

SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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Overview

Underneath all conversation are many unstated assumptions and definitions, arising mostly from current understandings—which of course grow and change throughout life.

My hope is for this month's essays to be empowering. If a particular sentence is not so for you, perhaps it was subconsciously intended for someone else.

The Definition of "Terrible"

I recall hearing various challenges named as being so terrible that one did not expect to survive engaging them. Yet after doing so, one is still alive and the definition of this word must be rewritten. The extremes to which some go to avoid such circumstances, however, is often much worse than the particular challenge itself.

Phrased another way, an expression is that "anticipation is always worse than actual manifestation." This doesn't mean that the particular challenges are less painful or that the losses therewith associated are somehow less than they actually are. The error is within exaggerating one's interpretation of them.

Then again, if they do prove to be as bad as expected—which is often not the case—the confidence and integrity with which the specific challenge is embraced, sometimes makes the loss less significant, in terms of the overall picture of life which follows after the encounter. Within considering the losses I have experienced during the past five years, their importance is slowly beginning to fade in, in comparison to the person I have become, specifically due to specific characteristics and components of the experiences. I am nonetheless still not able to consider the losses justified.

As much as certain wounds have not yet healed—and I do not know whether they

ever will—I feel that I must embrace whatever increase in awareness has consequently become integral to who and what I am. They are part of the internal resources with which I encounter new and different challenges, as the future evolves into the present. That being said, I would still rather have avoided the loss and pain of the experiences.

In relating this phrase to my early days of skiing double-black-diamond mogul ski slopes, this view of anticipation/manifestation is the reason that I do not stand at the top of the slope for more than a second, before launching myself into the challenge of navigating its topography—either finding my skills adequate or rising to my feet again after falling. It was by engaging this challenge that my downhill skiing skills dramatically improved. As pleasant as it may seem to avoid adversity and pain, a life devoid of such, might not be worth living.

From a certain perspective, such a life would be empty and meaningless, resulting in a person who spent a significant number of years learning absolutely nothing and being no more connected to his or her actual experiences than a glance at a photo within a book. One may have certain intellectual knowledge, but conspicuously absent would be true experiential understanding. I hasten to add, however, that I do not always value the difference, preferring, for example, to leave bungee-jumping to others, because I do not believe that experiential knowledge of this will significantly add to my abilities or memories of life.

I believe that it is nonetheless possible to have compassion, without having experiential knowledge of certain losses. One does not have to experience pain, to be an effective hospital nurse, but rather empathy. Among life's challenges is being willing to be present at all, within such circumstances.

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

The Definition of "Possible"

I remember the particular instruction of a high school art teacher, who said that the first step in learning to maximize the potential of a new material, is to learn as much of its properties, applications, and dynamics as one possibly can—specifically so that one can recombine all of these in new ways. The corresponding challenge is viewing what others have done and thinking that the future cannot transcend the past, instead of inventing new and different methods and uses. I am not certain that I could effectively live within a world that is devoid of growth and/or renewal—which would also leave no indication that I was ever there at all.

Yet nearly every time I pray, I am told that better days and new accomplishments are absolutely headed my way—although I of course interpret this as applying to myself and everyone around me, because being narcissistic or selfish has never appealed to me. To be so would include degrees of being unintelligent, incapable of love or truth, without maturity, and ultimately not being fully alive. As difficult as it may be, I try to also give thanks for times of sadness, because they remind me that I am, in fact, alive—rather than not feeling anything at all.

When I open my deck of *The Tarot of Sister Who*, I am not wanting some external metaphysical tool to magically tell me the answer to a specific question, but rather that the symbols and images may guide the thoughts and questions I already have, toward a configuration that makes sense. It is often a matter of finding a new perspective that understands what was immediately and directly in front of me all along.

If, as I keep saying, life is primarily concerned with the growth of the soul, what matters most is not the experience or even the nature of the experience, but rather what is learned thereby; the ways that capacities of wisdom and love increase. One could even say that this pursuit is concerned with making all good things possible—which of course begins with believing either that they

are or that they could be. Therefore, by the choices, principles, and beliefs to which one gives life every day, one is in effect engaged in writing the current definition of “possible.”

The added challenge, of course, is that everyone else is writing this definition too, that the spectrum of definitions being written is extremely broad, and that each one is not necessarily in competition with any other, but rather contrasting definitions may verifiably and simultaneously exist. The resulting challenge is to figure out how. That may be at the heart of individuation—that is, fully becoming the unique and wondrous person that one most truthfully is.

I heartily concur with a statement of Barbara Sher once heard within a recording: “Maybe we all think we’re special—and maybe we all are.” A reminder that a recent interaction with *The Tarot of Sister Who* presented, is that we are inescapably each others’ guardian angels and that if we do not individually and collectively do all of the good that we can, all sorts of good things will not happen. The resulting pain and suffering may be realities that one avoids directly viewing, but they will not be any less the results of thoughts, words, and deeds.

There are a great many ways that awareness is diminished, that distractions are embraced, and that even the best of personal and social habits can become mental or physical addictions rather than constructive choices. None of these are truly empowering to life or living. Love and wisdom recommend against any sort of addiction or holistic imbalance; increases in positive possibility require holistic balance.

Balancing only what one already knows, however, is a poor counterfeit. The very heart of possibility is having a jigsaw puzzle with no edge pieces; having a conversation which has no last word, but only pauses for other activities and further contemplation. In truth, we live within a universe of infinite possibility—if we will dare the wisdom and love needed to make it real.

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

The Definition of “Mutable”

“It is what it is,” I have often been told, to which I have usually responded, “or what it could become.” Yet the next challenge is recalling that possibility extends in both directions (that is, good and bad). Knowing whether or how change is possible, often arises from both knowledge and experience in dealing with the particular resource.

Opportunities are also included within the definition of resources. Those with more, often accomplish more, but I remain mystified by those who have so much, yet initiate so little. Perhaps more than others, they have been invited to learn generosity guided by wisdom, but all too often they do not.

In a similar way, in far too many instances throughout the past five years especially, I have encountered those who have been given administrative positions who respond by abusing rather than effectively using the associated powers. The power is not to be confused with their own identities, although many of them do, but rather allows their respective identities to be honestly seen in ways that no amount of lies can conceal.

I recall seeing the witticism, “Your actions are so loud that I can’t hear your words!” As much as words spoken cannot be withdrawn, however, understandings and ongoing messages can be changed. Doing this, however, requires positive and wise intention, because healing any form of brokenness never happens “by accident.”

I have tried long and hard to think of even a single exception, but it seems true that positive change always begins with listening and looking—to understand as fully and completely as possible what is actually needed, because positive change never arises from any form of ignorance. This is

“Manifestation is limited only by our collective responses.”

— Sister Who

nonetheless distinguished from stupidity, by the observation that the latter is a matter of choice. One cannot fix what one does not know is broken, but choosing greater distraction in order to avoid awareness—or choosing not to learn when an opportunity to do so has been provided—declines positive development and growth, which is life.

In effect, a great many people advocate forms of death while denying that they are doing so. In essence, they have also chosen against being mutable, able to change, willing to grow, and even being honestly alive. The only thing they have truly defined as being immutable, however, is themselves.

“Change is the only constant within the universe,” is a paraphrase drawn from the observations of Hippolytes, an ancient Greek philosopher. Yet this does not recommend any sort of obsession with change, constantly altering whatever one can for no particular reason at all. Like all other tools, the ability to change is a dynamic which can be either abused or constructively used—creating either endless chaos or positive development.

Yet the first step is still listening and looking, to learn as much as one can about the qualities and dynamics of the object of one’s concern. This requires humility and identifying one’s self as a student rather than an expert—something a true narcissist or xenophobe would never honestly do, which leaves the surrounding world intolerably small and unable to truly sustain life. This also strongly implies and absence of any form or expression of love.

I have to wonder whether it is also true that when love becomes optional, life becomes meaningless. The good news is that—by its very nature—life remains mutable; able to change, grow, and evolve in any way that is both necessary and allowed. In a similar way, the forms and dynamics of love are equally able to change, grow, and evolve—as long as integrity is maintained; that is, that it does not in any way cease to truthfully be love.

To do that, it must also always circulate.
May one and all and everything,
blessed and loved ever be.

The Definition of “Enduring”

The first basic and perhaps obvious point is that the dynamic or object of focus is still present. If it's not, it's no longer enduring, no matter how long-lived it may have otherwise been. I have often described myself as being too stubborn to quit, which implies that I'm still trying and have not ceased to do so, no matter how weary I may otherwise be.

I'm reminded of innumerable movies within which the hero or heroine is perhaps even severely wounded, but within a final act of defiance accomplishes the singular decisive action of victory (whether it is flipping a particular switch, firing the deciding shot, or some other such pivotal movement). They are not at their best, not acting from strength, and perhaps not even acting from confidence that they are exceptional individuals. They know only what they must do and they do it.

None knows which moment or action will be the last, as they do the action they believe is right. As long as they are alive, they continue to try. What becomes of their contribution to the larger picture of human life experience, will be decided by others—many of whom initially did nothing in response to the particular challenge.

In a similar way, principles and dynamics which are enduring, are so because someone has chosen to persist in embodying them. My hope is that by embracing a pursuit of truth, love, wisdom, and creativity, I am helping to keep those ways of being alive, because of their potential positive empowerment. In very close proximity is choosing to support people and organizations which I want to be available to future generations of humanity also.

It is not because I personally receive anything at all from them, but rather because I see potential within them that they may not even currently recognize within themselves. I carry the vision of what they could become, that they are not currently able to carry. I suppose one could say that it is my gift to future generations.

I cannot thank the past generations who have made my creativity possible, in any way other than to do the same—so I do.

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

On a Personal Note

A primary challenge of composing this newsletter is being a creature of time myself; by the time the text has traveled through ideas, initial creation, composition, translation, publication, and distribution, circumstances will have changed—so I strive to make the content timeless, with the exception of this final column, for those who wish to know my personal progress. Most choose no involvement in any current physical, financial, or social challenges and I do my best to respect that I do not know limitations, concurrent challenges, or the degree and ways my words inspire insight or response.

Suffice to say that I am attempting various shifts within my diet and exercise routines, in hopes of positively affecting ongoing but still unnamed neurological challenges. I am also choosing to hold onto various dreams and prayers which are yet unanswered, specifically to persist in moving forward through this often dark and chaotic time. My principles insist that what I currently see, is not where the story ends.

To reach a happy ending, one must not stop while still in the middle. I recall reading somewhere years ago, “don't stop five minutes before the miracle occurs.” The answer to how many disappointments can one transcend, must always be, “One more.”

Phrased another way, the reason I keep going is because, in one way or another, I don't like where I am. I may love the people, the events, or even some of the circumstances, but there is something which still needs to grow.

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

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