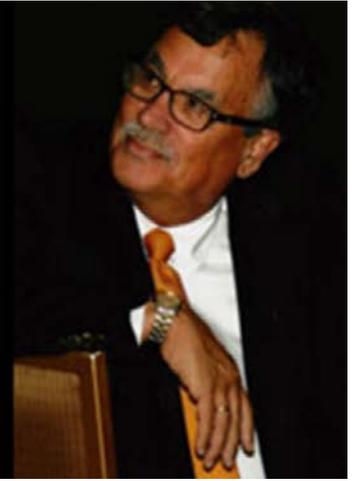


MY VIEW



Founder Wayne Fortin



WEAVERS

Many social and political commentators are expressing concern about the deep divisions in our society. Two prominent figures have recently written books which describe this divisiveness. David Brooks, in his book **The Second Mountain**, writes: *“Our country’s social fabric is badly frayed by distrust, division and exclusion.”* Recently retired General James Mattis writes in his book **Call Sign Chaos** *“The U.S. is dividing into hostile tribes. What concerns me most as a military man is not our external adversaries. It’s our internal divisiveness. We are dividing into hostile tribes cheering against each other.”*

David Brooks believes that the solution to this tribalism and divisiveness is relationship building. He calls on each of us to establish strong loving relationships with others in our local communities.

Brooks calls those who focus on establishing these strong caring relationships WEAVERS. WEAVERS, he says, try to make their communities loving and welcoming places, and they find meaning and joy in connecting with and caring for others.

Some WEAVERS work as individuals. They prioritize relationships over work and things; they maintain past relationships as well as establish new ones; they never miss the special occasions of the those in their social network; they rally to help their friends, family and neighbors when they are in trouble; and their relationships cross political, racial, ethnic, religious and socio economic lines.

Then there are WEAVERS who do their relationship weaving as part of a group. They join groups which establish caring relationships with those who are struggling, and in many cases feeling alone.

Which brings me to TIP. You probably didn't know it, but if you are part of the TIP organization, you are a WEAVER. You are an important part of what David Brooks calls the Weavers Movement. As a TIP WEAVER...

- You weave relationships with other TIP volunteers who may be very different from you and who you would normally just pass on the street in your everyday life. But because of your weaving efforts within TIP, you contribute to establishing a TIP family...a place where community members come together in a group where they feel they belong.
- You weave compassionate relationships with survivors of tragedy who because of the nature of tragedy feel alone and “disconnected.” You reach out to survivors of all political affiliations, races, religions, ages and socio-economic status, thereby sending a strong message to the rest of us: *“I care for everyone in my community. We are all in this together.”*
- You weave relationships between emergency responders and community members. Most survivors of tragedy see the service they receive from TIP volunteers as a service provided by emergency responders. Therefore, your presence on emergency scenes and in hospitals weaves positive relationship between emergency responders and the residents they serve.

I encourage all TIP members to appreciate not only the difference you make to individual survivors, but also to realize that you are an important part of the Weavers Movement. In the process of TIP volunteering you are weaving relationships with others outside of your “tribe” and in so doing are playing an important role in healing the divisiveness in our society.

Let's keep on weaving!