

sister who's perspective

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Overview

As good as it is for tools to be available, developing an understanding of a tool's capacities is equally important, without which human ingenuity and imagination may have little reason for ever making themselves known. In spite of the fact that the work is not always successful and that tragedies do happen, it is only by persistent, constructive, and visionary engagement, that the world becomes an ever-better place.

Human Evolution and *The Tarot of Sister Who*

To even suggest that "everything is fine just the way it is," gives voice to the mental illness of narcissism's notion that suffering people don't matter--as long as it's someone else who is suffering. Yet as it has wisely been observed, sometimes one is someone else's "someone else." There are no limits or restrictions to who may be impacted by various forms of human suffering.

Since the current state is therefore not "good enough," the alternative is continuing growth--of both the individual and humanity as a whole. Where the word shifts from "growth" to "evolution," is when not just the action or example, but the underlying pattern experiences profound change as well. What is often overlooked, however, is that change can move in both good and bad directions.

What complicates the discussion even further is that definitions of "good" and "bad" are highly subjective and vary significantly from one person to the next. Rather than viewing this as adversarial, however, one can instead embrace this awareness as a new opportunity. More concisely, one can be a co-creator of whatever evolutionary manifestations may follow.

Within *The Tarot of Sister Who*, I sought

to create a system of symbolic images that could empower self-reflection and relational contemplation to inspire and guide positive shift. While this could be said of innumerable other Tarot decks as well, specific invitations for new ways of thinking and believing have been built into my deck's configuration. As a friend and creative collaborator suggested, the single greatest shift within *The Tarot of Sister Who*, may be replacement of "court" cards of the traditional Tarot (page, knight, queen, and king), with four contrasting forms of non-hierarchical relationship (confessor, celebrant, angel, and saint).

In forsaking hierarchical considerations and recognizing that any person can play any role within diverse times and contexts, one becomes able to both hear what is said--regardless of who said it--and to also be the instigator of words and actions seeking wise and loving expression. In releasing one's expectations and definitions of what is or is not appropriate, one becomes open to any teacher or instruction that may appear--asking how something may be helpful instead of presuming that it is not. By meeting experiences of life with a new integration of wisdom and openness, the future becomes able to transcend the past.

Anything less insists that growth is not necessary, renewal is optional, and life itself is ultimately unimportant. Maintaining only a current form points in exactly the opposite direction from truly living. Humanity being what it is, there is a point at which one will run out of time to do whatever living one can.

The images which float to the surface within any particular reading, conversely, may prompt profound and constructive shifts within one's understanding, which give birth to new forms and dynamics of life. What follows the reading, consequently, may be unlike anything previously experienced.

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

Meditation and *The Tarot of Sister Who*

Perhaps especially as an autistic, the focus, direction, and intensity of my thoughts cover more ground, so to speak, than my body would ever be able to manage. I once noted to a group to which I was offering insight into autism, that one must "remember the complexity while addressing the focus." I wanted them to understand that it is not a question of "either one or the other," but rather of "both the complexity and the focus," configured constructively.

I am not able to recommend meditation which aspires to embrace nothingness or that reaches for self-censorship, since these seem too often at odds with Martin Luther King's statement that, "all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good to do nothing." A more constructive response would be to select specific points of focus which are able to lead to empowering relationship. When one does not know with which point of focus to begin, *The Tarot of Sister Who* may have an amazingly timely example of such to suggest.

As a child, I occasionally overheard adults comment that I had a knack for "figuring things out." My response was that if one stares at anything long enough, one will begin to understand what it is and how it works. This too could be considered to be a form of meditation, but it must be embraced objectively and without subjective agendas--allowing the object or dynamic to be the teacher rather than attempting to mold it like a lump of clay, using only one's currently available understanding and abilities.

One could say it is a matter of developing the skill of listening, watching, and learning without any agendas or preconceived ideas of how the results are "supposed to be." The more one tries to fit the present and future within the constraints of the past, the less the future is able to transcend anything that has already existed or been done. It would be like a snail or an insect that was prohibited from growing a new shell; it would die.

In seeking the larger mystery of life with its unknown, mysterious, and often expansive

dimensions, perhaps without realizing it, one is accepting and embracing that what has been thus far, is inadequate to contain all that is becoming or will ultimately be. The most essential quality within any reading is thus openness, but this in no way insists upon any sort of blind trust or setting aside of whatever wisdom and understanding has thus far been accumulated. Rather it dances with heightened awareness with the ongoing question, "What more could yet be?"

Within this internal conversation, some thoughts may seem like impatient and unruly children, interjecting disruptive comments and questions. Yet if those disruptions actually have the ability to alter prevailing norms, perhaps that is the reason for their very existence--recommending that they be heard rather than censored. Whatever else meditation may be, it needs to be a matter of truly and thoughtfully listening.

Narcissism, conversely, esteems the self to be the dominant definition, the point of the pyramid, and the conclusion of virtually every conversation--rather than merely another participant within the ongoing, unfolding, and usually-not-truly-hierarchical life within whatever surrounding multi-dimensional universe one may experience. As participant rather than master, one can contribute but also learn; one can listen but also speak; and one can be still while dancing with wild abandon through the clouds.

Within the surge of thoughts that crowd each day, however, it is quite difficult to truly hear anything at all. Finding moments of stillness, empowers preparation for whatever actions follow--as long as they do in fact follow. Finding only stillness but nothing more, conversely, places the spirit within a sort of straitjacket and denies the creative contribution it would otherwise make.

The surrounding world is a confused place, wanting both renewal and the reassurance of the familiar--not realizing that renewal of the familiar is the remedy for all that has gone tragically wrong. *The Tarot of Sister Who* is merely a tool--a lens, perhaps--by which such transformation can begin.

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

Personal Growth and *The Tarot of Sister Who*

Among the qualities I most value about cards within perhaps any deck of Tarot, is that they make no judgments about who is or is not qualified to hear whatever they might have to say. Whatever my past experiences have or have not included, the only inherent concern is whether or not one is listening. In being fully present and thus fully listening, a sort of metaphysical bridge is immediately created which allows greater ways of being to cross to where I am.

Do they predict the future? Well, they might, if all circumstances and variables remain exactly as they currently are--but that seems highly unlikely. That question is still worth contemplating, however, because the past and future are the peripheral vision upon which viewing the present depends, in order to avoid any perceptual spiritual equivalent of glaucoma.

Does the growth originate within the cards? Of course not, but neither did any intellectual growth originate within any of the classrooms I occupied throughout my years of elementary, secondary, or graduate-level education. It was nonetheless imperative for me to have classrooms within which to make myself present and engaged.

What is equally important to remember is that these classrooms were connected to the surrounding universe. In some cases, the topic of discussion or intellectual focus was specifically drawn from experiences outside of the particular room. Reinterpretation in new ways, nonetheless allowed for greater perception than one may initially have had of the related circumstances and events.

Among the fundamental challenges of

*"If I had to wait until
all mental and emotional pain
was resolved,
no act of love or kindness
would have ever been done."*

-- Sister Who

life, is that everything always seems to be "in process" in various ways. As long as life continues, one is never finished or finally complete. In that sense, no reading of Tarot cards is ever the last word on any subject.

Specifically because human experience consistently occurs within the ever-fleeting present moment, there is a natural tendency to see it as if it were all there is to reality. It is only by considering one's temporal form of peripheral vision that one is able to recall the reality of ongoing growth and development and to thus allow tomorrow to be different in various ways than today.

Remembering to allow the good to have as much opportunity as the bad, never happens without some degree of disciplined effort. To use a common expression, "It's not something that happens by accident." In even momentarily focusing upon a card of *The Tarot of Sister Who*, one is invited to give a particular sort of character and potential to a present pivotal moment.

Perhaps life will seize that invitation and opportunity with zeal, but equally possible is that the moment will slide quietly by--as if no such chance ever occurred. Both have been known to happen. When the moment has passed, however, I want to be certain that if my dream didn't come true, it wasn't because I failed to show up and do whatever I could.

From that perspective, any card of the deck could be a threshold which one may either cross or ignore. In subtle ways that may never be especially obvious, all that follows will reflect whatever choice one makes. One can regret, but one can never go back and make the other choice.

In opening one's self to *The Tarot of Sister Who* (or any other deck), one faces and honestly embraces hopes, fears, choices, aspirations, dreams, limitations, and a long list of other possibilities. What is essential to being fully alive, is that one allows growth to happen; that one accepts being a new and different person after receiving whatever a particular card or image may have to offer. In achieving new depths of wisdom and love, one confirms that one's life is not a mistake.

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

Self-awareness and *The Tarot of Sister Who*

Ultimately the photos and/or images of any deck are nothing more than that. The effect or what some may call the power of the particular images, resides ever and always within the interpretations and applications the specific individual makes. If the cards fail to inspire or if their voices are not heard, then they will fail in their aspiration to empower life.

Central to that is basic phenomenon of self-awareness. The inscription on the temple at Delphi within ancient Greece advised, "Know thyself!" and Socrates pontificated that "The unexamined life is not worth living." Even Jesus noted, "The kingdom of Godde is within you."

Within *The Tarot of Sister Who* is an invitation to spend more time within that inner temple; within "The Cathedral of the Heart," as phrased within a song I wrote many years ago. A significant part of such awareness, however, is simply remembrance. The images within this deck encourage that.

Too often in rushing from one demand upon one's time and energy to the next, it is far too easy for such awareness to slip away and be lost within the ongoing passage of time. In that sense, the images of particular cards may become like guardian angels, discouraging forgetfulness. Perhaps I will even someday create a plastic carrying case that can be worn around the neck, to carry a particular selected card with me throughout the day, calling its messages to mind for a moment or two at dozens of brief intervals throughout the hours which follow and seeking to notice corresponding effects.

If the images do not affect the living of life within each day or even moment, then they will have failed their primary purpose. That determination, however, is largely up to one's self. Who one is, is a place to begin; what one does, is who one becomes.

Nonetheless, a significant part of the doing begins with remembering, considering, and contemplating--each step of the way.

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

On a Personal Note

The definition, location, and configuration of my home continues to shift and I earnestly pray that in spite of all adversity it manages to persist, since its absence would make continuance of this ministry--apparently my primary life-purpose--a million times more difficult. I remain baffled at the lack of support from most of those whose lives have been touched in various ways by my creative contributions, but am equally convinced what I do is because of who I am and not because of the response (or lack thereof) that I receive--and I am that much more thankful for support that is received. As terrified as I am of particular circumstances, I strive to also trust that faith is weaving it all together in ways I do not yet understand.

"What seems disastrous often works out for the best, although it may not be apparent at the time," noted Miss Ferenczi within the movie, "Gryphon." I earnestly hope so, although at the moment it seems I may be standing too close to see it.

Dinadan's stubborn independence is being integrated into our family, as this little elderly dachshund remembers certain behavioral boundaries and expectations. My service dog, Bedivere, perseveres, but at nearly eight years old is battling neurological conditions that make everything more difficult.

I have two minor neurological conditions I'm now battling too, amazed at how many years have passed since this work began, yet determined to persist, as resources allow.

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