

SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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Overview

Always with us, but never completely under anyone's control, feelings are a part of each individual that transcend rationality. Yet one must make the relationship with this part of one's self as mutually beneficial as possible--so the most understanding one can manage is highly recommended.

Feelings as Occurrence

What if humans could only perceive the world in black, white, and shades of gray? I've been told that's the world dogs perceive--that they have no idea what color is. I think emotions are like color, giving an additional dimension to life experience that, like perception, can't be externally controlled and is inherently neither right nor wrong; it is only wanted or unwanted.

"I felt ___ when you said ___" is thus a legitimate statement, but "You made me feel ___" is not. Sometimes what one feels is a reaction, but at other times a response. Either way, further discussion is wise.

That being said, it is still wise to consider the nature of one's contribution, which is why I have sometimes remained aloof while managing difficult emotions or excessive levels of pain. I do not want what I experience as adversarial to define that moment. Every moment needs to be empowered to be good.

Yet there is always the possibility of some sort of misinterpretation--hence the need for ongoing dialogue. What seems to lean in one direction may only be blown by the wind as it moves in a contrasting way. Integrity involves discovery of all relevant truth.

Far too many feelings reveal only that complete truth is still conspicuously absent. It is only by continuing a journey that better ways of being come to light. Life's most fundamental and inherent objective is growing into whatever can come next--no matter what suffering or loss has otherwise occurred.

It must be remembered, however, that the world is first, last, and always a shared space

within which others can throw stones into one's path, such that one's experiences are never exclusively one's own creation. Whether those become reasons to stumble or constitutive of walls defining the path, can nonetheless be decided by personal choice. These can equally be educationally instructive to any who will follow.

None of that, however, will happen by accident. A wise, creative, and dedicated person is required. Whether life ever becomes all the best that it could be, depends upon each of us.

Feelings prevent everything along the way from being painted only in shades of gray. Yet no color is inherently right or wrong. What can be revealed is the truth of the artist's experience, if that choice is honestly made.

The singer and song-writer, John Lennon, noted that "life is what happens while you're making other plans." The challenge of feelings is constructively and creatively weaving them into everything around them. That, one can definitely learn how to do.

Nonetheless, creativity is profoundly guided by that upon which one's thoughts dwell--as are emotions. At a most fundamental level, feelings simply tell that one is alive and concerned, rather than apathetic, about that moment. It is specifically within that feeling that essential energy and motivation may be found.

In some cases, this may mean knowing the specific further questions to ask--and having the courage to do so. In other cases, it may mean recognizing that others are not ready.

Regardless, one must consciously own whatever emotions one has in order to shift them in better directions. One cannot constructively change what one does not possess. Additionally, individuals may experience analogous emotions, but they will experience them in unique ways and there will not be a single emotion experienced by multiple minds and hearts.

Humanity remains as diverse and individually unique as snowflakes within an avalanche and must retain individuality to do what only it can.

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

Feelings as Response

Within response is the possibility of constructive change. It is only a possibility, however, because the other may be stuck in a projected expectation and not be paying attention. Nonetheless, a decision will be consciously or unconsciously made and the outcome may thus be shifted.

I am reminded of the wonderful scene within the movie, "Mary Poppins," within which a shift occurs from terminating employment to taking the children to the bank, after which the father asks whether it was his idea. "It certainly sounded that way," his wife responds. I can't help but think she wished for a similar ability.

As much as I can empathize with virtually anyone and anything, my autism equally prevents seeing the world with any values other than my own, so I have often been victimized by dishonest administrators with agendas incongruous with common sense. It is only later that I am able to devise better replies. In actuality, mutually agreeable solutions are usually within reach.

What remains essential is viewing the event from a divine rather than human perspective, but I usually don't. It has been wisely noted that one must begin wherever one is and since time travel has not yet been perfected, one cannot go back and act differently. Still, choosing a response that positively redirects, remains wise.

In choosing a response, one can send circumstances in a new direction. In doing so, new possibilities come into being. Creativity may thus be the greatest ability of all.

Life thus becomes something one does, rather than being only that which is done to one's self. Response is consciously intentional, but reaction is not. In responding rather than reacting, one has the opportunity to contribute and thereby change the interaction.

Adding or allowing feelings to a contribution weaves in passion and power that would otherwise not be present. It is not power that is loved, but rather love that is powerful, because it points to something greater than itself. Without feelings, the passion's power would remain disconnected, impotent, and meaningless and this enhanced contribution wouldn't be possible.

Yet all this begins with a particular sort of self-discipline and does not happen by accident

or osmosis. Whatever one can do to encourage self-discipline, therefore, supports growth into better ways of being. It is not a matter of repressing feelings, but rather of consciously and constructively directing them whenever possible.

What I feel, therefore--or perhaps the fact that I feel--testifies to being fully present and participatory in relation to life. The meaning thereby embraced is that the present moment and its details are significant. Specifically *how* it is significant is a matter of choice.

This does not mean that one will have the ability to make every moment significant, however, so one should seize the opportunities whenever they come. Indeed, one may have been specifically chosen for particular opportunities, because other more qualified persons would not infuse the contribution with the same qualities. Life may already be infused with far more synchronicity than anyone realizes.

By making a contribution, rather than merely reacting, circumstances may begin to be shaped by one's values and ideological inclination. This may even include a shift from being adversarial to being life-affirming. Those who are stuck within envy, jealousy, and small-mindedness, conversely, may only strive to maximize loss, heartache, and victimization.

Surviving and recovering may be a more effective way of overcoming them than anything else one could do--but it will not be easy or in many cases quick to do. It will not for that reason be less than it is. Considering the struggles it must endure and the dark mud through which it must push, there is an astonishing victory demonstrated every time a flower blooms.

May we be as wondrous as the blooming weeds along our paths. The fact that they are unwanted and unloved does not matter. What is unknown is whether or not we will ever perceive and understand the beauty they freely give.

Yet grieving being unwanted or unloved and being prevented from expressing either of these, does nothing to negate one's reality and influence upon the surrounding world. It is a legitimate sort of grief that, as noted by Loretta Young within the movie *Christmas Eve*, is melted by any tears that may be thereby inspired. Yet in the midst of grief, seeds of joy can yet be sown.

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

Feelings as Initiation

Until I feel something, I am not a participant in any event I otherwise witness. When I begin to feel, I have opportunity to act. If others choose not to act, it not only distinguishes us from one another, but begins to convey what sort of persons we are.

Until one feels, however, one has not been initiated into the moments within which one is otherwise present. Acting upon one's feelings identifies that one is not a hypocrite. Acting wisely may also identify one as a worthy leader.

Yet as long as I observe and feel nothing, even an invisible connection to others present cannot be legitimately claimed. I remember when my legitimacy as a gay minister was openly questioned, because I consistently refrain from performing within gay bars--although I have no objection to doing so, but the music is generally so loud that dialogue is virtually impossible. It's as if the goal is entertainment and distraction, rather than personal and spiritual growth.

Life is too short to waste time being hedonistic or in any way not living. Hedonism, I decided, was pursuing the feelings of the experience while excluding all meaning. The ideal, conversely, is not only perceiving the meaning, but also learning whatever one can.

Hopefully needless to say is that some individuals don't like to feel anything, because of the ways feelings challenge us to grow. Yet is it not inviting to be always more than one has been--able to go more places and do more than one has ever done? The only times I have not wanted to do so are times when I have needed rest and healing, because battles have been too long and losses have been too severe.

That others have wanted me to join them in their smallness and stagnation in order to validate the limiting choices they have made, is

*"What you say tells about you.
What I say tells about me.
The topic may be irrelevant.
It is instead a matter of showing
what sort of person one is."*

— Sister Who

truly sad indeed. That I have never been willing to do so, even if the cost of freedom was quite high, testifies to the dimensions of my spirit. I cannot ever be less than I am.

I could not grow into being who I am, however, if I did not embrace my feelings' transformative potential. Temporary discomfort had to be tolerated. Difficult questions had to be faced--repeatedly.

Learning that although I have no allergies, autistic people are far more sensitive to environmental pollution, has been a most difficult adjustment--especially because not only do so few understand autism, but many do not wish to even believe it's true. I seem to be the person who is not supposed to exist--but I do. If there's one thing I've never been, it's "normal," but humans are actually as unique as snowflakes, of which no two are exactly alike.

In a similar way, I sometimes wonder if others are more impressed by what I have and do than I myself am. I have simply tried to make the best possible use of everything that came within reach. I am not nearly as financially wealthy as some seemed to think.

It is more a question of stewardship than ownership. I have an inherent duty to do the most good that I am able. Resources may pass through my hands from time to time, but I prefer no envy or jealousy within others be involved.

Nonetheless, I try to both mourn and tolerate theft and discouragement as graciously as I'm able. If the result is greater creative limitations, however, I won't pretend I'm not human. I also equally and vehemently object to frustration.

So while I feel whatever I feel yet choose my responses, feelings are never an adequate excuse for doing anything less than my best. I only hope that is enough to make a positive difference. It is my mind rather than my heart that decides what I do and my actions that determine whether I am ultimately rewarded or punished, but my life may yet be a multi-colored wonder if feelings are allowed to maintain integrity every step of the way.

Many things are more important than merely hedonistic happiness, but being happy is certainly not a sin. The source of my joy, however, is making Godde's most beautiful dreams come true--which opens a new world.

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

Feelings as Indicative

Sometimes I know what I know, because of what I feel, but I am often confused by what follows--until I am allowed to see the complete picture. Then it all makes sense. This is why I often note that I seem to be standing too close.

I was reminded recently of a verse I read many years ago, committed to memory, and even set to music. I do not know the identity of the original author.

*My life is merely a weaving
between my Godde and me.
I do not choose the colors.
He works so steadily.
Oft times He weaves some sorrow,
and I in foolish pride,
forget He sees the upper
and I the under side.
Not until the work is finished
and shuttles cease to fly,
will He unroll the canvas
and explain the how and why.
The dark cords are as needed,
in the skillful weaver's hands,
as the cords of gold and silver,
in the pattern He has planned.*

Suffice to say there have been many dark cords during recent months, which I have lamented facing all alone, but I cannot say with any certainty that these have no greater purpose within a divine plan and perspective--to which I do not have access. So like the title character within the movie *Mulan*, I'm making it up as I go. Whether my decisions are labeled right or wrong is entirely dependent upon the context of the observer making the comment.

The important notation is that feelings are not meaningless, but conversely provide valuable information. The question is only whether or not humanity is able to effectively respond. If yes, then growth will follow, but if not, then greater stagnation will nurture problems which one has never imagined.

Feelings are what one can notice first, if one is paying attention, striving to make one's love unconditional yet balanced by wisdom, and reaching for growth within every moment life provides. Hindsight may be 20/20, but one can still see fully as each thing is seen.

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

On a Personal Note

My neurological system continues to crash in spite of ten neurologists saying that they have eliminated possibilities of ALS, MS, epilepsy, and Parkinson's. Obviously I am way beyond getting a second opinion. My personal opinion continues to lean in the direction of environmental pollution, but none has been willing to investigate this, even though the symptoms fade each and every time I travel away from this location.

Yet I have nowhere else to go. Additionally, I have met many who have no understanding of autistic hypersensitivity, electrohypersensitivity (EHS, which affects autistics more than anyone else), or autism. Needless to say, hopefully, is virtually no trust in western medicine left.

Alternative health practices, unfortunately, are not affordable. Once again "When money becomes the measure, relationships always suffer." So I do what I can, pray often, and try to be patient--hoping Godde will act.

The dogs are invaluable and remain my only family, but in most other ways I am a bit too close to solitary confinement. My computer offers possibilities of communication that usually inspire no reply, but it seems to be the only creativity currently available. So I'm working on my next book manuscript.

The good news is that *Reinventing the Sacred Clown* is now available on the Internet at Amazon.com, and tells my larger story. It is a unique book in every way, but only time will tell how much recognition it receives. Please feel free to spread this news.

So the work continues as it can.

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

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