

# Prisms

BY JADE WOLFE

We are all prisms, multi-faceted layers of humanity.

Whenever I am presented with behavior from another that seems to "over-challenge" my coping skills, it helps to remind myself of this prism perspective. Realizing we all have many sides is a judgment reducer for me. It makes a great deal of difference to believe in the power of perspectives.

Kindness comes naturally from within our spirits. Violence is an acquired taste. For people afflicted with an addiction fed by anger and mistrust, it is a diet of fear. And anger is a hungry addiction, constantly requiring more fuel. Entertaining a notion of a prism perspective toward others can deplete automatic anger and snap judgments. Maintaining a we-they attitude necessitates a narrow focus and unyielding perspective. It does not lend itself to wider views than necessary.

Sadly, those who accuse others the most, hate the loudest, and fear the greatest are mirroring out from what lies within themselves. Inwardly untrusting and lacking self love, their outward view is a kind of self-reflection.

Any time a broader glimpse might lead to common ground it is very unsettling. Recalling the "basic need pyramid" concepts of safety, shelter and sustenance, I am continuing my hopeful prodding from last month's Yule-tide comments. Here we all are on a planet that is growing smaller and smaller as consumption increases out of proportion. While there are countries, ours being one example, capable of sharing enough food, shelter, etc. for those in need ... it is not happening. Yes, there are valiant efforts by caring, self-less groups and individuals. They appear as bright shining pin lights over a vast expanse of want.

I understand our need to feel safe and sustained. And it is appetizing to have a life where there is a roof over me, food in me and warmth around me. But I would literally have to become a complete recluse, never letting in the outside world, to be comfortable with only my needs being met. In order to believe in some kind of superiority due to my gender or lifestyle or personal politics, I would have to close off most of my senses on a twenty-four hour basis. And I have my parents to thank for teaching me the reasons that I cannot shut down, tune out, and feel con-

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tent by choosing to be ignorant.

If you are anticipating a description of 50's sitcom model parents Ward and June Cleaver, it will not be forthcoming. I grew up in a family of angry, frightened people. The need to feed the anger and fear was a daily struggle for them. They were greatly aided by selective ignorance doled out through fundamentalist rhetoric, periodically spiced up with misguided prejudices.

Trapped in that asylum of over-the-top hysterics, it was actually great training in how not to be. As soon as I could read, I did. Everything available, including the religious text so often quoted.

However, after reading it myself I realized that the quotes were in reality, mis-quotes. That the savior so frequently referred to and prayed at would never have been welcome in their home or the church. There were some fairly sane adults scattered about, and from my parents' reactions, it was clear how very unsettling open mindedness was ... how unacceptable unconditional love was and how limited their vision remained.

I am sharing this personal glimpse with you and myself equally. It illuminates my inability to pass up an opportunity to see the positive aspects of a moment, the potential of any initially negative situation or the silliness of schoolyard attitudes

Whether you come from a logical outlook minus intangible spirituality or traditionally based lives or any combination of views, it is my hope to offer momentary "deep breaths" for us. The freedom to step outside ourselves is greatly prized by many of us. Otherwise, there would be no demand or consumption of movies, books, television, radio, music or "extreme activities of play." It causes me to pause and consider, "Is our basic need list truly satisfied by institutionally controlled comparison shopping to determine our occupations, relationships ... beliefs?"

I am still thinking about Christmas 2001. We can all step outside of whatever

schoolyard we find ourselves frequenting. We do not need to nurture feelings of superiority to succeed in business, relationships or education. Too often, healthy competition is confused with one-upmanship.

The question has been put to me as to why my writing isn't focused on GBLT issues in my articles. The overall picture is ever present as I write. These words vitally touch GBLT issues because we are all of us beautifully, complex prisms.

Whether I am always comfortable with it or not, I am connected to the sheet wearers, the narrowly focused, the rich and privileged ... the very people who raised me. Ignoring the interconnectedness does not cause it to disappear.

Because I have a tremendous amount of faith in the future, the prism perspective works for me

Everyday as children play in school, they have opportunities to let go of old schoolyard tactics, accepting each other more equally. We adults have the ability to choose higher ground as well. Everytime higher ground is sought, the message spreads a bit further. Positive energy can effectively influence attitudes. We all make choices. As GBLT, we work, recreate and reside as members of a larger community. Everyday there are opportunities to encourage better understanding.

This month we celebrate "Pride" within the GBLT community. Rainbows will be more prolific than usual. Prism light has that affect.



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-Virginia Woolf

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