

The view from my window

The view from my window is smudged with handprints that, if I'm honest, were most likely here before I moved into this home. Light pours in, through stained glass and a navy sheer curtain, offering views of my neighborhood. A view that I have not truly taken in for years. Not because it hasn't been there. Not because I haven't sat in front of it for hours, working.

It is because I so rarely slow down and look through it to see what is beyond me.

I have read countless updates lately about what the coronavirus has "offered" people. For some, they are sleeping in. Or inhaling newfound family time. For others, it has been intense anxiety. Or fear of losing a job. For some, it has meant physically going to work, no matter the risk, because that is their job. And that our country has "seen" them—perhaps for the first time. For most, there is tense anticipatory grief that feels almost terrifying to admit.

It has been hard for me to admit, too. At varying times, and depending on my amount of time on Zoom (who knew introverts could tire of online time?), or how much I choose to watch the endless newsfeed scroll across my screen, I have allowed it to consume me.

And yet...still...that window has beckoned me. To clean it. To spend time with it. To challenge myself to consider what is being asked of me during this unusual time. And to change my view.

There is life just outside that pane of glass—life I have not noticed in past years. Pink azalea bushes flowering. Trees budding. Squirrels hunting for nuts, and my children outside playing instruments for the neighborhood to hear. People are walking their dogs and laughing deep, belly laughs. There are birds chirping and trees sighing. The earth exhaling in a sense of relief to feel a slowing.

There is connection that I didn't see before. Between earth, us, and those who have only been on the other side of a window. Deep, focused connection of not allowing another moment to pass without an "I love you," or a "Do you need anything?"

Within that window, those handprints, there is also a reflection of a woman standing there. Older than I want to admit, and a bit thicker around the middle, but alive and well, just the same. A woman who has been a bit lost lately. Missing the mark. Burning a candle at both ends. Hungry for something that felt just out of reach.

That woman, that reflection, begs the question: Now that you have been stilled...now that you have felt that connection and inhaled that fresh air...now that you have been given time to think, time to reflect, time to stop and truly listen and see the view often overlooked, time to spend with those closest to you without all the running around and outside requirements...

What will you do with it?

Melissa Seligman is a writer, a mother, a caregiver to her veteran husband, and a teacher in a former life. She is the co-founder of [Her War, Her Voice](#), and the author of [The Day After He Left for Iraq](#). She is a firm believer in the power of story and invites you to share yours with her at any time.