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Gratitude and Commitment October 5, 2019

It has been quite a while since I blogged and I've got all the usual excuses—travel for work, work for work, writing on my second book, and most of all, my multifaceted efforts to change the world for the better. Still, I have missed blogging here since it's a very real portal into how I think.

So here I am now, giving you a lengthy blog, which all the experts say is a no-no. I'm told that your attention level is just a paragraph or two, at most. Sorry. Hopefully, most of you will slog through.

The triggering event for this return to blogging was a Transgender 101 training that I conducted this week in a smaller city in greater Minnesota. My presence there wasn't by chance; in the January issue of my newsletter, *The Ripple*, I committed to doing more work outside the Twin Cities to reach places where there aren't many of "me"—obviously transgender humans—visible. Among other things, I feel a profound sense of responsibility to show up; yes, as a role model (I really dislike that phrase), but more importantly, knowing that I may be the first transgender human most will ever meet, as an example of my community—caring, compassionate, vulnerable, and really, just like everyone else.

Thus, a couple days ago, I stood in front of 100 or so health care professionals who seemed genuinely engaged and interested in learning how to be more welcoming to the transgender and nonbinary humans they're treating. Indeed, I was feeling positive about how the audience appeared to receive my messaging, which is very compassion-focused.

We got through 85 minutes of a 90-minute training when a question came that I foolishly hadn't expected that day. The question (and I'm paraphrasing because of a very crappy memory): "Understanding that God doesn't make mistakes, can you explain to me how it is that you believe this is who you are?"

The immediate reaction in my brain: *Really?*

A couple seconds later, I recovered and related how, in February 2018, I gave an interview on Mississippi Public Broadcasting when a gentleman called in with that very same comment, something that I had expected at the time. I further explained that the very next caller stated: "Ellie, disregard what that man just said. It's not about mistakes; instead, God gives us challenges. Babies are born with heart defects or cleft lips and palates, or as conjoined twins. He doesn't make those children die; they have

the right to be fixed so they live. You, Ellie, had the right to fix you so that you lived.” (Again, I’m paraphrasing; scroll down on this blog to February 2018 and you can click on a link to the actual radio interview.)

After relating the above to the woman at my training, I said, “I believe that if Jesus was here, he’d hug me and say that he loved me.”

The woman had no further commentary, nor did I give her the chance to say anything more. A few minutes later, the training ended to some nice applause.

Later that night, I found a posting on my Instagram account (yes, this older human recently joined Instagram) with the following words by someone identified as “Dhphilippi13”, who had attended that Transgender 101 training:

Got the opportunity to listen to a very engaging human being today who spoke about human inclusivity and being transgender. After her very informative talk that touched on religion and whether or not being transgender is a choice (and MANY other things), someone commented that God doesn't make mistakes, alluding that a person is meant to gender-identify with the body they were born into. I completely agreed with her comment that God doesn't make mistakes, but not in the way she was alluding to. I believe that God (or whatever higher-being you believe in) knew exactly what they were doing when they created this human being and that it was no mistake. There is a reason she was made the way she was, and she was put on this Earth for a specific purpose. All of the struggles and experiences that she has been through have made her into the person she is today and I can only imagine how many lives she has saved by choosing to become an advocate and share these experiences to let those who are struggling with their gender identities know that they aren't alone. #weareallhumanbeings #goddoesnotmakemistakes @elliekrug

Words can't adequately express the gratitude I felt for this person's kind and eloquent words and the fact that they reached out knowing that I might be hurting. Actually, the words melted my heart. Most importantly, Dhphilippi13 encapsulated me and my work in a way that I've rarely, if ever, seen before. In a phrase, I was blown away by this person's words and they re-energized me to keep going. Hell yes!

Friends, my mission is real, my work is real. I am committed to making this world of ours a better place and plan to continue with that until the last of my breaths. I will not tire; I promise you that! Further, I am so grateful that others find meaning in what I say and teach and most of all, I am in awe of the fact that this human, me—who is “Other” in so many ways—ripples to other humans. Wow.

It is the highest of honors.

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