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Dear Friends,

At the beginning of the pandemic, I received two burlap bags in the mail, each weighing five pounds. One was full of lentils and the other was full of chickpeas. My friend Kathleen had sent them, noting that legumes are her "love language," which made me smile in recognition. I then ordered [soaps made by a woman in Asheville](#) for Kathleen and several other friends, shipped with a note that said, "soap is my love language." What else does one give in a global public health emergency?

What is your love language?

What kindnesses have you received or given during this unrelenting time? And how easy or hard is it for you to receive kindnesses from others?

Yesterday in my weekly "Tea Time with Patti," as a group we discussed poet Naomi Shihab Nye's poem entitled "Kindness." Exploring the words like a treasure map to meaning, we realized how appropriate a poem it is for these times.

Please read it aloud:

Kindness

Naomi Shihab Nye - 1952-

Before you know what kindness really is

you must lose things,

feel the future dissolve in a moment

like salt in a weakened broth.

What you held in your hand,

what you counted and carefully saved,

all this must go so you know

how desolate the landscape can be

between the regions of kindness.

How you ride and ride

thinking the bus will never stop,

the passengers eating maize and chicken

will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness

you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho

lies dead by the side of the road.

You must see how this could be you,

how he too was someone

who journeyed through the night with plans

and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,

you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.

You must wake up with sorrow.

You must speak to it till your voice

catches the thread of all sorrows

and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,

only kindness that ties your shoes

and sends you out into the day to gaze at bread,

only kindness that raises its head

from the crowd of the world to say

It is I you have been looking for,

and then goes with you everywhere

like a shadow or a friend.

Kindness and sorrow are friends, and we must know both of them to know either of them. We must befriend them both. And we must know deep inside ourselves that the ones who have died, all 76,000+ of them, like the man by the side of the road in this poem, are us. Not the "other," but us.

Links you might enjoy

I made the first soup on [this page](#) the other night, and loved it. Perhaps you will, too.

[How to make black lives matter during COVID](#)

[This](#) was a hit with John.

Coming Up

ONLINE FREE WEEKLY GATHERINGS:

During this pandemic, I will host a weekly tea-time on Zoom for whoever would like to show up with a cup of tea, a quote, or poem to share, or

Be kinder than necessary

just a need for conversation. You can join me on **Thursdays from 4-4:45 pm Eastern** in [this Zoom room](#). We have an innate need for community, and the technology to create community spaces... Bring paper and pen in case we start writing.



ONLINE CLASS: Hard Conversations: Whiteness, Race, and Social Justice - Begins May 12. Focuses on white racial identity, hallmarks of white supremacy culture, what it means to be white in a racist world, and how to create a positive white identity. Taught by social justice educators Patti Digh and Victor Lee Lewis.



[Go here](#) for info.

Thanks for reading. If you like this newsletter and want to support it, forward it to someone who'd like it. If you're seeing this newsletter for the first time, [you can subscribe here](#).

Be kinder,

Patti

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