

Building Bridges Word by Word

Sharing Our Stories. Discovering What Connects Us.

Call for Stories

Guidelines and Prompts

Building Bridges Word by Word provides a space where we can share our stories and discover what connects us. We invite you to write a short reflection about a saying, quote, song, or poem that has meaning for you. Think about a line or two that speaks to who you are and what you believe. For instance, it could be a saying that seems particularly relevant these days. Or it could be a quote that you've taped to your refrigerator to remind you to think or act differently; or a poem that speaks to you and clarifies your sense of the world; or a song that makes your heart sing, weep, or dance.

Visit [Building Bridges Word by Word](#) to [read the stories](#) and meet the people who wrote them. You may find that their story is an inspiration for your own. Perhaps their song, the one they wrote about, is also your song. That's okay. There's no limit to the number of stories that can be written about the same text. It can be enlightening to discover how people see the same text in a similar or completely different way.

To participate, use this [form](#) to submit your story. Or you may email your submission to buildingbridgeswbw@gmail.com or mail it to Building Bridges Word by Word, Box #162, 7304 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Please be sure to include your responses to #1-7 in your email or letter. If you have questions, please feel free to contact us at buildingbridgeswbw@gmail.com.

- 1) **Select a favorite saying, quote, song, or poem that is meaningful to you.** For copyright reasons, we cannot post an entire song or poem on our website. If you choose to write about a song or poem, please identify a few lines that are the most meaningful or important to you and your reflection. We will include those lines and a link to the song or poem with your story.
- 2) **Write a short reflection** (up to 250 words) that describes your connection to the text. You may find it helpful to consider one or more of the following prompts.
 - Building bridges can be hard, even scary. There's a lot of misunderstanding in the world. If you knew people would listen with an open mind, what would you want to tell them about you, your life experience, and your beliefs in reference to this text?
 - Many have lost something over the past few years. It may be a job, a loved one, a relationship, a way of seeing our country, or a sense of what the future holds. What text gives voice to that loss, to how you wish things could be different, or to the hurt you wish you could heal?
 - How does the text help you celebrate special moments or honor people who are important to you? How does the text reveal something about them or yourself?
 - How have these words helped you see things in a different way? How have they helped you to understand someone and their situation or reach out across the divides?

Your reflections may be lightly edited for clarity or to fit the 250-word limit with your approval before posting. There will be no charge for this. To ensure that this is a safe space for all, please focus your reflection on something that matters to you and refrain from commentaries on other people. We will not accept malicious content, hostile language, or anonymous reflections.

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Please also include the following:

- 3) **The source of the text**, such as the author of the text and the name of the book, song, poem, or website where you found the text. If you don't know the source, just write N/A.
- 4) **Your name and a brief bio** (up to 75 words) to accompany your story and introduce yourself. Here are two examples:

I grew up in the Northwest, my father was an optimist, my mother found peace in the trees. I have lived longer in the East than the West, yet still consider myself a Westerner. The roots go deep. The West, optimism, and the love of nature are part of what makes me who I am.

I retired in 2001, after teaching thirty-four years of high school English. I've written many books for young adults and others who are not so young, including [Brooklyn Diner and Other Places](#). I could not have been a writer if I were not a teacher. When not writing, I am obsessed with "Jeopardy" and am the biggest Mets fan in Brooklyn!

- 5) **Your photo**: Upload your profile photo or a photo you would like to represent your story. Please make sure to only upload a photo you have the right to use. High-res photos work the best. A cell phone picture saved as "actual size" will work. If no photo is uploaded, we will select a photo on your behalf.
- 6) **Your contact information**, including your email, address, and phone number, so that we can verify your identity. Your contact information will be kept confidential. We will only post your name, bio, and photo with your story.
- 7) **Links to your social media**. Periodically, we will share stories posted on our website through social media. Please let us know if we have your permission to share your picture, story, and bio. And, if so, please include your social media account names for Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram so we can tag you in our posting. Please separate each account with a comma.

Consider sharing the following:

- 8) **Comments**: We'd like to hear from you! Please send us a comment through the submission form, your email or letter (we will not share these publicly unless you give us permission to do so). For instance, you might share how you heard about the project, what it was like to write your reflection, or suggestions or networks to contact in order to share the project more broadly.
- 9) **Resources**: Please use this [form](#) to share readings (blogs, articles, etc.) or individuals, groups, or organizations who are building bridges, bringing people together, reflecting on the challenges of our time or fostering hope and kindness. We will include some of these in our Dive Deeper section.

Please share this project and the Call for Stories with those who might be interested. If you have questions about the process or the project, contact us at buildingbridgeswbw@gmail.com.

Thank you for joining us in Building Bridges Word by Word!