

WHAT DO I TRUST?

By Mary Lee Peterson

Confidence in or reliance on some quality or attribute of a person or thing, or the truth of a statement - OED

What do I trust? I trust that the sun and moon will rise and fall every single day. I trust that I'll always get hungry again. I trust that it will be a while before I figure out how to dress for the changing weather in Colorado.

Whom do I trust? Now that's a thorny question. Will you show up for a date or leave me standing on a street corner? Will you repay the money I lent to you? Will you return my possessions in the same way you found them or compensate me for the loss? Will you tell me when I'm wearing a dress that really looks awful on me? Will you tell me when I've offended you so that I can be aware of your tender spots and so that our relationship will continue to blossom and deepen? Will you tell me the truth even though you think I don't want to hear it?

What can you trust me for? Well you can trust me to occasionally put my foot in my mouth, to be stupid or pedantic, to be oblivious to you at times, to forget your birthday, to swear, to get unreasonable and thoughtless about religious fanatics, to flake out on plans but to own up to it.

Learning to trust is an interesting journey. The first leg of my journey was recognizing that trust was linked to disappointment, that disappointment was the feeling I most wished to avoid, and that it wasn't fatal. I thought if I didn't trust anyone then I would never be disappointed. Funny how it doesn't work that way. I could still be disappointed. And when I was disappointed, I would pull away from you (because you were not trustworthy) and live in fear and doubt that I'd be disappointed again. And not trusting myself is an even rougher road indeed, leading to self-doubt, self-incrimination, fear and isolation, and paralysis. So maybe there was another step in here.

And that next step was forgiveness. Forgiving you for being human and forgiving myself for being human.