

SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

Sister Who's Perspective, Copyright, Issue 271, January 2022

Overview

Having discovered the dynamic of relational individuality within my doctoral studies a number of years ago, I continue to be impressed by how common yet unnoticed this dynamic often is. This month's essays, therefore, are an attempt to share related insights, in the hope that this term might eventually be commonly understood--and both generally and consistently put into practice.

Symbiotic Humanity

Those who experience affluence must always bear in mind that this is absolutely dependent upon the maintenance of a sustainable and healthy surrounding world--and all of the people, creatures, and other forms of life that the world contains. Conversely, those who experience need are the provision of various opportunities to learn compassion, wisdom, role definition and fluctuation, justice, collaboration, fairness, truth, empathy, communication, respect, consideration, sensitivity, and genuine love. Neither is complete without the other and life is ultimately a matter of learning how to positively relate. More concisely, in words coined years ago, "Life is a collaborative effort: we all take turns being the one in need."

A challenging aspect of this is that most never expect to be the one in need, but, as phrased by the singer and songwriter John Lennon, "Life is what happens while you're making other plans." I suspect that most would rather play the role of the fairy godmother than of Cinderella, but both are absolutely essential within one of the most timeless and instructive fairy tales. One brings the presence of benevolence and the other the opportunity of need, resulting in an interaction by which life will never be the same for either one.

Yet it is almost frustrating to me at times, that specifically what happens matters far less than what I learn from what happens--which is not to say that oppressive circumstances don't matter, but rather that recognizing them should never be where my train of thought and active response ends. An added qualification, however, is that learning is often better left for after rather than

during any particularly difficult experience. While the sometimes painful struggle is occurring, one's focus may be legitimately preoccupied with basic survival--which recommends that such moments be followed by times of rest and reflection, during which greater understanding can be achieved.

A common misinterpretation of the fairly timeless ideal of self-sufficiency is that it is even possible for an individual to exist without any symbiotic relationships. "I don't need anyone to help me!" some may protest, but in fact this is never true. A constellation of relationships is essential to secure basic food, clothing, shelter, communication, transportation, access to resources, and even economic viability. No business venture, for example, has succeeded without an adequate volume of customers both willing and able to buy. Making certain that customers have adequate funds to spend is part of the cyclical movement of economic resources that every intelligent business must support.

Concentrating economic and relational resources has thus never been a truly wise strategy, especially because it increases the impact of any disaster that occurs. In a similar way, if government or administration depends upon one person, it is only one accident or injury away from disaster. A single heart attack or illness could suddenly stop an entire community from being able to act.

If, conversely, cross-training has been fully implemented, numerous others can step into any gaps that occur so that the functionality of the community persists without missing a single step, every time anything unexpected occurs. A forest fire that burns down one barn, doesn't mean anyone is going to go hungry if other barns nearby are ready to share resources. It's not a matter of the survival of only one, but always of the survival of all--if the understanding is truly that "everyone matters; every single one."

That everyone matters is not dependent upon money, but rather unconditional and inclusive love. Where love acts, need disappears.

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

Symbiotic Individuality

So much of human thinking at present seems preoccupied with a "me first" attitude that injures essential relationships, reducing struggles for survival to the level of a childish game of "king of the hill." Hierarchical relationships have never actually been an intelligent approach to societal organization, as evidenced by the myriad of problems which have followed. It is not that administrators outrank production-line workers in a factory, but simply that their tasks are different.

Within academic settings, professors do not truly outrank students. They are responsible for ideological organization that the students do not yet have the ability to do. Presentations within classrooms have no purpose, however, if no students are present and attentively listening.

Granting that a great many of my professors and teachers have had very selfish approaches to doing their jobs--which perhaps explains why I didn't learn much from them--what I understand to be central to the accomplishment of a doctoral degree is accepting a duty and commitment to the intellectual understanding and evolution of individuals and groups whom I will encounter. It is not merely a matter of providing answers, however, but of learning how to ask better questions, that will clarify what is truly at stake.

From one perspective, if I am not true to myself, what I have to offer is likely to be poorly communicated. From a contrasting perspective, it is equally essential that I fully understand specifically to whom I am speaking. Having a common language is only the beginning.

Within any specific moment of life, every word I speak may be emotionally and intellectually charged or colored. What I was thinking a moment ago, tips whatever follows in a particular direction. No moment is ever encountered with complete neutrality and I should not expect that any person I encounter is completely neutral at the point in time that we meet either.

It may even be that every conversation should start with a specific question that respects this reality. "How are you," is common but too vague to be effective. That being said, I often encounter individuals who find my directness threatening, because they wish to hide rather than reveal their uncertainties and struggles.

Symbiosis interprets that no one needs to seek resolutions alone, but rather that the

combined wisdom and strength of both is available. If we can find or create sufficient love to make relationships work, the advertising slogan used within numerous contexts really is true: "We're better together."

All of which is actually empowered by diversity and weakened by conformity. By the inclusion of a large number of individually unique tools within my workshop, I am able to effectively address a far greater number of challenges. To use a different metaphor, I once read that "the invention of the orchestra does not require the annihilation of violins."

Within the title of this essay, there is no competition between the two constitutive words, because neither would be complete without the other. Together they convey a more complex and empowering understanding than either could manage in isolation. Within relational contexts, it is likewise imperative to recognize that the most frustrating person in the room may be the one who provokes the most effective response.

Within my years of amateur bodybuilding competition, every single ounce of muscle was created by responding to resistance. Within human interaction, unfortunately, my responses are too often perceived as problems to eradicate rather than resources to integrate. What I must always remember is to avoid doing the same.

This raises the question of whether symbiotic individuality is even possible without effective communication--which likewise requires mutual respect. If one is not listening, one cannot learn and there is a certain arrogance in presuming that one already has all the facts and that no additional information is available. I have often insisted that arrogance is not a virtue and there is no academic degree, role definition, or level of income that will ever make it so.

Nonetheless, there are treasures hidden within individuality that depend upon community if they are ever to evolve to their greatest forms and have their greatest expression. Far too many underestimate themselves, because they do not see in any mirror the possibilities and qualities that are so obvious to others within their community. More concisely, each and every one of us needs others in order to fully perceive and be our very best selves. When we are at our best, then everyone else can be too.

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

Symbiotic Community

To retain vitality and effectiveness, it is imperative that community be continuously engaged in renewing itself. More concisely, for life to persist, growth is required. Even the act of maintenance requires worn-out parts to be replaced by new ones which have integrated the wisdom and capabilities of predecessors with new empowerment and growth.

Each generation metaphorically builds a foundation upon which future generations will build even further. None of us is the form in which humanity will end. What we accomplish is not all that can be, but merely what hopefully provides a solid stepping stone to whatever comes next.

Far too many communities, however, have been so irritated and annoyed by the challenges of renewal, which seem to arise at the moment all that is familiar is becoming comfortable, that the general response is characterized by censorship, demands for conformity, and innumerable self-sabotaging methods. While I understand that life can be so difficult at times that dulling awareness seems desirable, there is no problem that won't be made even worse by being intoxicated with alcohol or drugs and consequently being unable to think clearly. Rising to meet any challenge requires being able to bring the best wisdom, dialogue, and perception the particular community has collectively available.

An additional adversary of symbiotic community is public hysteria, which is a tool often used by megalomaniacs, manipulators, tyrants, and bullies of every description, due to how effective inciting fear has often proven to be. The instinctive reaction is often to isolate whenever the level of hysteria has risen too high, but this is self-sabotaging, because it is only collective wisdom and strength that can overcome any relevant threat. One could even

*"Fear is not greater than love,
but when and where love
can do its healing work
is sometimes determined by fear
that stubbornly remains present."*

– Sister Who

say that humanity has evolved or perhaps been designed so that its members absolutely need one another (e.g., symbiotic relationships) in order to survive. The existence of needs is supposed to inspire interrelationship.

A big part of the ongoing work of humanity is to understand the specific character of each need and its constitutive elements, discerning which parts must be done by self and which parts require the support of a community. In a witticism created long ago, "Whoever wants the muscles must lift the weights," but providing effective exercise equipment and suitable places to utilize those resources, may require the ingenuity and strength of a community-- which is yet another example of symbiosis.

An effective understanding likewise considers both sides of the equation within each example, discerning not only the complete identity of the particular need, but also that of the individual at the core of the need's manifestation. Each person must be free and able to respond in individually appropriate ways.

Within every instance in which I have been required to respond with methods that are only truly appropriate for others, greater loss has been the primary result. More concisely, the central developmental purpose of humanity includes learning the uniqueness and utility contained within its individual members. Love is the dynamic by which this is rendered absolutely possible and even probable.

All of which points to the conclusion that symbiotic community is inseparable from unconditional love. Without love, in fact, such interrelationship may even be impossible, making survival unlikely as well. An added challenge is that one may understand all of this, but be unable to create any manifestation if no cooperation from others ever occurs.

More concisely, as noted within other times and contexts, "one can only build the bridge halfway." Symbiosis is such a bridge, that requires investment from both sides in order to receive blessings that exist exclusively within the other. The intelligence to accomplish this in safe and effective ways is available, if details are wisely managed by ourselves. Because computers are not alive, no auto-pilot will ever able to be an effective substitute.

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

Symbiotic Spirituality

Perhaps because they are relational dynamics rather than physical things that are easily measured, it is easy to overlook the value and necessity of inspiration, purpose, and ingenuity. If these are not present within one's self, however, it is highly questionable whether any external characteristic truly matters.

A number of viewers of video episodes of "Sister Who Presents..." have specifically thanked me for providing inspiration, urging me to never stop. As a comedic comment pertinent to the current time, after thanking the person for such very appreciated encouragement, I might smile and add, "Is there a certain wage that comes with that?" While I do not do this work for profit or income, I sometimes complain to the Divine about how poorly funded this ministry has thus far been (which results in limitations).

Specifically because spirituality has always been a symbiotic reality, both bestowing empowerment and requiring investment, it would be quite legitimate to say that I do what I do because of who I am. In terms of spiritual callings, I sincerely believe that each and every person is called to be him or her self, rather only the embodiment of others' expectations, because that which is hidden within each individual, waiting to be discovered and developed, is exactly what the world needs. All the expectations imposed by others are limited by their perceptions and understandings, rather than including unimagined new inventions and the infinite mysteries of the universe.

So in the interest of bringing out the best within each of you, I strive to continue being the best me that I can be. If my job is to offer inspiration and encouragement, I intend to do the best that I can, using whatever resources and opportunities I encounter. A wondrous consideration, is that each of us has the ability to increase available opportunities and resources by remembering that we are ever and always in symbiotic relationship.

Too often, in fact, we limit ourselves by perceiving only our half of nonetheless real symbiotic relationships, which could produce so very much more--if we were to embrace both visible and invisible interactive relationships.

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

On a Personal Note

The good news is that an eleven-year journey has finally come its intended conclusion and I can now legitimately identify myself as Rev. Denver NeVaar, PhD. For anyone who's interested, the complete dissertation is available online at DenverNeVaar.info/dissertation.html.

I once described the December holidays as being oriented to communal love in much the same way that February 14 is oriented to romantic love. The more I understand symbiotic relationships as essential to all life, the more alarming is neglect. Every relationship is at least a two-person community.

Yet even this still infers the persistent question of my second morality play: what sort of person will you show yourself to be? As much as I protest the losses in my life, I also recognize that from a certain perspective the essential point of any experience is not what happened, but what was learned and who I became by having that specific experience. So I continue to ponder the possible effects of experiencing uncertainty and transition that occur without a clear goal in sight.

All the while, I strive to avoid letting any physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual muscles atrophy so that no matter what comes, I will be as ready as possible to persist in pushing life in positive directions. Even maintaining an attitude of being ready to act and engage with opportunities requires personal investment and does not happen automatically, but is yet one more expression of being fully alive.

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