, and all)--a particular point that seems especially curious

considering that I am more often interpreted to be an introvert and he an extrovert, in terms of our personalities. Perhaps it's another example of a Sacred Clown unintentionally doing everything backwards.

Things were never perfect between us, but I have yet to find a truly perfect relationship within humanity. Whatever combination of good and bad our time together was, I know that I'd do it all over again, if given the chance to go back and avoid the relationship because it would not be a life-long relationship.

I often said that I wanted a mentor, so that I would not have to reinvent being a Sacred Clown as well as being the person that I am, with no guidance whatsoever. What is often not recognized is that each of us has more available mentors than we can count, but that like the prophet Balaam in the old testament section of the bible, we expect God to speak to us in certain ways and definitely not through the mouth of a donkey. Everything has something to teach, but too often I am unable to hear, sometimes because of my own choices and sometimes because I am struggling with other things at the moment.

Now I must move from wanting to go back to all of the wonderful memories, to giving thanks that I do in fact have so many wonderful memories of the times my life-partner and I shared. I must also grow into acceptance of the need to move on. To do otherwise would dishonor the love we shared, naming it as a place of personal stagnation rather than as a launching pad for journeys into still more wonderful things to come.

One does not give another person wings as a bribe to avoid flying and instead remain close by for purposes of personal companionship. In all of our stumbling through the confusion of a myriad of daily decisions that added up to the total experience of our life together, I think we gave each other wings. To spread those wings and fly, more space between us became

necessary.

No one can tell anyone else when the time has come to fly; indeed, though the answer must come from within, my experience is that when such moments have come I have generally not felt completely ready at all.

Through a curious combination of patience and willingness to take risks, I think I am slowly becoming a better caretaker of my own soul--giving myself time when I'm truly not ready to forgive, to risk, to be healed, or to evolve and giving myself a gentle push when a difficult choice confronts me and there is no where to go but forward. (One of the two poems I've committed to memory is Robert Frost's "Two Roads." I encourage everyone to reread it often).

In every situation, once everything has been described and evaluated completely, the question that remains is "so where do I go from here?"

My intention is to continue to pursue the ministry entrusted to me by being Sister Who. One of the great challenges to this is the need to now financially provide for myself. Working a more traditional job takes a lot of time and energy. In having been a homemaker to a life-partner who traveled extensively for business reasons for nearly the last nine years, I was given sufficient flexibility to create and develop Sister Who as well as many other things. My former life-partner is therefore to be thanked for allowing a situation in which creative expressions could happen.

The challenge of creating a world in which creativity not only can happen but is encouraged to do so, brought to my mind yesterday the thankfully non-historical ideas that Shakespeare never had time to write "Romeo and Juliet" because he was too busy working for a neighbor down the road in order to make enough money to feed, clothe, and shelter himself. Beethoven's fifth

symphony was never composed because he was busy that day working as a waiter at a local cafe to try to catch up on his overdue rent payments before his landlord evicted him from his small apartment. Audrey Hepburn didn't star in the movie "My Fair Lady" because she couldn't get the day off from her house-cleaning job in order to get to the audition on time.

Amusing? Perhaps, but it is my contention that such things happen every day for hundreds of undiscovered artists. It is only because we do not know their names that funding for the arts continues to be cut from national and local governmental and educational budgets.

It is my intention to succeed in spite of such challenges and to try to understand that nothing is inherently my adversary. Each situation and obstacle that comes against me is either a challenge to become stronger or an opportunity for someone (perhaps even me) to make a decision and take an action that empowers rather than impoverishes the world in which I, others around me, and future generations will live.

I am in the process of launching a commercial web site on the Internet, continuing this newsletter, developing a weekend retreat entitled "Rediscovering Ritual--and Making It Personal," writing a book manuscript by the same title as the weekend retreat, composing a book of sacred dances, and numerous other creative projects, including greeting cards, calendars, and a totally new version of Tarot cards. As these things become available, they will be advertised on the web site and in this newsletter. If you have specific suggestions or personal contacts you would like me to consider, please do let me know. As always, your prayers and encouragement are very much appreciated.

May each of you be abundantly blessed in all that you do and are as well. Most especially, thank you for simply being there.

Blessings, love, and peace to you, now and always,
Sister Who

Not as a glib statement
to dismiss
the uncomfortableness
of difficulties,
but as an assertive requirement
I place upon God

(and so far God has agreed
every time)

whenever I feel
especially challenged

(and also as a way
of reminding myself
that there really is
a bigger picture of my life
in which
everything that happens
has a place)

I firmly state out-loud,

"This too shall ultimately
be for my good."

(If I wait long enough,
it usually turns out to be true).

---Sister Who

Possible Presentations:

Completed Sacred Dances:

"The Sacred Clown Dance"
"The Benediction of Sister Who"

Sacred Dances Partially Composed:

"Namaste"
"The Blessing of Sister Who"
"Where There's Only Love"

Hopefully these will all be completed by the end of 1998, as well as the book manuscript Rediscovering Ritual--and Making it Personal, so that I will soon be available to travel and do presentations for various audiences in various places. If you know of anyone who might be interested in direct interaction with Sister Who, please let me know. Thank you.