

An Interview with Lelia Druzdis

Last March, Marti got an email from Lelia: “We've never met but we do have one thing in common; we both are members of Future Search. I am still getting my feet wet with the whole process. I have to admit, I am experiencing two very real emotions over the whole process. One is excitement and the other, frustration. I'm wondering if everyone starts out like this.”

Lelia was going to be in Scottsdale, and we agreed to meet for lunch. We serendipitously found a new restaurant, full of that energy of emergence, and talked our heads off. The conversation was peppered with lots of laughter, and we built the beginnings of a friendship. Every time I thought about that day, I'd smile, and I'd feel a warm spot in my heart for her reaching out in that way, and think about how lovely our connection had been. Those warm memories kept me in touch with Lelia, even though we didn't actually speak or write.

In sharing this editorial role with Magi, and in learning together what had we taken on and how were we going to tame the elephant, Magi had had the idea of doing an interview, not terribly in depth, a looking for nuggets sort of experience. We wanted to make it a regular column. So I thought again of Lelia, how nice it would be to reconnect again, and shot off an email, asking could we talk about what it feels like to be “new” to future search.

Lelia and I talked this morning, and in my usual emergent way, my first question was, “What are the questions you think I should ask you?” We came up with, “What's it like to be new to future search?”, and “How have you connected with people who are part of the Future Search Network?”, and then did our usual conversational popping about. It was going to be an OK column. The conversation had swirled around the topic of what it feels like to not be a part of an ongoing group, and the notion that it would be nice if there were some sort of regular outreach, along the lines of, “What are you doing? How has this affected you?”

And then a pause... “Let me share something with you...” Lelia told me the story about, following their Mother's death, how she and her younger sister had become estranged. Things had become more and more tense, and at one point they hadn't spoken to each other for months. The relationship had been close; the loss was potent. On her birthday, Lelia wrote all of her siblings a letter, starting the reconnection. She emailed her sister, “I'll be at the Square at noon (near her sister's place of work); if you have time; it would be nice to sit together and chat for a while.” They met, and conversation was sometimes light and easy, sometimes hesitant, but the reconnection was begun. They met again, several times, expanding a short chat into a shared lunch (“I'll bring a sandwich to share”, “OK I'll bring the drinks”). At one point, Lelia said to her sister, “Let's just try to find our common ground.” The relationship has grown back together, with both a little wiser and more attuned to each other.

In a recent email, Lelia wrote, “I can't help but think about when things started to go wrong for Margie and I, we thought our only reason for coming together was to care for our Mother. She (we thought) was our only common ground. When our Mom died we both acted like we had no reason to ever come together again. What Margie didn't know is the tremendous respect I had for her for all she did and all she gave up for the care giving of our Mother. She felt like I had no appreciation of her. That was so very far from the truth, BUT I never told her. I've learned from Future Search that your goal is to meet in the middle, but you have to be willing to travel to the middle alone, and wait. Just wait. Something will come of it.”

As our conversation ended, Lelia said, “It isn’t so much about ‘When do I get to do a future search?’, or ‘How do I get to be a part of this group?’, it’s about living your life with the myriad of lessons we learned at that training. So much of what I learned is helpful in so many ways.”

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