

# SISTER WHO'S PERSPECTIVE

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## Overview

I somewhat cringe whenever an allegedly “motivational speaker” insists that life should be without struggle, happy, or consistently positive, since my life has rarely been that way and any suggestion that I have therefore failed pushes me away from the stated goal. The truth I encourage and support instead, is a greater and more empowering awareness.

## Existing Despite Others' Denial

It was one of the peculiarities of theological school that professors and students were often describing how they each believed a particular configuration of relationship worked, without acknowledging or even being willing to concede that their description was at best a speculation: something that may have once occurred due to specific contributing variables, but which could not compel recurrence within any future instance. More directly, an auto accident occurring at a particular intersection does not mean that every vehicle henceforth passing through that intersection, would experience the same sort of accident. Every accident that occurs anywhere, is dependent upon multiple variables.

The relevance of this is that again and again, after hearing their detailed conception of “how things work,” I recognized myself as a person who—according to the details of their theory—could not exist; yet I do. Perhaps this is why it has often been more convenient throughout my life, for others to pretend that I am not there, nor have I ever been. A result of this is the challenge inseparable from basic integrity of neither over-compensating (that is, trying too hard) nor minimizing (that is, acting as if neither my existence nor my contribution to life matters) myself throughout my life.

Among the foundational considerations I learned while in graduate school, in analyzing any written work, is recognizing unstated assumptions and unsupported assertions. The

first is recognizing what must be true in order for a statement to also be true and the second is a claim which can only be true if other details are also present. The difference is subtle but distinct. One presumes dynamics while the other presumes facts, failing to recognize that any presumption is equivalent to crossing a frozen lake on thin ice.

What must be remembered is that belief in a presumption, metaphorically, does not make the ice any thicker nor one's crossing any more safe. A legitimate question but perhaps without any definitive answer, is “what is the distinction between presumption and faith?” I suggest the difference is humility and being vigilant and responsive to any unexpected developments encountered along the way.

Denial is usually based upon presumption rather than faith. A central point of faith is the understanding that Godde, life, or the universe is often wiser than one's self and may provide a better alternative than one has imagined—if one is sufficiently attentive to notice it. What has been provided within a specific moment to achieve a better outcome, may be one's self.

Perhaps the majority of people whom I've met throughout my life, however, do not recognize themselves as potential agents of positive change. They seem to interpret that others' denial of their uniqueness and potential, is more factual than it actually is. A framed quote hanging on my wall, which I attempt to utilize as often as possible, most especially because so few other people seem to do so, advises, “Hope is putting faith to work when doubting would be easier.”

To continue my life especially when others act as if doing so is foolish, may provide the miracle of healing and transformation that makes the positive difference with a moment that would otherwise be characterized by sadness, wounding, and loss. More directly, any one of us may be the only light someone's darkness could ever know.

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

## Existing Despite Others' Disregard

As tragic as it was each time two of my friends committed suicide, I am sometimes momentarily thankful that they did not have to live through certain sad and terrible events that have become part of history since they left. Yet their beauty and value were so disregarded by the majority of surrounding people, that they could no longer find the strength to persist in being part of life's unfolding—although I have recognized from time to time, the positive contributions they could have made if they still were.

Had I sufficient resources, I would have been all too willing to make continuance of their lives possible. I am trying to come to terms, however, with how scarce such interpersonal commitment and generosity have become. Within the ideal of an allegedly primitive tribal society, these qualities would have been foundational elements that insured the survival of the tribe.

My contention is that this generosity and commitment remain inescapably every bit as essential today, to the survival of the human species. Those who insist that biodiversity is essential, contend that with every species that goes extinct, the extinction of every other species increases in probability.

Believing in the value and importance of my own life, must be based upon similar greater awareness. If the workers at any municipal water plant decided they would only keep doing their jobs if everyone affected remembered to say "thank you," I doubt that the availability of safe drinking water would persist for even a day.

In a similar way, I don't live because someone pays me, but rather because I have a divinely appointed job to do. My creativity is that to which I sign my name for eternity; this is the sort of person I was. I am not here for my own benefit, but to empower a larger and hopefully eternal creation.

I often lament having been robbed by municipal administrators of resources needed to do my job well. Why was this theft so easily tolerated by the surrounding humanity of the time? Their limited awareness and various forms of mental illness are the only explanations that make any sense to me, but

this does not alter the fact that their behavior, objectively, is self-sabotaging—as if they are committing suicide in tiny increments rather than all at once, as my friends did.

Is it more excusable if they do it in a way that doesn't create obvious pain? Does attacking and wounding each other not matter, as long as there are no obvious bruises or bleeding? Absolutely not.

Within the present time of economic obsession, a conclusion persists, at which I arrived years ago and to which I've yet to find a single exception: "When money becomes the measure, relationships always suffer." An additional effect I've noticed, is that when relationships suffer, ability to survive weakens.

Specifically because of who I am, I choose to do whatever good I can, for as long as I'm alive. Yet my life is not merely a limited embodiment of how often others' provide support and encouragement, but rather also an expression of my unique creativity. How much and in what ways I am able to express that, however, very much depends upon available opportunities and resources.

As I've said numerous times already, if there is ever a tombstone with my name, the epitaph should read, "I would have done so much more, if I hadn't spent so much time just fighting for survival." It is because of faith in greater wisdom and love than I have thus far experienced, that I persist in doing whatever I can to make the world a better place.

Ultimately it's not money that matters, but rather the value and potential inherent within each individual life. Having faith and retaining awareness of the part of life which is invisible, must be the first steps and not the last, toward creating a world that is fit for habitation. When humanity pretends to be god, arrogantly and abusively requiring approval, a myriad of misunderstood elements are marginalized, due to insufficient wisdom of why they exist.

"Love one another" is not merely a nice saying; it is a principle that will very often ultimately determine whether any of us live or die, within any specific moment of life. Part of loving one another, is striving to ensure that what is done, is as excellent as possible. Any disregard of others' needs, does the opposite.

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

## Existing Despite Others' Hatred

In trying to understand the possible logic of hatred—to consider what lies beneath it—among the possibilities are, first, a belief in some fundamental dynamic that would be lost if the object of hatred were allowed. A second possibility is that the hater may be excluded from the blessings that the object includes. A much more common reality that often remains undiscovered in this case, is that no objection to including the hater in the blessings exists.

It has been suggested that a possible reason for forcing me out of my home in New Hampshire, was that I was constructing a far better home than those in which the municipal administrators lived. What that overlooks, however, was how willing I would have been to build similar or identical blessings within every other house in that town. My attention to detail was also so exceptional that genuine safety and high quality were characteristic.

A primary problem, however, was that my methods were different from the norm—thereby casting shadows upon the established norms, exposing their flaws, and recommending that they grow. Tyranny, ultimately, is a demand for no more growth or positive development. I have experienced a horrendous amount of bullying throughout my life, but at the heart of every such incident is some form of tyranny, imbalance of power, or interpersonal violence seeking to hide a greater internal weakness.

Concealing a lack of understanding, ability, or resource, however, increases the likelihood that the underlying need will never be met. In bringing such into the light, however, new and more loving relationships can be forged. The reason that Jesus recommended within the Christian Bible to love one's enemies, is specifically so that they may be transformed into collaborators, friends, and even family.

Ultimately, hatred identifies the locations

***“Evil has never succeeded in eradicating genuine love—which is equally inseparable from healing and restoration.”***

***— Sister Who***

where love most needs to grow; where healing of some sort is needed. The task is not merely preventing expressions of hatred, but filling those places with love and healing. It is not only the task of limiting violence, but also of empowering love and understanding.

If all that has been done is constraining violence, the job is far from finished. The agent of positive change persists, not because it is easy to do so, but rather because a location where there is work to be done, has been discovered. Perhaps because of the agrarian environment within which I grew up or perhaps because of my inherent life-long autism, I long ago developed a perception that one should never quit and go home, until the job is done.

A first challenge within dealing with hatred, however, is establishing communication and trust—without which collaboration remains very difficult, if not impossible. When each begins to see the humanity of the other, miraculous possibilities finally come within reach. When it is understood that each is simply trying to meet needs—but often in ineffective ways—and the focus shifts to recognizing what those needs are and how they could be more effectively met, love is empowered to heal whatever sort of brokenness is present.

At the heart of existing in spite of hatred, is the calling (some might say) of maintaining a presence of love, without which some part of the world may not survive. I recall seeing a poster once that said, “If it is to be, it's up to me.” While I have experienced situations in which my own effort was not enough—that some sort of larger collaboration was required—I also coined the phrase long ago, that “whoever wants the muscles, must lift the weights.”

So when faced with a weight, I immediately begin pondering the various ways it might be lifted, rather than presuming any challenge to be impossible. It is not “this cannot be done,” but rather “what would it require, for this to be done?” At the heart of the mental illness of megalomania, is an inappropriate or irrational quest for power and control, which is in fact a mental illness specifically because it is adversarial to the larger possibilities of life.

Love answers by expanding into previously unimagined worlds of possibility.

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

## Existing Despite Others' Rejection

I try to remember that a rejection is not always an expression of “no” or “never,” but rather merely “not now.” A perhaps unlikely example of this at a societal level is the objection some have to transparency in governmental and societal operations. The fear of some, however, that a particular report will cause panic, needs to be answered with acknowledgement of a general failure to adequately prepare a population to receive particular news.

Most people do not panic, for example, when a fire alarm sounds, if they know how to quickly and safely leave the area. I especially liked the scene within the holiday movie starring Henry Winkler, during which he exits a building, is threatened by a thief in a dark alley, and responds due to police training, by quickly disarming and constraining his intended attacker. Unfortunately many of us do not have adequate training to effectively respond to the adversarial situations we face.

Part of effective response, nonetheless, is recognizing that others may be the ones without adequate training or even awareness that more skills and education are needed. In some instances, they may even be resistant to any suggestion that such is the case. It may also be that one's self is the person resistant to further education and development of skills.

Among important elements of awareness, is that of reaching beyond mere existence. If I do no more than physically exist, if my life has no greater purpose or symbiotic dynamic in relation to the larger world within which I live, then it is legitimate to assert that, in fact, I am not truly living my own life.

The reason each of us has been born—that each of us has been given to the universe for a time—is to live that unique life that only one can live and to bestow upon the universe what only that unique life can bestow. If that does not happen, the universe remains to some degree or in some way, impoverished and less than it could have been.

Each of us is a chance for good to happen, if we will find our voice and be our best selves.

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

## On a Personal Note

I loathe how very many hours I have spent the past month, staring into a computer screen while rebuilding websites, editing a new introduction of my ongoing television show, “Sister Who Presents...” (to completion), and preparing the next document necessary to completion of my doctoral degree. I am very grateful, however, for those accomplishments, in spite of constantly uncooperative equipment and ongoing technological transitions. I am also very thankful for the individuals who made those accomplishments possible.

I'd rather be in my portable chapel, directly interacting with an unpredictable variety of individuals in whatever ways are individually appropriate, but I know all too well that an enormous amount of “behind the scenes” work is essential to every public manifestation.

Video production of Episode 500 is still scheduled for Wednesday, April 7, and all set pieces have finally been constructed, although some are not as perfect as I might prefer (but in ways that are unlikely to be visible). The one remaining set challenge, weather permitting, is to paint the second-hand carpet for the stage to a dark purple, but if the show must be recorded on a medium-gray surface instead, it will probably not be disastrous.

Moving the entire set in and out of the production space all by myself is nonetheless daunting, but I've accomplished more difficult challenges already, so in time-honored words, “Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!”

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

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Sister Who a/k/a Rev. Denver NeVaar, MTS  
POB 16074, Golden, CO 80402

Email: [dn@SisterWho.com](mailto:dn@SisterWho.com)

Internet website: [www.SisterWho.com](http://www.SisterWho.com)

Additional Informational Websites:

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