

An important time in history

The last few weeks have been strange. I thought it important to write a story to acknowledge this moment in history as it will probably be relevant in times to come, and in your life. I hope that it will be remembered as a time, in New Zealand at least, where the needs of people came before profit. As a time of community when we put our own needs aside to keep others safe, a time of introspection where we learnt about ourselves and the importance of other people in our lives, a time of innovation and creativity as we found other ways to work and connect with people. This was the time of the Covid19 pandemic when the world isolated to necessary social 'bubbles' to stop the spread of a virus. I wonder what you have noticed about what has been happening? I hope that you have enjoyed the special time you have had with your family. Have you been on walks to see the bears in the windows? The Easter eggs?

Like you, most people in NZ - and around the world have been social distancing, staying at home, keeping 2 metres, even with their friends. I wonder if you have thought about your friends during this time? I have sent through a few videos to let you know I have been thinking about you, and I have loved the photos and videos your parents have sent on your behalf.

One of the things that has occurred to me over this time is the importance of touch and body language in relationship to show how we feel, to check in, to communicate our needs, and to connect. Like when I help you to sleep by gently brushing your hair; like when you see me and smile wide; when you come over to me

for cuddles when you need to reconnect; when I rest a hand on your back to reassure you; and how I invite you to join me in care moments with my hands extended to you. Even sitting in the same room, just being in each other's heartzone. I look forward to giving you a big cuddle when we get back!

As people we have an instinct to come together; an innate need for belonging; to feel recognised as individuals; and know we have a place in the world around us (Te Whāriki, 2017). We can never truly know the extent that our ripples affect the lives of others. Although, one of the ways to learn about what you bring to the world is to hear about what people value in their interactions with you. I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you what I have missed about you. I hope that one day when you are older you can read this story and recognise just some of the gifts that you bring.

Rose, I have missed your smile, so wide and bright that you fill the room with joy. I love that this is your way of greeting, you know exactly how to make people feel special interacting with you. You bring this joy with you in everything you do, you look so content when you play, and I often hear you talking or singing softly to yourself. I have also missed our care moments in the day, where we get to spend unhurried time together - most especially when you nestle in for a sleepy cuddle. I have missed our cuddles, sometimes singing and chatting, no matter how well I hide it you always find my necklace and inspect it for a long while.

Melanie Audier

