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COMMUNICATIONS  
Your message. Better.

Hello,

Thanks again for joining our email list. We won't overload you with frequent messages, and we won't fill the messages with irrelevant clutter.

We will share thoughts on the power of words, inviting your consideration and response.

Words matter. Many years ago as a young reporter I interviewed a social worker, a wise woman trying to fundamentally change the way welfare worked. She stopped me in mid-question when I asked how her plans would help the poor.

"Poor *people*," she corrected.

Ever since, I have been acutely aware of how often we substitute the label for the person. By referring to the poor, the hungry, the homeless, blacks, Hispanics, Christians, Muslims, Jews--add your own inflammatory favorite--we leave people out of the equation. In reducing ourselves to the two dimensions of the label, we diminish the writer, the subject and the discourse.

Poor people. Muslim people. Disabled people.

People of color. Now there's a label that works.

Until next time—

Laura Behrens

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