



From a Distance; The New *Normal*

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In 1988, Julie Gold wrote a song that won a Grammy for Song of the Year in 1991. When she wrote this song, she stated that she believed in an internal and humanitarian God. She wanted the song to be something that people had a right to interpret the lyrics any way they wanted. She has stated that the song is about the difference between how things appear to be and reality.

From a Distance has been recorded by several people and is relatable to many people for many reasons. The lyrics remind us that the God is ever present and always with us.

Gold's maternal grandparents and mother were Jewish immigrants from Russia in the 1930s. Her paternal Jewish grandparents came from [Romania](#). Her Orthodox mother and conservative father were a founding couple in Philadelphia's Reform Temple Beth Elohim. Her Jewish background has influenced her songs, yet her lyrics touch the souls of all faith traditions.

When our church was started three years ago, one of the energies I wanted was help people connect spiritually with elements that were relatable. Music has a way of touching people on a spiritual level much deeper than mere words. The level lyrics are written touch our spirit is so personal, they help make meaning of joy, conflict, times when life gets so fuzzy and messy, and when answers need to be found.

In the first part of the song, she writes:

*From a distance there is harmony
And it echoes through the land
It's the voice of hope
It's the voice of peace
It's the voice of every man*

As we prepare to have some sort of normalcy back into our lives, it doesn't mean we will have the freedom to be close yet. Life will have to be from a distance and with everyone's patience and compassion, we create harmony. Through these days of anticipation, it's important to listen to the voice of hope and peace.

What does hope and peace look like? When crickets chirp, birds sing, children's voices in a distance...these are all signs of hope. Peace may look like the sun rising and setting, the sounds of a stream running, even the sounds of your own breath.

What are the signs of hope and peace for you? I challenge you this week to make a list of all the things that make meaning for your personal hope and peace. How many of these signs are you getting during the week? What is God trying to tell you?

This morning I receive a short video that I knew I had to share the words. It was a man with a British accent putting his son to bed for the night. The son wanted his dad to tell him a story. It wasn't just any story, it was one he had been told before.

The Great Realization

*The son tells his dad, "Tell me the one about the virus again and then I'll go to bed."
Dad replies, "But my boy, you're growing weary sleepy thoughts about your head."
To which the son replied, "Please, that one's my favorite. I promise, just once more."
The dad grins and says, "Okay, snuggle down my boy though I know you know this one full well. The story starts before then in a world I once would dwell. It was a world of waste and wonder. Of poverty and plenty. Back before we understood why hindsight's 2020. You see, the people came up with companies to trade across the lands. They swelled and got much bigger than we ever could have planned."*

*We always had our wants but now we got so quick.
You could have everything you dreamed of in a day and with a click.
We noticed families stopped talking.
That's not to say they never spoke.
But the meaning must have melted
and the work life balance broke.*

*And the children's eyes grew squarer
and every toddler had a phone.
They filtered out the imperfections
but amidst the noise they felt alone.*

*And every day the skies grew thicker
till they couldn't see the stars.
So we flew in planes to find them
while down below we filled our cars.*

*We'd drive around all day in circles.
We'd forgotten how to run.
We swapped the grass for tarmacs
and shrunk the parks till there were none.*

*We filled the sea with plastic
because our waste was never capped.
Until each day we went fishing
you'd pull them out already wrapped.*

*And while we ate and drank and gambled
our leader taught is why
it's best to not upset the lobbies,
more convenient to die.*

*But then in 2020
a new virus came our way.
The governments all reacted
and told us all to hide away.*

*But while we all were hidden,
amidst the fear and all the while,
people dusted off their instincts
they remembered how to smile.*

*They started clapping to say thank you,
and call up their mums.
And while the car keys gathered dust
they would look forward to their runs.*

*And with the skies less full of voyagers,
the earth began to breathe.
The beaches bore new wildlife
that scuttled off into the seas.*

*Some people started dancing,
some were singing, some were baking.
We'd grown so used to bad news,
but some good news was in the making.*

*And so when we found the cure,
and were allowed to go outside
we all preferred the world we found
to the one we left behind.*

*Old habits became extinct
and they made way for the new.
And every simple act of kindness
was now given its due.*

The son asked, "But why did it take a virus to bring people together?"

To that the dad replied: "Sometimes you got to get sick my boy before you start feeling better."

*Now lie down and dream of tomorrow.
And all the things we can do.
Who knows, maybe if you dream hard enough
maybe some of them will come true.*

*We now call it the Great Realization
and yes since then there have been many.
And yes, that's how it started
and why hindsight's 2020.*

As we continue to see life from a distance, I again challenge you to look beyond what you see in front. You see, what is right in front, may hold more than the obvious.