

Words Have Power

By Marilyn Reeves

Over the past week or so I've heard a number of voices on the media say, "We need to eliminate the words 'Social Distancing' from our vernacular and replace them with the words 'Physical Distancing!'" I completely agree. The term 'Social Distancing' can sneak into one's subconscious to suggest that we should cease having any form of contact with our fellow beings. Such a concept is not only unhealthy, it could also be life-threatening.

Human beings are social animals. We need contact with one another almost as much as we require food and water. We absorb immeasurable emotional and psychological nourishment from being around other people. It helps us form the core of our personalities and build our own self-image. Our shared thoughts and ideas inform our philosophy. Indeed, seeing ourselves through the eyes of others help to validate who we are.

Physical distancing from one another is beginning to take an emotional toll on all of us. While it is necessary in order to stop the spread of the Covid pandemic, the sense of isolation is an unfortunate side effect, and may have even longer lasting repercussions than the virus itself.

In some ways I may be better off than many of you. Since my retirement 14 years ago, I have become a bit of a recluse, and have learned to cope with being isolated by developing routines and hobbies that get me through each day. Yet I, too, suffer from the want of companionship. The problem, I know, is myself. It seems my likes and interests differ from those in the majority, which limits the number of places I where I fit in. I dislike sports, for instance, so that alone makes me an 'outsider.' I am awkward and uncomfortable meeting new people, so I avoid interjecting myself into social gatherings comprised of strangers. That leaves me with few places I can go, or groups I feel comfortable joining.

But the Writers Group is one of the gatherings where I feel I do fit in. Our usual Monday morning meetings have been a godsend for me. For the past 10-1/2 years, I have counted the days each week waiting for Monday morning to finally arrive, so I can spend time with people I care about.

There's a sort of hum of electricity that takes place in a group of companionable people. I often say I go to the Writers Group to get my 'internal batteries recharged.' That term is more than a metaphor. The group acts like a tonic on my spirits. It elevates my endorphins, and for a couple of hours a week, I feel euphoric! But now – for the time being – that life-enhancing experience has been put on hold.

I think I can make it through, living just one day at a time for however long it takes, until I can see all of you again, and feel that life-enhancing electricity of your warm vibes. Virtual meetings, e-mail correspondence, and sharing our writings will help see me through. We may have to practice 'Physical Distancing,' but we can still be Socially Interactive through the marvelous means of the Internet!