

Solidarity – What does it mean?

Solidarity is something that I believe in. It is something that I have written about and spoken about often over the years. And yet . . . ? It wasn't until recently that a comment from a member had me thinking about solidarity in a new and different light. I have been mulling it over off and on for weeks now. And through those musings have begun to wonder about other people's interpretations of what solidarity means and more specifically what it means to them. And most importantly what does it mean to you the member?

One of the first places I went to was the dictionary:

sol•i•dar•i•ty (noun)

mutual agreement and support

harmony of interests and responsibilities among individuals in a group, especially as manifested in unanimous support and collective action for something

It says that “solidarity” is a noun. Hmmmm . . . right off the bat I knew I was in trouble as I view solidarity as a verb, an action and something I value. This concept is an active part of my thinking and my doing. I wonder and I am curious how others embrace this word/concept, and to what degree it is part of their lifestyle?

So then what actions define or demonstrate solidarity? Is it the minority agreeing to support the majority? Is it the majority agreeing to support the minority? And what about “I – me” versus “we – us”? Where or when do we as individuals assume ownership or make a commitment?

For myself I know that it is always a case by case situation. I know that I have voted on things where I have gained nothing or even lost something in order for others to gain. Other times I have asked for the support of others in order for me to gain or in the very least to not lose.

The questions just keep coming and those in turn spawn new questions. Are our beliefs rigid and entrenched or are these principles and concepts fluid and alive? Do we struggle with our beliefs and are they such that we may often be tested every day?

What is the foundation for the concept of solidarity? I think in part it is imbedded within our culture, our sense of community. We are so blessed in Canada to live in a country that was built on sharing and support. People throughout our history have made sacrifices so as a nation we could move forward as a whole.

And so . . . I am back to where I began wondering about other people's interpretations of what solidarity means.

What does solidarity mean to you?

In solidarity,
Wendy



Wendy Despina, President