

The Importance of Conversation

Why I write Hairballs

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***"I need to hear it, need to sense it, need to know that I am loved.
Open your mouth for once Dad."***

From "Making Sense of Suffering"
J. Konrad Stettbacher, Swiss Psychotherapist

IT IS MY CONTENTION THAT CONVERSATION CAN CHANGE THE WORLD. In these trying times we need to talk to each other more than ever. We rely on the web and cell texts, but it's not enough. We need deep dialogue that results in an understanding of issues that leads to solutions and pivotal actions.

But, instead of resolutions, we have war, lawsuits, broken promises, separation, rage, gossip, disappointment, addictions, confusion or fatigue. Did I miss anything?

Hairballs get stuck in my throat when I don't speak up. I have to get mine out here because my stomach churns in the night, worrying about survival and the world.

Why do we continue circling around the same wars and family feuds for decades? Could we all be afraid to drop walls? Then, how can we expect countries and politicians to do it? Is it any wonder the world is in such a mess?

When we don't speak and listen well, we become resentful, judgmental or frustrated, unspoken fears run amuck. Words unsaid turn to poison, hurt and loss. Instead of building bridges we have unresolved conflicts. Wouldn't we get farther with vision and debate than with stalemate?

Conversation under stress isn't easy. It takes courage to tell the truth – to hear and be heard. It's an act of bravery to take the ball and run with it, to say our needs and feelings. So, instead of resolutions, we have lawsuits, broken promises, separation, rage, gossip, addictions, confusion or fatigue. Did I miss anything?

I wax eloquent, but sometimes I stuff everything, shut down or lash out. Hairballs abound but I choke on them or blame. I see why isolation grows like mold. "The Confidante Study" states: "The number of people saying there is no one with whom they discuss important matters nearly tripled in one year. Recently, modal respondents report having no confidante." The internet is great but there's no hand to hold.

Anger or separation isn't any fun. So, why do we do it? Why not just talk things through, personally or politically? It's like being naked. Saying our wishes and intention is risky. Telling the truth can terrify me. As Dressler says, in "Standing in The Fire:" "When we bring people together to talk about what matters to them, fire is a given."

My own hairballs hit me hard in the head, when my mother was dying of emphysema. I loved her beyond words. But how do you tell the truth to a sick, depressed, old or angry person?

So I kept a distance. I thought, “Don’t upset her, leave it alone and keep your boundaries.” Detach. This time, I wish I had opened up. I could have said, “I’m scared of your anger and saying the wrong thing, but I want to feel closer. I wish we could talk about Dad’s death and your illness and our feelings.”

But, I didn’t and she died. I froze and missed our precious connection. I live with this every day. This is where my passion for conversation began.

Countries and politicians fight, but we are also armored, anxious or enraged .David Bohm, a famous physicist writes about the electron field. “... if you touch one you effect the other.... Humans exist in an information field – in superconductivity....What I am proposing is that if we keep the heat of our conductivity low, through a sense of common purpose we can discover solutions.”

We move beyond the fire and create bonds when we say our sincere intention, make “I” statements and share our souls. I do believe that conversation can change the world. But even as I write this, I admit there are times when I need to sit in the outfield. I get discouraged, feel unsafe, attacked, betrayed or battle worn. Sometimes I need to say “no” to harmful situations and drop the ball. Or, do I need the "balls" to remain in real conversations?