

SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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Overview

Considering the millions of years the earth and all that it contains has been in existence and also how many years each person has lived in intimate proximity to that which is truly one's self, it is sometimes surprising how much remains to be discovered. Yet this is often where profound treasures can be found.

Undiscovered Self

I sometimes worry that I'm repeating myself too often, but I choose to trust intuition that perhaps the reason any particular topic comes to mind is that someone needs to hear once again, insights that I'm reasonably certain I have shared on many previous occasions. An additional consideration, however, is that I may use words and descriptions I didn't previously choose, specifically because of the growth that has occurred within me during the days since the previous mention was made. Far too often I am standing too close to my own growth, to realize its reality and the related implications.

Yet such growth is not for that reason less a part of who I am. In a similar way, I seriously doubt that anyone will ever know all of which the mythological man called Narcissus was unaware, as he became transfixed by nothing more than a two-dimensional and extremely fragile reflection. The slightest breeze across the surface of the water would cause the image to ripple completely out of focus.

A primary component of life, therefore, is bringing into consciousness the capacities, relationships, and multidimensional qualities that are as much a part of a holistic sense of self as the current color of one's hair, the shape of one's fingers, and the hue of one's skin. It would seem that most individuals never finish discovering all that this includes--about themselves or anyone with whom they have a significant or even pivotal relationship. Sadly, religion often becomes an excuse for avoiding such challenging steps of growth, which

consequently denies the world all of the blessings that would consequently arise.

I persist in my belief that it is within the individual selves of the world that answers to every challenge and need humanity will ever experience are hidden. I would further argue that these answers are relational in nature and not intended for exclusively individual utility or application. No gift or ability given to any individual was ever intended to go no further than that particular person's experience.

In fact, it is by sharing blessings and abilities and responding to needs without judgment, that the fundamental symbiotic relationships of life grow, become stronger, and create a future sufficiently large for all of the individuals who will live there. The dynamic at the heart of such exchange is love. All too often, however, the initial reasons this is not employed, are perceptions of vulnerability and painful past memories that have not been healed, of times when love was absent.

We must not become no more than the embodiment of past wounds, which, as tragic, terrible, and painful as they may have been, are very small moments in time in comparison to all that our lives can include. The capacity to rise out of even the most terrible tragedies has been repeatedly demonstrated as a distinctly human quality. I rejoice again in the observation of the alien of the movie, *Starman*, that a fundamental and fascinating quality described as uniquely human is that, "You are at your best when things are at their worst."

Yet it seems that many are not aware of this and thus need to discover much more of the complex and wondrous beings they actually are. Such discovery, however, cannot occur by using only the vocabulary and forms of the past, which are ill-suited to embrace the larger realities of the present and future. More concisely, we cannot become our greatest selves by using only what is already familiar; it is the unfamiliar which grants opportunity.

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

Undiscovered Community

It is never that the past should be forgotten, but rather that the past provides a foundation upon which a better future can be built. The wounds that have fully healed become points of greater strength than the surrounding pristine areas could ever be. It is specifically these concentrations of strength, which become invaluable to facing present and future crises.

Yet if there is no inclusivity and dialogue, the availability of such strength may never be realized. Additionally, if wounds are viewed competitively, some of their voices will be muffled and not clearly heard. All pain and suffering is equally real and deserving of healing and compassion, because all lives really do matter in more ways than are obvious.

Any life being treated as dispensable or optional robs the surrounding community of the contribution that life would otherwise make. At the same time, part of genuinely respecting and valuing any particular life, is allowing that life its own self-agency and ability to choose--even if one disagrees with choices that are made. No other person has the depth of understanding or first-hand familiarity that the individual has, who will also be the one who must live with the consequences, one way or the other.

In talking with someone recently about the common use of various medications within the current time which are considered essential to extending life spans, I questioned the decision to essentially become a prescription drug addict in order to live longer. The alternative of course would be to accept a shorter life span, but, considering the current state of affairs within this world, I think I could accept that.

A philosophical question latent within such consideration is whether individuals would be more concerned about quality of life if a greater quantity was less available. It seems that personal virtues are less valued within the current time in comparison to times past when life spans were shorter. Were courage, honesty, integrity, faithfulness, compassion, love, modesty, godliness, generosity, discipline, perseverance, efficiency, frugality, kindness, benevolence, and so forth more important, because persons within those periods of history had less time within which to embody and fully master them?

By its very nature, community is either short-lived or multi-generational. Part of the discovery, therefore, is noting the progression and evolution through time. In the era of one's grandparents, needs were satisfied with methods that are no longer used. Presumably, future generations will equally devise new ways to satisfy needs, specifically because of the particular resources which are available to them--which includes knowledge of methods used in previous times, if those methods have been adequately documented.

If so, future times may be evolving toward a sort of timelessness by having access both to the new methods as well as the old. Using the metaphor of language, this would be equivalent to becoming multilingual and thereby able to communicate within more diverse contexts and to address challenges with a greater spectrum of tools. Yet this is not a matter of the future being better than the past, but rather of having more complex challenges to face.

From an inclusive perspective, there is not truly any competition between the past, the present, and the future. They simply have different jobs to do to form the complete picture of life within time and space. To use another metaphor, it is analogous to recognizing that there is no competition between the diverse colors on an artist's palette; they simply have different jobs to do, but all jobs are essential.

Discovering community is therefore very much the challenge of moving away from competition and toward collaboration, which is specifically empowered by having greater understanding and empathy of each other, by learning an increasing number of forms of communication. When truly listening to each other is for any reason impeded, relationship is diminished and voices are less informed of what is most necessary to say. Learning how to truly listen to each other is likewise a matter of developing discerning self-discipline and not placing the entire burden of communication and interrelationship upon only the one speaking.

Yet while community prepares for such interrelationship, there may be emotionally, mentally, and spiritually painful isolation. It is like thunder before the flash of lightning that will briefly illuminate the entire landscape.

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

Undiscovered Symbiosis

Innumerable human beings throughout my life have been unwilling to engage in genuinely familial relationships with me, so I long ago opened myself to familial relationships with other creatures. Within the world of Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek*, this would be viewed as interspecies relationship. No offense is intended, but my experience has consistently been that every single one of the canines I have known has been more reliably honest and unconditionally loving than any human I have ever met, within virtually any circumstances.

Perhaps because I was also blessed with a vivid and virtually unlimited imagination, I also extended this sense of familial relationship to inanimate objects as well. Tragically, in far too many specific instances, various misfortunes prevented us from remaining together. For me, it was like the abduction of a child or the death of a loved one in a sudden auto accident.

I'm not sure I will ever get over some of those inanimate persons being taken from me, but a sense that seems to persist in trying to comfort me, is that my relationship with those objects fully demonstrated that for one moment in time, they were truly loved. Many objects in this world never experience that. I am still working on appreciating the reality of what I gave to them, however, rather than being more aware of the pain of their absence.

For that matter, I have never really been able to accept the impermanence of most things in life. I often lament that we are "creatures of time," condemned to know beautiful experiences without being able to remain within any of them for any longer than the moments of their occurrence. In each case, for a time, I gave them love and they gave me whatever empowerment they could.

I suppose what makes such symbiotic relationships possible is first of all being open to such spiritual, mental, and emotional forms of interaction. Without that openness, the interaction would be merely physical and view

the objects as having no inherent value. The dimensions of relationship would be no larger than my imagination allowed them to be.

I worry sometimes that this dynamic is not confined to relationships with objects, but is also descriptive of the ways individuals devalue each other. With both objects and people, using the metaphor of live theater, the result is that they are viewed as disposable rather than as significant players within the marvelous ongoing stage production of life. Each has its moment, its movement, and its contribution to the plot, that ideally will cause the spirits of every performer and every member of the audience to grow in wisdom and love.

No matter how inspiring or wonderful any particular moment is, however, the play unfolds within time and will eventually end--all too soon, it always seems. If each person is more than they were prior to the play's beginning, then perhaps all the sacrifices involved will feel in various ways as if they were worth the effort. If that is not the case, I'm inclined to commend the players effort, but lament their inability to successfully do their job.

Yet that success is never determined by only one side of relationship that is inescapably symbiotic. One can only give of one's self; one cannot require or force what only the other can give. Perplexing to me, is how nonetheless abundant such relationships are--everywhere all around--yet how unseen, neglected, and ignored the majority of them are, which might explain some of the emptiness that pervades so many relationships of greater potential.

A great ongoing sadness of life, is how often one perceives opportunities that have passed and are no longer within reach--all of which should ideally awaken us to seizing every opportunity to create and grow within the present and future. Life, by its very nature, is eager to grow, but is symbiotically dependent upon every creature within time to provide the means, the opportunities, and the actions which are essential, in order to do so. Life provides the stage, but the performance of the play is up to each and every one of us.

We can make it beautiful and wonderful or victimizing and tragic. All possibilities are within reach and depend upon our interaction.

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

"Accepting that good is impossible, guarantees failure."

– Sister Who

Undiscovered Horizons

One must always remember that all other horizons are invisible, until the current one has been reached, but they are not for that reason less real. In that sense, life is forever unfolding within a context of both seen and unseen realities. Arguing against the reality of the unseen, makes the world a smaller and more confining place with more limited potential.

Far too many are afraid, however, of what cannot be seen, because it cannot be defined, measured, or controlled. Indeed, that may be among the greatest challenges humanity faces, individually and collectively: learning that control is both unnecessary and impossible, but that symbiosis is more correctly the defining dynamic of life. In moving toward knowing, understanding, and loving each other, we move toward trusting each other also, such that control is shared and not hoarded by any individual part, mind, or voice.

The intention within humanity experiencing individuals afflicted with a mental illness of irrational hoarding, may be specifically to raise awareness of how destructive this dynamic can be and that it is actually occurring in a broader and more dangerous way on a global level. In this instance we are again standing too close to see all that there is to see. So we are given smaller examples to illustrate worrisome global dynamics and conditions desperately needing wise and constructive response.

So when one notices a troublesome form of interrelationship within an individual, one can ask, "Is humanity doing the same thing in ways that we have too long failed to notice?" The point, however, is not merely to lament what has been overlooked, but to move toward effective integration, improvement, and resolution. Resting from exertion may be a prelude, but it should never be a finale, any more than a musical performance should repetitiously perform an overture without ever getting to the subsequent complex symphony.

So I strive to appreciate my current horizon while remembering that it is not all there is, but once this appreciation has been done, to be ready in every way to move toward whatever lies beyond, which has life and love to bestow.

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

On a Personal Note

The most difficult times for me are those when my attention is focused upon survival rather than ministry, but of course such basic tasks are not for that reason more easily set aside. The additional challenge is when the ongoing dialogue I have with benefactors of this ministry has temporarily gone silent--at least from my perspective. From the other side, hundreds of Internet television shows continue to be viewed, literally all over the world.

I may not be immediately aware within those moments of what my voice is saying to people I may never directly meet, but I occasionally still receive online communications of the pivotal and vital difference that contribution to their lives makes. So I strive to have faith that good things are still happening, even when I don't see them, and that even if I am ahead of my time and most truthfully writing and creating for a future generation, it is imperative that the largest possible body of literary, academic, and creative work remains when I leave this world.

All that being said, a number of new creative works are in the early stages of development during this otherwise quiet--and often tedious--period of time. I am also working toward eventual replacement of my service dog, because Bedivere is nine and a half years old and beginning to show effects of that age. As has often been said, the hardest part of forming relationships with dogs is the goodbyes, which are generally foreshadowed even years ahead of time, giving opportunity to love them more.

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

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