

Sister Who's Perspective

Sister Who's Perspective, Issue #137, November 2010, copyright

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

Overview

In dealing with spiritual abstractions, there is a general tendency to think that things which are invisible are also not at all influential—when the truth may be that the unseen is even more influential than all that is seen.

In becoming aware of what lies beyond the reach of our five physical senses, we may also find that we become more aware of who and what we truly are and of how our words and behavior project those truths toward others.

As we (here in America) are about to enter another annual holiday season, perhaps we can do so with greater depth and richness than we have in the past—dancing with the less visible parts of ourselves and each other in ways that empower all of us individually and collectively throughout the years yet to come. I hope the thoughts that I have shared here will be helpful in that regard.

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

Envisioning

As phrased by the American filmmaker and visual artist, David Lynch, "everything starts with an idea." Some part of us must believe that a thing is possible before we can participate in its incarnation or manifestation. We can serve the transition of a thing from spiritual to material realms, but generally not before we have (for whatever reason) allowed for the possibility of that thing. In the face of whatever doubts we may also experience, some tiny spark within us must persevere in believing.

Some people call this "faith," but one must first understand that faith has no argument with science or material observation, except within certain theologians' discussions. For those who persist in resisting, rejecting, or denying faith, a divine apparition would still be unconvincing. For those willing to open the door to possibility, miracles may become not only possible but also probable—so the first step is simply to open the door.

As an artist with an internal open door, I observed long ago that virtually every creative work

I have ever embraced, quickly takes on a life of its own, asking for alterations in its design and execution which are sometimes quite different from what I originally imagined.

Perhaps this is analogous to new parents who expected an infant son and instead were blessed with an infant daughter. Is something truly missing? Did something go wrong? Of course not. This is simply an example of how having specific expectations can be problematic.

If, on the other hand, one has envisioned a spectrum of possibilities and is also eager to serve and to learn from whatever happens, unexpected blessings may abound. That the envisioning is important cannot be overstated; that envisioning must also be free to become whatever it needs to become, in whatever ways it needs to become, is equally important. To require anything less will restrict and limit the new possibility to being no more than what is already known and understood.

Envisioning is an invitation to life to be or to become something greater than everything we already know or understand. If we fail to take any time for envisioning, we inadvertently build a cage around humanity's individual and collective intellect—opposing the expansive power of life itself at the level of the eternal and invisible soul or divine spirit within each of us.

Perhaps for one person, it will be those moments in the car on the way to this or that event, listening to music and finding a calm center within one's self, which may be a striking contrast to surrounding traffic situations.

Perhaps for another person it will be a few moments early in the morning, before the phone starts ringing and a list of daily chores must be undertaken, sitting quietly with a candle or a photograph, pondering love and wisdom within one's heart.

What will come of such investment of time and focus? Only the creative work itself knows. In serving such, however, our spirits can again experience the freedom they need to live.

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

Positioning

All too often, I describe life situations as analogous to adversarial chess games, within which game pieces must be strategically positioned and gradually relocated as the game progresses. If the game is mentally reframed as a carefully choreographed dance which reveals values and impulses of the person with whom one is playing, however, dynamics can switch from being adversarial to being collaborative and perhaps even a sort of celebration of interaction and relationship.

Another example of this would be a martial arts class, in which someone must volunteer to play the role of the adversary and presumably to be defeated, in order for effective instruction or practice to occur. At the end of the exercise, however, (within many examples of martial arts classes) the two participants bow to each other before leaving the demonstration mat. The goal within such exercises is not to create enemies, but rather to create ability.

Positioning is a necessary preparatory step to testing or practicing a particular maneuver. Although I do not agree with some of the implications, my friends who embrace a New Age approach to spirituality sometimes testify that each human soul makes choices before entering a physical life, which may include everything from language, culture, and economic level to familial configuration, gender, orientation, and even hair color. While the context may not determine all of the details of the outcome, a great influence is nevertheless imposed.

On a more mundane level, another example might be the decision when applying for employment within a particular company or business, of whether to seek a managerial, a custodial, a clerical, or a production-oriented position. The exact daily experience is not thereby determined, but certain boundaries are nevertheless put into place.

Positioning is not, however, always a matter of one's own choices. A first consideration might be the answer to the question, "what's available?" If nothing desirable is available, a second question might be, "what additional possibilities can I create?" If too many limitations are still in evidence, one might ask "Where else can I go?" Limitation is sometimes a divine prompting to venture forth in search of a new horizon (which is a search for a new position).

Sometimes a certain amount of positioning is unavoidable. Whether or not one wishes to speculate about the reality of pre-birth choices, once physical birth has occurred I will no longer have any ability to decide that I'd rather have two older brothers than to be the oldest boy. I may be able to invite analogous relationships into my life, but the experience of growing up with two older brothers is unavailable to me.

Shall I whine and complain that it was all a mistake, that I should not have been born where I was within a family unable to embrace my uniqueness? I suppose I could, but I fail to see what good that would accomplish. Moments, days, and years of life pass all too quickly. Why should I waste them within the paralysis of resentment and wishful thinking? Time is running out and it is imperative that I reach for love and wisdom instead of allowing experiences of loss to indefinitely paralyze my fingers.

I frequently encounter those who would like to wish away all negative feelings, but I am content to feel whatever I feel as long as I don't get stuck within the feelings of a particular moment. Doing so would be analogous to becoming a blood-clot within my own spiritual circulatory system. Like my own physical body, I must develop effective positions and strategies for processing whatever conditions occur.

The nature of the body is to heal and the nature of the spirit is to grow, but neither can do what is needed without the availability of certain essential resources and abilities.

If I am to weave a beautiful blanket on a large floor loom, I must thread specific colors of yarn through the loom in a specific order and according to a specific pattern of placement. Not until all such threads have been positioned, can any weaving occur. The situations and circumstances of our lives are the threads through which our thoughts, words, and actions will weave the story of who and what we are or have been since the beginning of our lives. Every change or failure to change will be obvious within the finished work; every act of love or wisdom will be like an embroidered jewel or a golden thread.

Ultimately it is our positioning of love and wisdom within our lives which will determine whether we become an exquisite tapestry or a burlap sack for hauling potatoes—but, then again, even the sack brings nourishment to humanity.

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

Transitioning

Heraclitus statement that "change is the only constant in the universe" may be a good place to start, but what I think he failed to add is that when one is going through a transition or time of significant change, it can seem to be the entirety of one's universe—as if nothing else existed.

Within such times, it can be reassuring and even genuinely empowering to remember that contrasting experiences of life may be equally as real. As much as everything may be changing for me, someone else nearby may be battling stagnation. As much as one person may be doing without, someone else may have too much.

Within the intensity and immediacy of a time of radical change, however, it is easy to forget what contrasting possibilities are. When I am now putting on more clothes before going outside and stop for a moment to try to remember what it felt like last June when the temperature was in the upper nineties and wearing so much clothing would have been intolerable, I can't seem to remember exactly how it felt. I can describe it, but I can't remember the actual feeling.

Within dealing with memories is the task of assigning words to represent understandings of past experiences. All that I absolutely know, however, is what I am feeling within the present moment. Then again, even as I feel the present moment, I recognize that what I am feeling is different than what I previously felt.

Similarly, when I attempt to define who I was and how I understood things when I finished high school, when I finished college, and when I finished my masters degree, I am immediately

*"Be proactive
about immediate problems
and opportunities,
but trust God
with long-term progression;
the Divine has bigger dreams
for each of us
than we ever dare to dream
all on our own."*

--Sister Who

aware that none of these is the same as how I would define who I am and how I understand things within the present moment.

Yet the universe extends outward from the present place and time in ways that the present place and time is unable to encompass. Within the navigation of a time of transition, therefore, are the tasks of envisioning, observing, and/or exploring as much as necessary so that I have someplace to go—some direction in which to move.

An additional and very worthy concern is safety; answering the basic question of how I can envision, observe, and explore without experiencing any greater injury or loss than is absolutely necessary. If there are certain injuries or losses which are somehow necessary, I am given the challenge of viewing the experience non-adversarially—which is a very daunting challenge indeed. A more literal example of this would be any one of the hundreds of corrective medical surgeries which are performed within this country every day. In general, acceptance of the pain and temporary limitation which immediately follow the particular surgery is only tolerated because of the promises of a competent professional that empowerment will be the long-term reward.

Within distinguishing between immediate and long-term effects, however, is where choices to move in other directions are sometimes made. An additional consideration is how probable or improbable a particular outcome seems to be. The outcome that is ninety percent probable is often valued much higher than the outcome which is only twenty percent probable. Specifically because I am the one who will have to live with the ultimate consequences, I believe it is only right that I should make all relevant decisions.

It is by accepting responsibility for such choices that we move into an ever more mature and empowered internal form of who we are. Personally, I also believe it's one of the ways we become the navigator of our own transitions, ultimately choosing the specific paths by which our spirits grow.

Times of transition are therefore not unproductive times, but rather times of invitation to be both proactive and also faithful; to choose the steps by which I dance and to also follow the lead of Divine Spirit as we move across the dance floor of this world and all that it has to offer. The beauty of our steps will be what we offer in return.

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

Ascension

This is surely a most misunderstood spiritual word, perhaps because of several commonly associated assumptions.

Assumption number one: ascension is accompanied by fragmentation—that is, moving toward a more heavenly realm and forsaking a more earthly one (along with everything the earthly realm encompasses). In actuality, true ascension brings a greater realization of how interconnected everything is and therefore of how important it is to infuse even the littlest moments with as much wisdom and love as possible.

Assumption number two: ascension confers superiority. The unfortunate truth is that there is no accomplishment of growth or development which will divorce us from our ability to misunderstand, to act foolishly, to make a mistake, or to be momentarily clumsy or stupid. It is specifically within retaining this ability to fail, however, that we also retain the ability to experience discovery, growth, expansion, joy, love, and being truly alive.

Assumption number three: ascension is a permanent change. If I travel north, nothing in doing so prevents me from changing course at any point and moving in a different direction—perhaps even retracing my steps and going south again. Why would I do that? For the same reason that I sometimes re-enter my house after locking the door and preparing to go to a public meeting: I forgot an important document on the kitchen table. Sometimes I may even get to the meeting before anyone tells me that the document is so necessary to the proceedings that I must return home again to retrieve the document. Ascension is not equivalent to omniscience and frequently brings new insight that informs me about why the "lower" experiences are so necessary (sometimes necessary enough to repeat them).

Specifically because ascension refers to a number of different (but also slightly similar) things, experiences of such can be large, medium, or small (depending upon one's perspective). The wondrous blessing is that experiences of ascension are available to us within each moment of each day. All that is necessary is a genuine openness to love and wisdom. If we are truly listening and watching for such, That Which is Truly Divine will take care of the rest.

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

On a Personal Note

It has indeed been a month of intense transitions and empowering blessings.

The second pre-dissertation paper of my doctoral studies has been finished and approved and I am attempting to begin the third paper.

I'm told that my motorcycle will finally be completely repaired and reliable in about another week. The GMC Jimmy I acquired in July (after my Toyota 4Runner was destroyed in late June) has been sold because it proved to be too expensive to own and operate. I am presently investigating a much more economical possibility.

Preparations for production of a television holiday special entitled "Sister Who's Holiday Care Package" are nearly complete and included texturing and painting of the "Sanctuary" / living room area of my home. If production can be accomplished within the next week, cable-casting throughout the month of December (and availability over the Internet using streaming video technology) is a very real possibility.

Production of my contribution to the "It Gets Better" project related to teen suicide has been completed and is now available online on the Internet at <http://www.youtube.com/denvernevaar>.

New photos of the Sanctuary and Meditation Garden will hopefully be added to the Internet Website of God Space Sanctuary within the next week (www.GodSpaceSanctuary.org).

Composition of the 2011 calendar has been completed and this will hopefully also be made available through my Internet website within the next week (www.SisterWho.com). The theme chosen for the calendar is "The Empowerment of Inquiry" and relates to thoughts and ways by which questions or questioning empowers us to truly live.

Significant new friendships have also begun within the past few weeks, providing hopeful possibilities. My dogs (Galahad, Tristan, Gareth, and Dinadan) are doing well, getting their exercise each day when we go jogging together.

May God's blessings, love, and peace be with you now and always, *Sister Who*

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