

SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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Overview

Far too many challenges are encountered as if they are the last things one will ever face, instead of as nothing more than what lies between one's self and whatever follows. Part of the necessary strength to get through them, however, is envisioning what follows.

Beyond Feeling Powerless

At the onset of the epidemic of AIDS, the first nemesis encountered was the feeling of being powerless to do anything at all to oppose the tragic circumstances which that health crisis created. It was literally years of intense daily struggle before even a glimmer of hope came into view. I was unable to find any specific statistics, but one source suggested that a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS increases the chances of suicide by 100 times and I strongly suspect that number was much higher during the early 1980s.

Essentially, humanity had to remember how to value and celebrate each moment of life without any expectation of longevity. Phrased another way, what matters is not the amount of moments within one's life, but rather the life within one's moments. Nothing is to be wasted.

Throughout the entirety of human history, no marriage has ever included a guarantee of any specific amount of time to follow. Every such relationship was an exploration of what *could* follow during the unknown amount of time the persons had left. I suggest that the amount accomplished was proportionate to the amount of inner qualities and abilities that were shared.

As much as societal pressure leans toward strength, stoicism, and conformity, the truths of integrated strengths and weaknesses, of shared generosity and vulnerability, and of sustained communication and harmonious growth reaches infinitely farther. Through such merging of spirits, the resulting bonds rise to meet every challenge and emerge victorious, but sometimes in quite unexpected ways. What is often discovered through such struggles, are different forms of

power and strength than were ever previously conceived or even envisioned.

A yet unexplained neurological affliction nearly two years ago acquainted me with levels of pain beyond what I believed consciousness allowed, but ultimately proved instructional. As much as I noted that pain is blinding, I also recognized that no amount of pain had the ability to alter my fundamental consciousness or personality. Through it all, I was still me.

Whether empowered or powerless, I am still who I am, bringing whatever compassion and intervention I can offer, to whatever challenges life might present. At that point, however, I concur with the words of a popular song someone passed along to me: "What a long strange trip it's been"--which is why I continue to contemplate the ashes of my past, to see what gold may be lingering therein. Often, what I find are valuable insights to which the pain of those moments had rendered me momentarily blind.

So perhaps if this is a dark time through which humanity is passing, more attention should be given to charting new constellations by which to navigate. During the early years of AIDS, so much attention was given to battling denial that I wonder how many contrasting insights and how much timeless wisdom were insufficiently documented. It makes no sense, but during times of human history when wisdom was most needed, the wise were often the first ostracized.

Nothing compels the current generation to repeat the mistakes of the past, except its own lack of vigilance and contemplation. Nothing makes powerlessness the final word, except the silence of those who could speak. Nothing requires defeat, except a refusal to fight--with or without conventional weapons.

When I left my home in New Hampshire in 2016, which has been empty ever since, it was a choice in pursuit of freedom and in opposition to enslavement, that I faced all alone. I continue to have faith, however, that Godde is absolutely determined to ultimately make all things right.

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

Beyond Feeling Frustrated

Perception and language often rely upon unstated assumptions. The first one I detect within frustration is that sincere effort should be rewarded. Discovering what the specific reward ultimately is, however, may require some time.

Frustration most concisely means that a desired result did not follow the investment of one's energy, resources, or action. Nonetheless, the result is sometimes of sufficient value that perseverance rather than shifting perspective is the recommendable choice. I recall working on my first home, located at 10,000' elevation in the mountains west of Denver, Colorado, and being so persistently frustrated in its reconstruction, that I once looked at a particular challenge and said, "You might as well give up, because you know I'm not going to."

Yet it continues to annoy me that in spite of consistently doing an above-average job, violent, narcissistic, and greedy persons persisted in manipulating situations to their advantage. No matter how much they abused power and resources entrusted to them, no means of curtailing such abuse could ever be found. In considering that Godde had not momentarily lost control of the universe and was remarkable at transforming even the worst of circumstances, I did what I could, but ultimately considered that perhaps in ways I was standing too close to see, this too could be integrated into a greater and more wondrous work that my oppressors lacked the faith and vision to imagine.

Such a possibility does not change the fact that what they did was wrong, but suggests that they do not have the final word on what will ultimately be accomplished within my life, because, at least for me, Godde is very real indeed. Some would call that irrational and they are free to do so as long as I am free to persist in being a person of faith and of deep spirituality. If one wishes to determine who is right, however, time and circumstances must be allowed to pass without judgment or prejudice, so that a final outcome can be measured.

I'm reminded of a mother who told of her son in his early teens saying to her one evening, "Mom, I think I might be gay," to which she gently responded, "Well, I guess we'll find out." In a similar way, while some challenges require perseverance, others have messages to

communicate if sufficient re-evaluation and patience are available. The number of moments which follow a moment of frustration is so vast as to be incomprehensible.

Any one of those moments could be primarily described as a moment of discovery. As difficult as it may be to comprehend, humanity's universe is one of infinite possibility--in both good and bad directions. Frustration may fill half of one's perception, but it is essential to consider the contrasting half--that is equally real.

When all is said and done, I must conclude with the singer, John Lennon, that "Life is what happens while you're making other plans." I don't know the mind of the Divine enough to say with any certainty exactly how circumstances will evolve and manifest. I do have a sense, however, at least as much as I'm able to perceive, of the spiritual embodiment of highest wisdom and greatest love, who is committed to making all things ultimately loving and good.

It is not because I believe in circumstances or psychology that it seems likely for things to turn out well, but rather because I believe in Godde, against whom even the most narcissistic bureaucrat doesn't stand a chance. In the meantime, I strive to be the best spiritual servant possible and to remember that what is essential is to create a life of integrity. Merely making a living is a human notion with no eternal reality.

Yet we live within a material world, so an appropriate amount of attention needs to be directed toward being good stewards of our time, resources, and abilities, but not so much that we are not ready to leave it behind when the time comes to do so. The value of these resources is simply to demonstrate the sort of person one is.

In most cases, frustration is concerned with the unfolding of circumstances and events here and not with any eternal spiritual reality of who one truly is--which is where I come back to recommending stewardship over ownership. In embodying love, however, part of stewardship is being concerned that persons within one's immediate community be able to legitimately meet their needs as well. Indeed, if humanity were to conduct itself in the manner of a true family, supporting and encouraging one another, it is very probable that most frustrations would quickly come to an end.

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

Beyond Feeling Exasperated

As much as frustration can follow even a single effort, exasperation testifies to persistent and sustained effort that has moved beyond an initial response. I do not usually experience exasperation unless I have developed a relationship with the source of that feeling. One might even suggest that exasperation testifies to love, since there is rarely exasperation with those about whom one does not care and with whom the effort is an isolated effort.

So the first things I try to remember are both the basic love that is present and the humanity of the individual, which is inescapably always vulnerable and fragile, although some go to extreme lengths to camouflage or conceal such truth. So many seem to do this, in fact, that I have wondered whether the most difficult thing for many to be is themselves. I've actually seen within profiles of online dating websites for gay men that some try to promote themselves with the description of being "straight-acting."

My response is the encouragement that instead of acting gay or straight, we should all act like ourselves. When I mentioned this to a administrator of such sites within a phone conversation, the response was a somewhat dismissive, "Well, that's an interesting philosophy." My point was simply was that when one is finally exasperated with such attempts, truth is a better conclusion upon which to base further relational movement.

Yet it seems that many have not yet reached that point. If this is what many do with each other, how much more the Divine must be, with the pretenses utilized within various religious and spiritual contexts. It makes a genuine and honest conversation of any significant depth seem like an almost miraculous breakthrough.

The good news that nonetheless remains is that there are possibilities of deeper and more

truthful relationship which can follow such times, if one will pursue them. Perhaps this is one of the possible interpretations of the parable of "The Pearl of Great Price" recorded within the biblical New Testament. I suspect there are equivalents within the ideologies of other religions as well, because of being such a basic relational dynamic.

The point is simply that a logical subsequent possible development after exasperation, is a renewal of love and commitment. Yet all too often, minimal attention is given to what follows, other than perhaps expressing relief that the experience has ended. Relationships, by their very nature, are potentially endless.

What defines that which follows is simply whether or not personal investment continues to be present. If not, what has been lost is love, the most precious and often the most neglected interpersonal dynamic of all. I remain uncertain of whether any relationship can survive this loss.

Superficially, personal association may continue, but without love it becomes a lifeless oscillation of robotic figures in standardized routines. Tragically, that was the definition of parental movements throughout my childhood, which may explain why I am so open to other configurations of legally or figuratively wedded relationship. Whatever is both consensual and honest inspires no judgment or jealousy in me.

More concisely, what waits to be embraced after exasperation is love, regardless of whether it is an action that is initiated or renewed. Love is what will begin any healing that is needed as well as open the door to dynamics and realities that are completely new. What is perhaps a bit amazing is the volume of creative works this spiritual and emotional reality has generated since the very beginning of humanity and yet how misunderstood love continues to be.

In summary, what begins essential healing following times described as dark or difficult, is some sort of reintroduction of love. The painful times do not magically become wonderful because they might produce such a contrasting reality, but, at least for me, they seem to matter less. My focus instantly shifts to the greater beauty that is emerging.

Remembering this whenever experiencing exasperation, may encourage love's return.

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

*"If courage is not
the absence of fear,
but rather remembering
what is more important,
I know where to direct my thoughts."*

– Sister Who

Beyond Feeling Insufficient

I've frequently lamented (but not regretted) being insufficiently normal for the surrounding world. The question that immediately comes to mind, however, is whether the popular definition of normal is truly wise. Yet even if it is not, the ability to change the predominant definition, may not be easily or quickly within reach.

I suggest that constructive changes in this area often begin with truly listening to each others' stories and being willing to share one's own. The extent to which we do not truly know each other, is often central to shifting attention to externally based expectations instead. This cannot be successful, however, if what is expected is in direct contrast or even opposition to personal and individual truth.

To expect behavior that is, in fact, divergent from inner truth, establishes that what is defined as societally normal, may be a continuing practice of deception--essentially that those one allegedly loves will be required to live a lie in order to maintain a pretense of love. A first constructive step, therefore, is distinguishing pretense from honesty and discerning when this is what is more accurately occurring. Love cannot live where truth is not allowed.

Coming to terms with others' perception that I was (or am) insufficiently "normal," required an inner construction of my own definition and a recognition of others' limited projections. They had not heard my stories, I did not know theirs, and whatever pretense of relationship had slipped into place was not something to which I needed to remain committed. Indeed, refusing to do so, invites an awakening for everyone.

So the first constructive thing I encountered after feeling insufficient, was awakening to previously unnoticed dimensions of my life. In some instances, the awakening was filled with such dramatic contrasts, that I seriously wondered whether I had previously been truly alive at all. Be that as it may, my task in that moment was to move into the larger world recently discovered.

As with Plato's cave, however, it became intensely difficult to communicate with those who'd not made the transition. Yet perhaps someday, in their own ways, they will follow.

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

On a Personal Note

I reported last month that a winter television special had finally been successfully recorded, but this turned out to be untrue. While the production session appeared to have gone very well, it was discovered within the editing process that none of the audio had recorded correctly. Considering three valiant attempts that were made and the lateness of the season, I reluctantly conceded that no winter special for the 2021-2022 season would occur. Hopefully next winter season will be a better experience.

Sometimes striving with all of one's might, isn't enough to ensure success. Sigh. I continue to pray for more collaborators, but they seem to be currently in short supply. Not doing the work at all, however, is more objectionable.

Plans for a personal doctoral ceremony are currently in development, with a likely date of early to mid April. If anyone is interested in being present, please contact me immediately, but the result will nonetheless be uploaded to my YouTube channel for viewing by others.

Once this has been completed, the next areas of focus will be a book manuscript, nine morality plays, and of course twenty-four new episodes. It seems the work never ends, but it is actually very good that it does so.

Perhaps that is one of the blessings of being a creative person--that there is ever and always something new and wonderful to create. So I pray for discernment, that the investments of my time and energy will be exclusively toward the best and most blessed possibilities.

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

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