

SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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Overview

Each month I strive for reflections and insights upon the ideas and challenges my life includes, hoping they will provide empowering insight for others. That we are living in a time of transition seems obvious, as does the possibility we are each headed in unique directions.

Finding New Resolve within Grief

I was told more than three decades ago that the phenomenon is called, "survivor's guilt"--the basic feeling that one should have died in place of a loved one who has been lost. The mystery which remains is why one is still here, but the answer to that question never seems particularly quick in coming. Perhaps it's because the definition must be built rather than discovered.

On a societal level, one may even mourn for a sense of community that has evaporated without a trace like a morning mist. Deeply held principles that guided thousands and perhaps even millions, are nowhere to be found. Again one may wonder, "Why am I still here?"

Yet the fact one wonders indicates intuitive awareness of a most important work to do, even if it is not yet specifically defined. Contemplating Gawain's character and manner of living, I am convinced his final words wanted me to know how much he loved me and how important it was to persist in making the world a better place, yet I think he also understood how much I would blame myself for his passing. I would rather have spent every moment being with him, but survival always seemed a more pressing matter.

I'm reminded again of the suggestion for my own memorial stone: 'I would have created so much more, if I hadn't spent so much time merely fighting for survival.' I would have made more memories with him as well, if basic survival hadn't been always the priority. Yet he was always thinking beyond himself, which I strive to remember and contemplate as days continue.

Yet his priority, even beyond survival, was simply being with me. As long as he was, every

other thing was virtually optional. Even whether he lived within a house or out in the woods was a small consideration--as long as I was there with him, because that was the definition of home.

All of which emphasizes to me once again that dogs are the superior species, since humans have made having a sense of home ever more difficult. Then again, the new puppy in service dog training is clearly a major step in the other direction. We're still working on him embracing pack structure and orienting to me as the one whom he will one day be constantly serving.

I did specifically submit every choice to most extensive prayer, being thereby intuitively encouraged to proceed, but now find the pathway most peculiar in terms of the developments and events I have encountered. Yet there are days when a single response will provide unexpected hope for unimagined collaboration ahead. To reach those days, however, requires enduring the current apparently hopeless ones.

"This is not where the story ends," I tell myself repeatedly. This seems especially curious within the many instances individuals and agencies claim to know future outcomes, which are fewer in number than similar predictions made during past experiences that ended in other ways. It may be that uncertainty holds the possibilities which are ultimately most important, suggesting that one should not seriously fear the unknown.

"If tears could build a stairway and memories a lane, I'd walk right up to heaven and bring you home again"--immediately and without hesitation, but I must live for now within a contrasting reality, because there is much work yet to do and Gawain would not want me to leave any of it undone. So I strive to move forward more wisely, specifically because of the contribution to my life and memories that his quiet presence brought. I nonetheless long for our reunification at the Rainbow Bridge between heaven and earth.

"But what if you die?" some protest, forgetting for a moment this will happen anyway. Gawain's goal was for his body to live while it was still able.

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

Finding an Individual Way

A song on my second album, entitled, "Holy Mystery," begins with noting contrasts between perception and experience. I am likewise challenged more or less continuously to be an individual while praying for literally decades for forms of family and community within my life. In reflecting upon significant setbacks throughout the last decade of life, major setbacks have always occurred when I attempted to impose someone else's answers onto my life.

I've sometimes remarked that I seem to be the only one who believes in being me, but this causes me to wonder whether I myself even truly believe in doing so. Although it is often true that I do not adequately trust myself, the most significant accomplishments of the last three decades have all occurred when I did. A major challenge is ensuring that my definition of individuality is always relational rather than narcissistic; that is, being mindful to care for the constellation of relationships which sustain me.

Yet maintaining these relationships must be done in a symbiotic rather than enabling way, the first characterized by mutual empowerment and the second occurring at my expense. The second, oddly enough, is socially encouraged, while the first requires wisdom and inclusive love. Any deficiency of love and the result is inescapably unbalanced, producing results that are likewise limiting, but often in subtle ways.

In asking for family and community within my life, I sometimes wonder if I am subtly running from being the divinely created self necessary to the current time. There is, after all, a strong likelihood that I was born when and where I was, specifically because I am the exact sort of person most needed--even if the surrounding world does not yet realize this. My primary task, therefore, is not as much work or even artistic creation as it is discovery--which is hopefully obvious within my doctoral dissertation.

An ongoing challenge is bringing the holistic understanding of my dissertation to the daily living of my life, even before I successfully find anyone who appreciates the accomplishment of my PhD. I contemplate this intuitively quite often, but remain convinced the degree is to serve a purpose rather than be trivialized within an alternative pursuit to earn a living rather than create a life. Yet I wish I knew that purpose.

All that being said, I remain puzzled by those who persist in expecting me to be less autistic and live life their way. They really do not see how disastrous doing so would be. It's as if I am a single person with sight, wandering among so many others who have no eyes--not superior but nonetheless inescapably unique and different.

Being gay within a heterosexual world, being autistic within a neurotypical world--there are numerous possible conceptions to consider, but all of them are of me being me within a vast population of others, attempting to live an unprecedented life that could be disastrously compromised by demands for conformity. So being myself is itself an act of faith. The one I most wish to avoid disappointing is Godde.

So the search for my individual way persists, no matter how unmapped it may be. Someone recently commented that I've been lucky to have the dogs I've had, because most dogs are not so intelligent. Considering the diverse sources and conditions from which I extracted every dog I've adopted and trained, I'm more inclined to believe that the others never reached their maximum potential, because no one encouraged them to believe in such possibilities.

Yet it was not an easy road of predictable development for anyone involved. In each case, there was an enormous amount of struggle we had to be willing to endure. Even if we often considered foregoing any further attempts, what is important is that we never did--reminding me again of the poster, "The race is not to the swift, but to the one who keeps on running."

It is specifically by doing what most others did not, that we accomplished the exceptional--which I try to remember each time Bedivere and I are riding my motorcycle on a highway and someone comes alongside to create a photo. It is likewise why Gawain, Bedivere, and Percival understand from experience what it is to live all together within the cab of a large moving truck for four days--on four occasions--as we cross the country together, seeking a better sense of home and not fully realizing that being together is the best definition of such we'll ever have. Now that Gawain has gone to the Rainbow Bridge, that feeling is much more elusive and Bedivere sometimes sleeps on Gawain's pillow, wanting that definition of family back.

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

Coping with Speed-bumps

The first thing to remember whenever one encounters speed-bumps on the roads of one's life, is that they were presumably put there for a reason, by an entity with particular concerns related to surrounding conditions that are not immediately obvious--which are likely to benefit if vehicles move at slower speeds. It remains quite true that moving too quickly encourages many important elements to be unseen. One can defy the speed-bumps and traverse them as quickly as one's vehicle will allow or instead interpret them as opportunities to be more aware of everything nearby.

So as many voices scream for reactivity, I strive to make time for calm contemplation, within which I am able to hear beyond my ears and see beyond my eyes. Slamming my foot onto the brake pedal a few feet before a bump is not so essential if one was already looking at more than only the road immediately in front of the vehicle. Surprises may happen, but it is unwise for them to ever be because perception was in any way negligent.

If something has entered one's life urging a slower and more contemplative pace, the best response one can offer is to pay attention. Not doing so may result in a fine or greater cost one would prefer to avoid. For those on the autism spectrum, this often means placing limitations on one's otherwise potentially obsessive focus.

Yet stopping at each adversarial component is not recommendable. The intention is not to impede one's journey, but rather to recommend a slower, more contemplative, and circumspect pace. It is specifically by noticing what would otherwise be overlooked, that the character and personality of the journey are wisely altered.

One is no longer concerned with mere profit or efficiency, but rather with applications of love and wisdom within the lives of all affected. One hopefully even moves beyond self interest and into exploration and application of symbiotic dynamics. The inclusive effects are thus upon

*"If I am who Godde intended,
others' objections will be
with the Divine rather than me."*

– Sister Who

new ways of being and doing both community and individuality.

More directly, using the pivotal philosophical questions of the television series, *Babylon Five*, one moves from "What do you want," to "Who are you?" Without that growth and progression, however, what is left is merely a series of mostly meaningless events that shift resources, power, and control from one to another. Constructively, nonetheless, this means everyone is given a chance to learn better ways of being.

Mere economics is stagnation within the first question that is, at best, unlikely to ever reach the second. Stagnation, most concisely, is choosing blindness over perception. Rephrased metaphorically, it is choosing a coffin over a space encouraging life and growth.

I recall during the brief time I attempted to recreate a sense of home within upstate New York, being puzzled that extensive cemeteries seemed to outnumber affordable homes. Now I wonder if this was symbolic of the lives of local residents, since integrating anyone or anything new was, judging by responses, apparently objectionable. I wanted to be a better example, but generosity seemed to provide opportunity for selfishness, dishonesty, and greed.

I am reminded of a wonderful sentiment attributed to the Romanian nun who worked for many years in India, known as Mother Theresa:

"People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and Godde. It was never between you and them anyway."

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

Moving Forward Holistically

It is never only one's self or only one part of one's self that needs to move forward. Staying exactly as one is, of course, is death-inducing stagnation. Not moving physically, however, may grant opportunity to reconfigure mentally, emotionally, or spiritually.

Selecting a specific area to address rather than all together, conversely, leaves one in a fractured and even wounded state. Humanity is composed of inherently multi-dimensional beings, but they often forget this is what they are--or likewise that others also are. Advice that has not been invited should always be carefully scrutinized, but as much as it may impose the thinking of a smaller mind, such words may also invite greater awareness.

It is the inclusive greater consideration that matters most. A primary omnipresent challenge is that available information and understanding is virtually always deficient. Life remains inescapably a series of guesses, because of the future being unseen and unformed and the present never being fully understood.

A constellation of relationships is usually helpful, but still no guarantee. Accepting that life is inescapably uncertain, may be a first step toward truly living it. Proceeding without even considering circumstances and conditions holistically, increases any likelihood of failure.

Alternatively attempting to reduce life to conditions and interactions that are verifiably "safe," makes the experience artificial and without integrity. That physical life will end, conversely, is certain (except perhaps within one or two science-fiction movies). Rather than waste time lamenting that life is finite, a better investment of the time one has, is to use each and every moment as wisely as possible.

Moving forward holistically, maximizes one's utilization of every resource, rather than casting innumerable elements aside--and thereby impoverishing both the surrounding world and one's self--simply because no immediate need is apparent. Why are there platypuses in Australia? Specifically because something or someone transcendent knew they were needed and among the intellectual and educational tasks of humanity is figuring out why.

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

On a Personal Note

Someone suggested I take a sabbatical in response to the current overabundance of challenges, but I declined because there are newsletters in three languages to write and distribute, correspondence from viewers to answer, and ongoing operation of the website and YouTube channel. Direct appearances would nonetheless be difficult, because more than a year of requesting relocation away from negative neurological effects of residing beneath high-voltage power lines have been bureaucratically blocked. Last night after fifty years of very accomplished practice, I could no longer move my fingers sufficiently to crochet.

Numerous new songs are waiting to be recorded into a fifth album of original songs, but I am likewise unable to play my guitar and guitello. Even going up and down the stairs has become a risky. None of this makes any sense when considering I was an above-average athlete when moving to this residence less than three years ago, although Gawain immediately recognized that something was very wrong.

Intuitive responses to prayer insist there will be positive developments within the next month, but I wonder how much worse circumstances will become between now and then. Training the new puppy is also not going well, causing me to wonder whether his potential was very misrepresented, but every now and then there is a little encouragement, so I'm not ready to stop trying. As I have too often lamented of late: in one form or another, life goes on.

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

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