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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format..... LETTERS - Opinions - Letters to the Editor
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....42621

Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Practicing active listening to people with whom we
2 disagree

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

3

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 Thanksgiving will soon be here with the usual gatherings
6 of people who are not likely to agree about a lot of things. In our
7 divided nation, it's time to learn how to bridge the gaps, starting
8 at our own family tables.

9 The divisions and hatred in our country are perhaps not
10 surprising, given our history of violence, racism, and colonialism.
11 And yet, there is something in our claims of being a nation of

12 democracy, inclusion, and promoters of the good that needs to be
13 revitalized now.

14 I would like to draw on the work of Marshall Rosenberg's
15 nonviolent communication for a path forward. Instead of "they
16 said, we say" and name-calling, we need to slow down our
17 communication and focus on understanding one another. To
18 accomplish this, we need to practice active listening to people
19 with whom we disagree.

20 Real listening will help us hear more than what we
21 reject. It allows us to see one another as humans with hopes,
22 dreams, and needs.

23 To help with this, we can ask one another, "What do you
24 really need?" This simple question guides the speaker and listener
25 to the underlying issues that have led to divisions. In this space,
26 we can discover common ground, although we will not instantly
27 agree on other issues.

28 Common ground creates trust from which we allow
29 ourselves to be vulnerable enough to explore options to our
30 previously held views and to see others as more complex humans
31 with needs and aspirations, rather than as simple adversaries.

32 The ancient Hebrew word for "evil" is rooted in the word
33 "divided." Evils in the world tend to grow in situations of great
34 division, separation, isolation, and exclusion. Of course, these
35 divisions arise from fears and often from lack of accurate
36 understanding.

37 To break the cycle of fear, division and hatred, let us ask,
38 "What do you need?" and then listen well. Let's give this a try at
39 the Thanksgiving table this year, and see if we discover the
40 possibility of communion with one another.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

41

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

42 0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

43

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

44

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

45

####END LOGLINE####