

SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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Overview

For whatever reason, I have always found differences fascinating and therefore have usually had more questions in mind than anyone had the time or patience to answer. It has never ceased to baffle and befuddle me, however, that so many consider questions to be adversarial--when they might, in fact, be the gold mine of empowerment most needed by humanity, especially during this perplexing current time of radical transition.

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

Questions' Truth

In my humanness I often seek answers, but specifically because they usually turn out to be something unexpected, a better question is typically more helpful. While well-intentioned friends and acquaintances would love to resolve such dilemmas by passing along what has worked for them, this is mostly about as effective as trying to wear the others' shoes; much more than shoe size is clearly unique and thus needs case-by-case adaptability.

I learned many years ago, perhaps from watching too many episodes of "Perry Mason," that a sufficient number of well-phrased questions are often the key to discerning precisely what the truth actually is and additionally that many ultimately erroneous tentative conclusions may be encountered along the way. The unstated assumption within all such questions, however, was that truth was there--waiting to be discovered rather than manufactured. The most important operational question was thus whether or not the inquisitor had sufficient determination to persevere until the truth was, in fact, revealed.

Holistic truth is not easily seen; it does not present itself within a casual glance or a even a brief passing stare. Sustained attention is required, as well as an awareness that one's

own knowledge is now and perhaps always incomplete. How much we see depends very much on how closely, persistently, thoroughly, and patiently we look, but the alternative is self-imposed blindness.

The Christian perspective regards Jesus and Godde as being in many ways the same being and logically extracts from the former's statement that "I am the way, the truth, and the life" that one cannot run away from truth without simultaneously running away from the Divine. I am consequently especially disturbed when those who describe themselves as people of faith in some way or another, make light of compromising honesty and truth whenever it seems more compatible with personal or communal agendas. Do we really want our world to become even more ungodly than it already is?

Regardless of whichever term is used to linguistically identify what is considered to be Divine, the qualities identified by godliness are also those which empower humanity's survival and positive development. To act in a contrary manner is consequently ultimately suicidal.

Questions' truth, therefore, is ultimately concerned with discovering our best selves, capabilities, and potential. How ridiculous then, that questions are so often discouraged, derided, and dismissed--as if we actually wanted to ensure our own failure and to make obvious our own short-comings. Not knowing an answer is not a short-coming; it is an indication of an honest and educable spirit.

The future of life individually and collectively, however, hangs on what follows: whether one moves onward to learn or relaxes into apathy and ignorance. As the lingering question of my second modern "morality play" entitled, "A Sequential Journey," repeatedly pleads, "Considering [various life challenges, characteristics, and circumstances], what sort of person will you show yourself to be?"

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Questions' Power

I continue to observe pursuits of power within public media, personal conversations, and societal debates, but am disturbed by the distorted conceptions of this which those participating in whichever particular struggle embrace. The more limited the perception and the less holistic the relationship, the more likely extremes of violence seem to be utilized--in much the same way that the disease referred to as AIDS throughout much of the 1980s and 1990s and the family of diseases described as cancer, consist of various ways that the body begins to attack and destroy itself. I find myself wondering sometimes, if this metaphorical correlation is purely coincidental.

Power exists within every atom, so it is never a question of not having power, but rather only of how effectively or ineffectively one is utilizing whatever power one has. If in fact nothing existed beyond this physical life, a number of additional dilemmas would also be intensified, including the notion that losing one's life is synonymous with losing everything of value. Even if I were to leave this physical life before this day ends, it would not be the end of everything I have accomplished, specifically because I have written my life, my work, my faith, my love, and whatever wisdom I have accumulated, into the lives of others.

Is that my power? Perhaps, although I don't think of it as such. I am rather just one more participant within the ongoing, ever-fluctuating, ever-flowing, ever-evolving power and energy of life. It is not that I own the power, but rather that I strive to serve it in the best ways imaginable.

Sometimes what I imagine is seriously questioned--by myself as well as others. Past experience, however, has taught me to extend a significant degree of trust to the mysterious, intuitive, and creative forces within me, while nevertheless holding them accountable to the effects they produce both within my life and within the lives of others. What the power of my contribution ultimately accomplishes, however, is beyond my control, specifically because it is subject to the simultaneous contributions of countless others.

In considering the power of questions,

therefore, it is not merely our own questions or Godde's questions which must be considered, but rather all questions that ever cross our individually unique paths. Specifically because the power of life tends toward expansion and growth rather than paralysis, it is imperative that our practices of consideration be managed in ways that are not only effective but that also avoid the possibility of being overwhelmed.

To some extent as a person with autism, this is hard-wired into my brain: I can only deal with one thing at a time anyway. Larger quantities of questions must therefore form an orderly and sequential line. Once that line is formed, however, I can progress through them at an above-average pace. This is perhaps an example of synchronizing myself and my capabilities with the power of questions which continuously surround me.

An amazing additional benefit, however, is that each question to which I effectively respond, becomes a structural beam within the overall configuration of my life, such that I am able to bear the weight of even heavier and more difficult questions. The corollary to this, however, is that there are in fact questions, the weight of which my life is not yet ready to bear.

A principle quality of all power, is that it must be respected. In and of itself, power is neither good nor bad, but can nonetheless be used or abused--to astonishing extremes in both directions. Any question can in fact be used or abused, specifically because its power is as capable of contributing to miraculous healing as to tragically deep wounding. Even a question posed from a place of love, can come from an inadequately informed mind and thus become a vehicle of unintended negativity.

To balance the power of questions, therefore, it is also essential to integrate the power of forgiveness and the awareness that all human languages are inherently limited, often inaccurate, and never fully adequate to the perceptions and experiences which life may occasionally include. If we expect to misunderstand and commit ourselves to collaborative comprehension, however, ongoing dialogue can have the power to open the gates of heaven and welcome us home.

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Questions' Love

As often as we speak of it in isolation, it is fascinating to me that love is inseparable from relationship. Questions--virtually all questions--similarly exist within a complex configuration of discovered and undiscovered relationships. This vast web of interconnection between innumerable knowns and unknowns, is ultimately the canvas upon which we paint the moments of our lives, at times impulsively and at other times with careful consideration.

It is imperative to remember, however, that questions do not come with an intent to destroy--even if the specific words chosen may give that impression. Rather they come to expose new possibilities of growth, areas in which strengthening and revision is warranted, and moments within which increasing our awareness is the very best thing we could do.

For myself at least, I am often standing too close to the din of competing demands and voices to respond with anything other than self-sabotaging limitation, instead of pausing to remember the more holistic largeness and limitlessness of my spirit. More concisely, I sometimes forget that I am loved.

A particularly good friend once asked what to do, should he ever again have to witness one of my occasional and unfortunate autistic melt-downs. I responded that within such moments, I need to re-experience safety and love. An abbreviation for such upon which we thus agreed, was for him to simply interrupt with the words, "Hug Break!" By the time a silent hug was completed, things could be reasonably expected to be back in focus.

The intent of questions' love is always empowerment, but even expressions of love can be overwhelming--like a drought-stricken land besieged by a flash-flood. If we hold to our questions, we can build effective reservoirs, drainage ditches, and irrigation systems; but without wise collaboration, no relationship automatically becomes good.

***"What cannot be questioned,
should not be believed."***

-- Sister Who

All of this remains just as true even when dealing with questions more analogous to roses--a challenging combination of thorns and beautiful fragrance. It is never the intent of questions to make us feel comfortable; rather, they point to something much more important than comfort or convenience. This is perhaps analogous to the witticism that courage is not the absence of fear, but the recognition of something much more important than fear.

Questions are concerned with seeing more than easy excuses to be afraid. In being persistent and unwilling to abandon one to lesser fear-oriented results, a demonstration of love can be interpreted within the substance of even the most difficult questions. The true question, however, will also always listen for a response--either to learn whether it has been truly heard or to discover a newer and even better question that can be given life by the particular response.

Counterfeit questions, conversely, may hold an appearance of love, but conceal forms of manipulation, narcissism, and inappropriate projection. Whatever claims such inquiries make to be expressions of love, are false and untrustworthy--specifically because they are concerned with taking more than they give. It is not empowerment which results, but rather conformity and a certain loss of integrity.

Whereas a true question will result in discovery, a false one pushes instead toward inappropriate surrender and victimization. In the end, participants in the conversational exchange are less than they could have been, had they instead asked what each had to give and how those contributions could be more effectively integrated. By thus making room for the other in all of his or her complexity, by the questions and discoveries which are shared, one creates a larger world within which to live and greater possibilities to embody.

None of this is possible, however, if the unique love hidden within questions is rejected or in any manner sent away empty-handed. In a sense, we are each a "care package" of questions and discoveries, sent from heaven to earth within our physical lives, to make the universe an even more miraculous place.

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Questions' Life

As with our physical lives, particular combinations of circumstances and events give birth to unique questions at specific points in time. Ideally, these inquiries then serve particular concerns within the lives of multiple persons, thus creating additional possibilities.

At some point, however, a particular question may have accomplished all it can and now needs us to let it go, so that it does not tragically evolve into a paralyzing obsession. It is ultimately not the question itself that matters, but rather the life that (ideally) is served.

While we may wonder what it was like to live within a particular previous era and while it may be empowering to ponder this briefly in some particular way, it is far more important that we bring love and wisdom to the ways we choose to live now. Ultimately, we were not born to live the lives of those who have gone before us; we were each born to be ourselves and to give that which only we ourselves can.

Godde does not request that we have someone else's spiritual experience, but rather that we individually each have our own--specifically so that the unique combination of questions and tentative answers hidden within each of us may be a blessing by which both we and others become the healers, educators, creators, and miracle workers that are most needed by the world within which we live.

It is in conversationally and respectfully weaving all of our questions together, however, that even greater possibilities are realized, than any individual's questions could accomplish in isolation. A peculiar paradox of this situation is that it is our innocence which most often provides the courage to try. Specifically because we don't realize how badly our initial performances are, we stand up and do them where they can be seen--and then we move on to refine and present their improved forms as opportunity allows. The life of a question, like any other life, is a sequence of mistakes, of accomplishments, and of collaboration, within which incompleteness must always be forgiven and further development must be encouraged, so that each answer leads to the next question.

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On a Personal Note

This is a most challenging time, as old systems continue to fail and new ones plead to be invented. While I strive to be open to new ways of doing and organizing, I also try to remember previous forms and methods and to consider whether a new version of them could still be effective within present situations. One very important element that I still have not managed to reconfigure, however, is some sense of family or community.

Nonetheless, an exceptional number of new episodes of "Sister Who Presents" have been created within recent weeks and I am also pressing ahead with possibilities of video production of three modern "morality plays."

What is most needed at present are volunteer camera operators, in order to record a large number of short pieces of video, from which the finished work will be edited. Interest and availability are the two most important qualities; everything else can be learned within the recording of many different scenes.

As for my doctoral work, a new faculty collaborator has been found, but effective communication and interaction has not yet been achieved, which creates further unhelpful delays. Nonetheless, I continue to do my best and hope that it will ultimately be satisfactory.

In other news, three friends are battling various forms of cancer. It seems that for all of us, the future is an uncertain place. I persist, however, that working together is the key to making many wondrous things happen.

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