

Letter from the Director

Dear Women Writing for (a) Change Community,

Happy New Year to each and every one of you! With our 25th anniversary year now behind us, we move into this new year with a variety of reflections and intentions.

I hope you share with me **a sense of pride** for all that Women Writing for (a) Change is and continues to be. Seven special events were created specifically for the 25th year in 2016, and every other program contributed to the festivities. Thanks to all of you who participated in one or more of our celebrations, and immense gratitude to the many individuals who made those events come to life!

What's in my heart at this time is **a deep sense of concern** about our world. After witnessing the polarization and vitriol of the 2016 election, I wonder if we as a people have lost our ability to listen, to express ourselves with civility, and to be curious enough to learn about different viewpoints. That kind of curiosity takes time: the willingness to slow down enough to go deep, to listen, to ponder, to ask questions. To seek understanding and to suspend judgment. Not easy in our fast-paced, media-frenzied culture.

Also in my heart is **a sense of hope**. Our mission at Women Writing for (a) Change, in part, "*to nurture and celebrate the individual voice*," doesn't come with the caveat "*as long as we all share the same view of the world*." Our work here may be more relevant than ever. This sacred place can be one of the spaces in the world where it is possible for civil discourse and conversation to unfold, as we listen to one another through our writing, telling our own unique stories. "*You can't hate someone whose story you know*," wrote Margaret Wheatley.

How do we move forward together to co-create a world where everyone feels safe and included? Change does happen here at Women Writing, again and again. My hope is that positive change will find new ways of expression in 2017. Our wish is that **you will find your way to our doors**: come on in and find a seat in the circle of chairs, warm your hands on a cup of tea. We'll offer you the opportunity to write and share, to be heard and to listen. It isn't magic, but it is magical.

Sending all of you, and all the world, wishes for peace, grace, light and safety.

With love,
Diane