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BIG TALK in the Circle:

Holding a Mirror Up to Our Human Condition with Poetry

Dear Colleague,

Some of the best and most profound CircleTalk™ conversations have been introduced through poems. At CircleTalk™ we love to open up the imagination of our members through a “third thing” (the use of an object, story, or poem to introduce big life themes). These “props” are a safe way to explore feelings and deeper insights into things we all experience . . . gratitude, regrets, life dilemmas and tough choices, to name a few.

We allow the poem to ask the question, and that gives us a way to look at things in a different way and listen to a different voice as we think through big life issues. In this way, leaders facilitate self-discovery. Poems can become a potent tool for self-discovery.



Gratifying Moments. I love to watch our circle members take a little bite from a poem and come up with their own interpretation. Often, they understand the power of being connected to others because they share the same universal themes and struggles. Whether it's written or spoken, poetry can be a powerful tool to aid in healing and amplify our empathy towards others. It offers yet another opportunity for circle members to feel both heard and understood.

I'm in the mood for a great poem right now. Let's hear poet Billy Collins describe life as a book, splayed open on a glass coffee table.



As you read the below poem "Cliche" think about:

Am I really comfortable in a world where my life is an open book?

Who knows almost everything in every chapter? Just me?

What chapter or paragraph would I put an asterisk by if I could?



Cliche

by Billy Collins

My life is an open book. It lies here
on a glass tabletop, its pages shamelessly exposed,
outspread like a bird with hundreds of thin paper wings.

It is a biography, needless to say,
and I am reading and writing it simultaneously in a language
troublesome and private.

No one has read the whole thing but me.
Most dip into the middle for a few paragraphs,
then move on to other shelves, other libraries.
Some have time only for the illustrations.

I love to feel the daily turning of the pages,
the sentences unwinding like string,
and when something really important happens,
I walk out to the edge of the page
and, always the student,
make an asterisk, a little star, in the margin.

I hope that we all find new ways to explore (with others) what we face every day in our shared human condition: confusing situations, dealing with loss or pain, navigating difficult transitions in life. I hope you can find some solace in poetry to transform difficult emotions to lighter and better understood ones.

In these times, let's use some new tools to inspire us and give us a way to live more freely and fully!

In peace and health, Deb



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