

Weekly Wisdom

December 28, 2016



The end of a year is nostalgic for many and I'm no exception. I'm not big on resolutions. Just like a large percentage of the population, I don't keep them. So why make them? But I've considered one, just one, this year. I've been thinking a lot lately about those *other* people. You know, those who think about the world differently than I do. I know they are people just like me. I know they don't hope that the world "goes to hell in a handbasket," as my father used to say. I'm making the commitment to purposefully interact more with people who I perceive think differently than I do. Maybe I'll setup a lunch or coffee date and ask some questions. I'm hopeful this will help me be more positive about the future. Who knows what it'll bring. The older I get I become more and more aware of what I don't know. How about you? Making any changes?

I read this recently in The Sun, "...an independent, ad-free magazine that for more than forty years has used words and photographs to evoke the splendor and heartache of being human."

I met Betsy in College on the first day of Comparative Religious Thought, when we clashed during a classroom debate. She called me intolerant while I played the role of persecuted martyr standing up for my Christian faith. The professor watched us go at it for fifteen minutes. Betsy made a few points that challenged my beliefs, and I was embarrassed not to have a better defense.

When class was over, I made a swift exit, but Betsy found me outside. "I disagree with everything you said," she told me, "but I like you. Want to have lunch?"

I accepted, and for the rest of the semester we would argue our beliefs in class and then eat lunch together afterward as if nothing had happened. Betsy inspired me to dig deeper into my faith and to ask questions rather than accept the platitudes I heard in church. I stopped trying to convert her and learned to appreciate her for who she was. She taught me to think for myself and not be afraid of not having all the answers.

Years later Betsy was a bridesmaid in my wedding. We still joke that our friendship doesn't make sense, but that's precisely why it works.

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Will be available at <http://thesunmagazine.org/> in February 2017

From a TED Talk by Elizabeth Lesser: Say Your Truths and Seek Them in Others (available [here](#)):

So those are the three lessons I took with me...

One: uncover your soul.

Two: when things get difficult or painful, try to stay open.

And three: every now and then, step off your hamster wheel into deep time.

You don't have to wait for a life-or-death situation to clean up the relationships that matter to you, to offer the marrow of your soul and to seek it in another. We can all do this. We can be like a new kind of first responder, like the one to take the first courageous step toward the other, and to do something or try to do something other than rejection or attack. We can do this with our siblings and our mates and our friends and our colleagues. We can do this with the disconnection and the discord all around us. We can do this for the soul of the world.

Happy New Year, Everyone.