

Sustaining and Nurturing Hope in A Mediation Process

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SELECTED QUOTES

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- In most cases, what people in conflict are weeping over, might equally turn out to be what they will be rejoicing over tomorrow.
- Often parties' blindfolded by their opposing views, interests and positions do not recognize chances and possibilities that abound for resolution, except fighting it out with their opponents to win at all cost. What parties need most in this dark journey through the tunnel of conflict is a sort of inspired awareness to change direction to new self-realization, a condition of mind that will help them to change their perceptions and behavior. In addition, the awake-ness that inspires disputants to change course in dispute is Hope.
- There is a growing belief in the power of hope to bring about transformation in societies and individual lives. In a bold step towards conceptualizing hope, Snyder (2000) describes hope as "a cognitive set that is based on a reciprocally derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed determination) and (b) pathways (planning of ways to meet goals)" (Snyder et al, 1991, p. 571).
- Snyder (2000) has created a hope-scale claiming that, "higher as compared to lower hope people have greater number of goals, have more difficult goals, have success at achieving their goals, perceive their goals as challenges, have greater happiness and less distress, have superior coping skills, and report less burn out at work" (Snyder, 1995, p. 357-8). Furthermore, Snyder discovered that high-hope people maintain their agency and pathways when confronted with difficulties, such as an obstacle to achieving a desired goal, while low-hope individuals will abandon their goals.
- This inner stimulation to make peace is akin to the "hope that is not seen" and has the propensity to transform lives and conflict.
- Individuals, who are instinctively awakened by hope, are more likely to be creative in finding alternatives (Snyder, 2002). This is because these individuals will react differently and are able to make choices that they feel might be appropriate to satisfy their demands and still be able to understand the needs of the other party. Nevertheless, individuals lacking these pathways of hope are more attracted to seek redress in either fighting or resorting to adversarial steps, such as taking opponents to court for redress, oblivious of the fact that such an adversarial step will not address issues underlying conflicts satisfactorily. Adversarial steps bring short-term comfort to a party but will leave the conflict flames still burning, with disrupted relationships and communication links. Good relationships and communication are prerequisites for peacemaking because of their propensity to fuel conflict resolution.
- Hope during conflict is awoken when disputants start sharing vulnerability and decreasing will to continue the conflict. They are inspired by hope towards alternative dispute resolution when their goal is to make peace. In addition, when this happens, the dramatic change of attitude that has taken place, brings about hope of a better future, capable of restoring strained relationships.

- In this vein, disputants come to the mediation table with a vision and courage to dialogue and listen to each other rather than seeking who may be right or wrong. In other words, pathways combined with agency thought ignites the dynamo that heals and transforms conflict.
- Most constructive solutions to intense conflict situations are those resulting from intrinsically motivated efforts by disputants to creatively discover satisfactory solutions to their problem.
- A well facilitated mediation process is capable of generating hope, creativity and design to reach a mutually agreed solution to a problem. Individuals who have many creative ideas (pathways) to a problem have hope. The glaring light of hope is evident from the road map of conflict resolution drawn and jointly produced by stakeholders without much participation from a third party.
- Sustaining hope in individuals after a long conflict will not be successful without a hope-mediator, armed with creative pathways, distinct goals and commitment to help the disputants exit their conflict environment for a better life.

(Prepared by Yea-Wen Chen, FDR Graduate Assistant)