

Being sad together this way is a curious thing to me, as I notice everyone is entirely alone in the confrontation with mortality. The loved ones sitting on either side of me are engaged in entirely separate struggles from mine. Lots of little kids wiggling around, and babes in arms, grew restless during the brief remarks, or took naps, and the

*Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?*

Oh fearful meditation! where, alack,

to get to church more often if it upset me so much.

two hundred people there for the service.
funeral director was putting out more chairs. There seemed to be near adjoining room, next to some other friends in the neighborhood, as the two, and we arrived near the end of that. We found seats in the We went to Lizzette's funeral yesterday. The visitation was from ten to Happy tenth birthday, Story-whose-title-I-stole.

This one worked for me.

door. Whatever. Sometimes the magic works, and sometimes it doesn't. Ghost near at hand, if you've answered That particular knock at the home and move on to the next bit of life on our own -- or with that Holy call to try to make some sense of it somehow for us, so we can all go

audience response. Praise God. Someone has to stand up and answer the blues fashion). Some preaching, from her reverend aunt, with some *Grace* (which my family, I found out later, had never heard in that deep individual solitude. Then there were sung a couple verses of *Amazing*

reading it over again) and we had transcended for that moment our the place was on the same page (and I don't mean we were actually

been donating their sick time to the bereaved father, praise the good.) evil, and leaves vengeance to the Lord. (Members of Local 236 have

bitterest offering was the weeping incomprehension of the very young of why she should be gone. The family is getting a lot of support from the community, but still it's hard. Such a fine family, that offers good for

Sad mortality Mary Read, 16th December 2002

talked to each other, and changes were wrought in more than one of them. I stole the title. "Conversations" by Elf Matheini Stenberg was published ten years ago, on the 11th April 1993. In this story, people

unexamined. To provoke changes in the minds of my readers.

people think about things which they might otherwise have left others say or write and, by passing these conversations on, to make of the things which I'd said or written, some of the things that I'd seen wanted this little exercise to achieve: to relay to a wider audience what I

A Word of Explanation Doug S, 11th April 2003

Conversations 2

Because once is not enough.

Conversations compiled by Douglas Spencer
Issue 2 published 15th April 2003
Future issues published when I feel like it.

Available for the Usual.

Because you're mentioned.
Because you helped.
Because of your LOC.
Because you found it in the bar.
Because you sent me yours.
Because I love you.
Because.
And unconditionally online.

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<http://efanzines.com/Conversations>

Douglas says "I'm only here to confuse people."

Ted says "I think you've succeeded."

Sporting Section Doug, 29th/30th March 2003

I used to think that LiveJournal was a hugely enjoyable thief of time. That is, until I installed an instant messenger client. Three and a half hours in my first session. I suppose it's all to do with the person you're chatting to, rather than the medium.

She was thirty-six years old, and he was thirty-seven.

They played on Instant Messenger and seized a taste of heaven.

They said much more in three short hours than they had said before,

Although the subjects touched upon were just a little raw.

They still have issues, both of them: there's work there still to do,

But online chat enabled them to talk those issues through.

It gave them both a needed buzz, their flirty online game:

It made her feel sixteen again, and he was much the same.

He said it was "constructive", "therapeutic", words like that

And she said – well, you read it here. I'm pleased we had a Chat.

Who said that?

No-one guessed the source of the quotation "I'm a ..." in issue 1.

Here's another quotation from the same source. Try again.

"I went to the LJ "similar users" page and wondered why all the people I actually know are so far down the list. I looked at the journals and profiles of highly ranked people who I didn't know. Most of them were bisexual leather-clad computer geeks from San Francisco. I went to my profile page and edited it. I removed "SF" from my interests and substituted "science fiction". I went to the LJ similar users page and still, the people I knew were down the list, just not quite so far. Once again, I looked at the journals and profiles of highly ranked people who I didn't know. Most of them were bisexual leather-clad computer geeks."

The LOC Box

So I had Letters of Comment. Of course I did. I had too many to quote in full. I heard from Bill Bowers, Bill Burns, Steve Green, Sue Hobsob, Susan Leinbach, Ang Rosin, Janine Stinson, Alan Sullivan and Ted White. There was discussion on mailing lists and over on LiveJournal too.

Apparently no-one in the USA can print double-sided A3. Fancy.

Some of the LOCs were very kind, some of them were very interesting, and some of them raised some points for further discussion. I had, as I say, too many to quote in full.

But there was one LOC in particular which *is* worth quoting in full.

Lloyd Penney: My condolences to Douglas. I am now at an age (43) where some friends have died, often much too early. I saw a news feature on the CBC last night about how to make the life of the dying richer, and my thoughts immediately went to a friend long gone, Marisa Golini. She was radiant, energized, beautiful and rising to the top of her profession, broadcasting. As her career took her away from us, we seldom saw her, and we missed her, and seeing her again made us love her all the more. Cervical cancer took her more than 10 years ago now, and our heartache at losing her is sharpened by our knowing that she called for us in her dying moments. We attended her funeral, and her “weird sci-fi friends” were pushed aside and quickly forgotten by her family. The family produced a book on Marisa’s short but promising lifetime; those weird friends, which included her best friend Cindi, were excised from the book and her life. Marisa still comes into our thoughts from time to time, and still a tear is shed after all these years. My one happy thought about her death is that at my last seeing her, too weak from cancer and the chemotherapy to rise from her bed, I told her that I loved her, and that was perhaps one of the most honest things I’ve ever said. And with that same honesty, I can say that I still do, and will as long as she is in my memory.

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The loss of someone you love or loved, romantically or not, is a sharp pain. Somehow, so many recriminations come to mind, as to what you should have done, or what might have been. All I can suggest is to try to let go, and resume your life. Easier said than done, but best done than merely said.

Many years ago, a group of us were discussing religion in an apa I used to be in. Some were silly enough to try some proselytization; others just wanted to learn and discuss the topic. At some point, I said, if I correctly recall, “God is divine, faith is personal, religion is man-made, and a church is just a fancy building. That’s all that really important.” Either that killed the conversation, or it settled the argument. I think your choice of religion is personal to you, and you have no right trying to convert others to that way of thinking. If you follow no religion at all, that’s your choice as well.

Do I follow any organized religion? No, I don’t. I’m up early Sunday to do some chores, and get the weekly groceries. Does God exist? I would like to think He does, for there is something in the human psyche that seems to demand that someone must be looking over them, just like their parents did when they were young. We seem to need a God, at least some of us, from time to time, so I hope He is there for those looking for Him. I haven’t had the need to search for Him, but I may in the future. I hope my options will be open. (I put a capital H on Him and He for the usual format of referring to God. Like your mileage, your own belief may vary.)

I hope this was the kind of loc you were hoping for. The so-called taboo topics, including religion, can be discussed, IMHO, as long as there is consideration for other opinions. Who knows, maybe we’re just heathens trying to convert the pagans, and no one’s right. With that in mind, such discussions can prove fruitful and interesting, without anyone feeling insulted or denigrated.

Take care, and I hope there’s another issue coming.

Lloyd Penney, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada, November 14, 2002

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I'm looking for a word James Shields, 4th April 2003

Well, I'm actually looking for suggestions for a new word, because I'm nearly sure it doesn't exist already.

We have...

Synonyms: Two words that have similar meanings

Anagrams: Words that are made from the same set of letters

Palindromes: Words that read the same backwards as forwards

But we don't have a word to describe two words that have the same predictive text entry values. For example, my name has the same keystrokes as “Lanes”. “Me” and “Of” is another common one. As you probably all know, some people are not very careful when sending texts, usually because they're trying to do something else, like drive a car.

Of course, phones are rapidly getting smarter. I already know several phones who are smarter than their owners. It's only a matter of time before they start being able to work out which word you meant from the context. Then things are bound to get better. Or possibly worse. In the meantime, I think this phenonym is worthy of a word. I've come up with a couple of suggestions: “textonym” and “cellendrome”, but they sound just a bit too manufactured. So I'm hoping that the creative people here can come up with some more suggestions.

I have every confidence that the OED will be interested.

James really is interested in suggestions.

To contact him, or any of the other contributors, email me using the address on the front page:

I'll pass any comments on as required.

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Chat Log Extract DougS and iolanthe, 5th April 2003

I'm in Italics, she isn't. One brief snippet from mountains of chat.

I decided a while ago that being depressed was a total waste of time. There was the usual gap between decision and action, but I don't ... ummm ... “relax” into depression like some people do.

Ah, I think I see. It's all in the headspace, once again ...

I say to myself “sod this”. And I change my mind. If I can.

Good for you!

Sometimes it doesn't work, but I've tried to make it a matter for decision.

Taking control of my own life

Because depression is a waste of time (Unless there's a chemical imbalance or such). Decision is good. Don't let life control you.

The big hurdle is that, having decided that's the case when you're “up”, it's hard to remember your decision when you're “down”. It's not “avoidant” to avoid depression. If you can turn it into action, it's good. If you can turn it into action against the underlying cause, that's even better. And when the underlying cause goes away because of your actions, that's the best of all.

I think I need to print out that last paragraph and paste it up on the wall.

I can feel another paragraph in “Convers[at]ions 2” coming on ... That

was a good thing that came out of a decision to act.

The zine?

The zine arose because I wrote the content for the centre pages of issue 1 in my LJ. I joined LJ because I'd (then) recently become more active in Fandom once more ... as a result of a decision I'd taken because I was depressed about losing Anne.

Decision, and action.

And then something good happens. Without that decision, I wouldn't be a writer now.

Really? That's interesting. Well, I'm glad you decided to get an LJ ... and do more writing.

So am I. It's good therapy – and you're familiar with that process too.

I've been through an emotional wringer, I know that much.

You'll be a bit less wet now.

Heh. Well, let's hope so.

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