

DISCONNECT

(ttm, dec2019 & apr2021)

I cannot understand your pain.
Therefore your pain can't be all that bad.

I was not involved in causing you hurt.
Therefore I carry no responsibility.

Your feelings are not connected with all the facts.
Therefore your feelings are invalid.

Your anger comes across as hateful.
Therefore you occupy the low moral ground.

This conversation makes me uncomfortable.
Let's rather talk about something pleasant.

The way you express yourself makes no sense.
Let's talk again once you make sense.

You've been talking about this pain for a long time.
Please could you move on?

You cannot possibly understand my pain.
Therefore I will not engage with you.

You resemble someone who hurt me.
Therefore you are complicit.

You are challenging the story that makes sense of my pain.
Therefore you are questioning my identity.

Don't tell me about your pain or someone else's pain.
It invalidates my pain.

What has happened to me continues to affect me.
Therefore this is who I am.

My struggle is unique.
I am alone and isolated in my experience.

I cannot heal until you change.
Please could you move on?

I wrote the above poem as a way of processing my experiences of conversations I have been a part of in South Africa. It is a composite of many conversations, and it's an attempt to figure out where our conversations sometimes tend to get stuck. In case there's any doubt, the point is that every statement in the poem is fallacious in some way. Whether or not you agree, my hope is that it is meaningful to you.

Thorsten Marbach (marbach@telkomsa.net) – posted online at tt-tt.co.za/disconnect