

PEACEMAKERS

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This essay series presents a philosophy of professional peacemaking, discusses attitudes that profit such professionals, suggests some specific reforms of the legal system, and describes some of the essential skills of peacemakers.

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RED BIRD

[This is the first of a series of twelve short essays about peacemaking. Like all stories about peace, its salient moments detail conflict within oneself, between others, and among cultures. I begin with confession.]

Our judge delivered her oral decision. Black robes swished as she bustled out. This hellish divorce trial had raged for ten days, spread, due to senseless wrangling, over ten weeks. Exhausted, opposing counsel and I rocked back in our courtroom chairs, sore from their dead padding and torn upholstery. Counsel glared at me, war-weary: “The one upside here is that I will never have to see you again, you corrupt turd.” I searched for something appropriate to say, then settled on the truth. I growled, “Back at you,” without a smile, without making eye contact. In her defense, opposing counsel was battling cancer. For me, I have no excuse.

I came to law mid-life. After the bar exam, I drafted a philosophy of legal practice. One part reads: “Courts exist to end intractable conflicts and should be the forum of last resort. Litigation benefits no one except attorneys. Litigated solutions necessarily involve coercion, forcing unchosen change on unwilling participants. The results dismay. When litigation cannot be avoided, courtesy and candor must temper advocacy. Ethical probity and personal trustworthiness are the essence of practicing law.” In the mud of client frenzy, I found this, like every aspiration, easier to say than do. An unholy alliterative trinity of ambition and anger and angst crowded my heart, hobbling its better impulses. I came to law to help. I came to law to serve. I saw that most often I achieved neither. I began searching.

The east African Bushmen tribe tells a story:

Young Gimbe knelt at a rock-hollow pool in his tribe’s desert. Reflected in the mirror of the pool’s surface, Gimbe saw a red bird of startling brilliance. Gimbe knew he must possess the scarlet wonder. The young man leapt to his bow, notched a bird arrow, and swung its killing end skyward. But the desert sky yawned empty. Gimbe sought sleep, but the fantastical red image danced upon his heart. Gimbe hunted the red bird, fruitlessly. As he aged, Gimbe widened his forays across his tribal homeland. He pestered strangers. None helped. Years piled. Gimbe’s skin thickened and cracked, his joints ached. Finally old, Gimbe had walked the land, never spying the red bird. Gimbe pointed his curling toes homeward, defeated. An unexpected message arrived: red bird soars at a northern mountaintop. Gimbe limped the desert to those foothills. Tired to death, he scrabbled skyward. Always, Gimbe scanned horizon, hill, and heavens for his avian mystery. Gimbe crawled upon the peak and lay gasping upon his back. For Gimbe was passing. In his final breath, Gimbe searched the sparkling mountain sky for red bird. Dimmed eyes saw nothing. Gimbe sighed, closed his eyes, and savored the childhood crimson reflection that had driven life’s journey. As Gimbe joined his ancestors, a red feather drifted from above, settling slowly into Gimbe’s limp hand.

I adapted this story from Peter Matthiessen, *The Tree Where Man Was Born*, who adapted it from Colin Turnbull, *Tradition and Change in African Life*, who adapted it from the Bushman tribe’s fireside myths, who adapted it from their ancestors long dead, who adapted it from longings of the human heart.

Peace is a red bird—furtive, hiding in plain sight, watching. The strength of peace is reticence. Peace, unlike war, declines force. Peace waits while the assertive coerce. Peace listens. Peace craves invitation. When beckoned, peace may, with breathtaking rapidity, dominate the self, a family, even tribes and nations. Before the beckoning, peace appears impossibly distant.

Peace exceeds mere absence of conflict. Peace is not absence, but fullness. In peace, life brims. In peace, the best human urges unfurl and dominate: sympathy, empathy, compassion, giving, sacrifice, understanding, forgiveness, community, reconciliation, resilience. Even within peace, ripples of human distress bestir still waters. Yet, peace addresses conflict differently. Most conflict is jumbled, diseased, shoddy peace. Some people redirect conflicts toward peace. As lawyers, we are well-positioned to do so, to make peace. Conflict, after all, is our business. Are we making peace, or merely generating process and money? Each of us must answer. I do so late at night, awaiting sleep.

Will I die with a red feather in my withered palm? Will you?

Peacemakers #2:
LITTLE “P” PEACE

What peace should lawyers seek to make? I distinguish Big-P from little-p peace.

Big-P Peace is heaven on earth. Unfortunately, Big-P Peace is a putty that mashes into any shape one prefers. The same is true of Big-L Love, Big-F Freedom, and Big-J Justice. These capital-letter aspirations capture cherished human values. Yet, none have concrete referents. We cannot point and say, *Peace resides in Marysville*. *Did you catch that glimpse of Freedom on CNN? Whoa! I just saw Justice on that bus*. The world is just too muddy for Big Ideas to root themselves. Big Ideas guide us, like maps. Yet, they detail terrain that exists only in our hearts. We worry (or should worry) that Big-P Peace suffers such intellectual plasticity that it lacks meaning altogether.

Much Peace-talk is utopian. Lions and lambs snuggle together. Swords disappear; plows abound. Evildoers are reconfigured as misunderstood children suffering attachment disorder. The libertinism of militant crowds is deemed to express only repressed, well-justified political rage. God frequently sneaks into our Peace-talk. Human and urban perfection is, according to Augustine, the *City of God*. Jesus and his disciples marched toward a shining Yahwist city on a hill. Utopias seem forever distant. Thomas More’s *Utopia* lay on an imaginary Atlantic island off the shores of the New World, a frolicking pastoral vision of Christian communism. Plato’s *Republic* was inaccessible, not by virtue of distance, but because of the mire of ordinary minds. We muckers are chained in dark caves; none but philosophical elites glimpse utopian suns. Seyyid Qutb, a militant Islamic theorist, urged Peace by Islamic war against all non-Islamic authorities (*Milestones*). Only when Divine Law (Shariah) is every land’s rule will people be truly free to choose Allah. Then Qutb’s version of Peace will blossom. Hitler’s Germanic utopia was Jew-free. Violence and utopia seem intellectual cousins, chummy at family dinners. I have little interest in Big-P peace, because I cannot really get hold of it. I doubt courts and lawyers have much to do with Big-P Peace. Utopias seem the bastions of mystics and prophets and dreamers. The peace lawyers and courts can make is little-p peace.

Little-p peace is not necessarily little. Martin Luther King Jr. and his activists employed non-violent means to push back American racial segregation. They marched in Birmingham and Washington and Detroit to the beat of King’s sonorous speeches. They avoided retaliation when attacked. They forged unlikely alliances. Mohandas Gandhi drove the British Empire from India by *Satyagraha* (non-violent resistance). He taught countrymen to weave native thread and boycott British textiles, to harvest their own salt from the sea, and to resist injustice first within, then without. It is important to recognize that the little-p peace of King and Gandhi was earthly

and flawed. Each leader suffered foibles. Gandhi was an ascetic anorexic; King had an ill-restrained appetite for women. Occasional violence erupted from followers, usually in response to outrageous mistreatment by opponents. Both King and Gandhi died by assassination. These sad blemishes teach that little-p peace is a human artifact. Real people with feet of clay make little-p peace. The upside is this. We can make peace, despite our shortcomings, if we wish. But there will be obstacles.

Our courts have peacemaking quite backwards. We lawyers, in our various capacities, comprise the courts. Our habit is to file suit, then negotiate. Backwards. When we file lawsuits, we lead with coercion. Read a summons. When we acquiesce in the rules of civil procedure as a guide to conflict resolution, we affirm predicates of violence. Unwilling participants may be compelled to accept unchosen outcomes. The results dismay. Legal peacemakers invert the civil rules. They do not begin with the summons, but end there, only with reluctance, on those rare occasions when listening, negotiation, patience, mediation, and collaboration have, after long perseverance, failed. Peacemakers recognize their skill deficits as part of the problem. They train themselves to hear, to care, to brainstorm, to find common ground, and to narrate a broader, more constructive, more humane story to teach clients about opponents.

Peacemakers help people cope with conflicts constructively. Peacemakers settle divorces by leading negotiating clients toward hard-won agreements and compromises in a threat-free, information-laden environment. Peacemakers drag warring siblings to probate mediations, put doctors and their unwittingly injured patients at the same table, and give bitter neighbors cups of coffee from a common pot. Peacemakers teach disputants narratives that weave and transcend divergent perspectives, and harbor previously unimagined solutions. Little-p peace is real people in gritty conflict finding workable solutions without coercion. The peacemaking lawyer becomes midwife of a new equilibrium.

Little-p peace does not aggregate to become the kingdom of heaven. Little-p peace is penultimate; we all imagine better, more utopian, outcomes. But, unlike Big-P Peace, I can get hold of peace. On good days, I can even make it. So too can you.

Peacemakers #3:
WITHIN

Peacemaking starts within peacemakers. Examining my own interior world, that is not an auspicious beginning.

Within me labors a host of conflicting urges. Let me describe a moment last Tuesday at 3:07 p.m. A nap beckoned. One client needed his contract completed. Another called for a no-notice meeting on something urgent. Her knock approached like thunder after lightning. A blattering truck ground my ears. My paralegal walked by, smelling good (she is my spouse, so I suppose that is okay). Sofie the dog peered at me with that “I’m fun; let’s have fun together” twinkle. Her tail jiggled a preference for a squirrel-laden route through Hamlin Park. My left knee throbbed, and blood sugar waned. The Libyan bombing nagged. Would Brian Williams detail smoking wreckage? Washington roundballers in the Sweet Sixteen—that Isaiah kid. The economy growled a threat. A visceral tweak teased me as a recent critic yammered silently. Mike’s surgery Friday worried me. A dawn Wittgenstein segment darted past. My crushed lumbar disc throbbed. My garage brimmed with school books my Rotary club collected for Africa; would they would get rained on during transport? A sternal spasm stabbed as my dead dog, and a buddy’s recent memorial, brushed the periphery of consciousness; these melted into one another, *homo caninus terminus*. Jack Bauer executing people efficiently, for national security (of course), on NetFlix after dinner. Oddly, part of me welcomes the carnage of 24. Just below these items churned a hundred or thousand others, vital, throbbing, but unrecognized, sub-linguistic. Then, 3:08 p.m. arrived.

Peacemakers bring minutes like this, and 1,439 others from each day, to negotiation tables. Fortunately, forebrain cortical functions suppress much of the freeform torrent when necessary. Across the peacemaking table sits a person (or several) who suffers the same subliminal cacophony, but copes even less effectively because of personal trauma presently endured—divorce, assault, betrayal, death. And so, together, clients and peacemaker constitute the assembled players. This could be bad.

One retreats to skills. These seem so frail, so puny before the task. **Listening.** Listening is five percent compassion, and ninety-five percent turning down one's own volume. One discovers a quiet place from within, drags it to the surface. Personally, I conjure a simulacrum of serenity from my study before sunrise. In quiet, others can be heard, just barely. **Repeating,** saying again what has been said at the table. Parroting sounds stupid, but keeps clients talking. As information grows, an alternate narrative for the warring parties shapes up. **Curiosity** helps. Few journeys hold wilder rides than distressed humans splattering their fractured meaning upon a conference table. Well-meaning inquiry pries open those floodgates. Clients' laden messages, however, are encoded. **Sympathy** breaks the cipher. Sliding even one foot into a client's worn and smelly shoe opens them up. Common language emerges, glimmers of trust. We begin **re-narrating**, weaving another way to frame their world. The warp and woof of this new story encompasses the misery of each, and, on good days, hints resolution without bloodshed or emotional carnage. If they share a common tale, no matter how sad a tragedy be recounted, the hard work is done. Only drafting and details remain.

To begin peacemaking while noisy bodes disaster. Mohandas Gandhi, India's ascetic politician, encouraged followers in the Kheda district to resist British arrogance. Many villagers were arrested, some injured. Gandhi called the Kheda incident his Himalayan Miscalculation. He had sent tribal people out to nonviolent resistance without having prepared their inwardness for the inevitable rigors. In Gandhi's view, non-violence is an ascetic discipline. One magnifies one's own failings, as in a convex lens, and shrinks those of one's opponents, as in a concave lens, in order to fairly assess the relative merits of conflict. Gandhi's revolutionary optics benefit only those who possess an interior place of serenity from which to peer. To venture out before marshalling resources within is to re-enact Gandhi's Himalayan Miscalculation.

Peacemakers inevitably encounter thunderheads; they need maps to avoid gullywashers and blizzards. That guidance unfolds from quiet discovered within.

Peacemakers #4:

PDR

Rustling subsided after Commissioner Bedle slipped into his Department D chair. With no opposition, I expected my probate matter to be heard early; disputed cases were footed. Queued just ahead of me was a guardianship case. One issue in that matter was an attorney's fee request. The guardianship had spent more than \$71,000 in fees litigating with counsel for the ward, and now sought \$3,000 more. One previously litigated issue sought judicial determination whether the guardian acted appropriately in denying the ten-year-old ward use of his cell phone daily after 9:00 p.m. Of this case, I know little. Some issues must have been portentous. Still, I wondered about the civil litigation system. Was a child's cell phone abuse a matter so laden that it required the attention of a superior court commissioner? I was most grateful not to have Commissioner Bedle's job.

Mohandas Gandhi, before he became India's peaceful revolutionary, worked as a South African barrister. Gandhi reports events, early in his career, that changed his assessment of the law. Dada Abdullah's business contract dispute involved substantial sums, tortured accountings, and allegedly-coerced promissory notes. The opponents, who were relatives and neighbors, engaged excellent barristers, who, at each client's urging, argued each precedent. They battled, at

absurd expense, to stalemate. In 1893, Gandhi entered the case midstream, fresh from English law training, a very junior associate. Gandhi observed that animus hardened, and rising litigation costs threatened to obliterate recovery by either side. Gandhi felt disgust with the legal system. Even litigation's winners lose; the disputation culture gobbles any award. Gandhi got the case promptly arbitrated, and fought for terms of settlement payment workable for both parties. The case settled. Gandhi concluded that a lawyer's true work lies in appealing to the obscured goodness in disputants. An attorney inches into the troubled hearts of people in conflict. Lawyers mend sundered relationships, nurturing durable peace (Gandhi, *Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, 131ff).

As an attorney, during much of my career I have been too impatient and too lazy in negotiation, and much too quick to litigate. People need time and conversation to work out disputes. They must re-tell their conflict story to encompass their opponent's perspective. Counsel must be longsuffering and imaginative. Creativity in roiled relationships entails demanding, almost spiritual, practices. I see in many colleagues a presumption that a summons and complaint is where negotiation begins, rather than where failed negotiations end. A lawyer's work **begins** with working things out among conflicted parties. Conflict resolution should descend a ladder of increasingly structured interventions, from chat over coffee, to discussion with trusted friends, to facilitative face-to-face mediation, to collaboration with mental health and financial input, to shuttle mediation (with parties segregated), and finally to arbitration. These approaches are presently mis-named alternative dispute resolution ("ADR"). Only when all these steps have failed should litigation commence. Snohomish County local court rules teeter in this direction. Early mediation is now required (though seldom undertaken early and administered with laxity). Our mandatory arbitration rules are well-established (but amount to mini-trials with a vividly adversarial ethos). Alternative dispute resolution should be re-conceived as primary dispute resolution ("PDR"). Australian courts have adopted this rule in family law matters (with well-considered exceptions). ADR is PDR. One cannot commence family litigation without a certificate that non-litigated dispute resolution has been engaged but failed. Thus, out-of-court conflict solutions become a mandatory first resort before courts consent to consider claims (*Australian Family Law Act of 1975*).

Peacemakers climb down the ladder of PDR interventions with reluctance. If our job is to knit unraveling relationships, then litigation, with its lingering medieval heritage of trial by ordeal and adversarial jousting, cannot be our forum of first resort. We speak to human hearts. Few can speak freely or think creatively when litigation's sword is drawn. Peacemakers serve clients by hoping for and giving form to restored peace. PDR gives peacemaking a procedural structure. American courts should climb the trail Australia has blazed.

Peacemakers #5:

BOOKENDS

My waitress had taken my dirty breakfast plate and refilled my decaf. I paged through the New York Times, slurping. Murmurs arose. Jen, the morning-shift waitress, whispered to regulars what the kitchen Sony blurted. Hijacked planes had slammed into New York's World Trade Center towers. Online, I saw the south tower fall, then the north tower. Thousands died. The nation grieved. Al-Qaeda's Arab street-cred skyrocketed.

The bookend moment arrived this May. United States stealth helicopters flew low and fast into Pakistani airspace. Navy Seals landed in an Abbottabad residential compound, where they conducted a brief firefight. The soldiers killed, among others, Osama bin Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden, founder of al-Qaeda's terror network. Some Americans rejoiced, even cavorted in streets. I could not join them; inside, I shuddered that we (with our taxes and votes and

acquiescence) had murdered another human being. Yet neither could I deplore President Obama's decision to assassinate the Saudi-born terrorist.

The concept of "evil" is a problem among peacemakers. Sentiments about evil also have bookends. At one end, some peacemakers deny that evil exists. Here is how their argument goes. Accusations of evil, according to evil-skeptics, emerge when intemperate people fail to invest the energy necessary to understand and show compassion to opponents. All humans have constructive impulses, as well as demented ones. One must appeal to the good in others, without triggering ugly motivations in them or us. What appears as evil is nothing more than mis-comprehended good. The evil-doer is confused enough that he has failed to recognize the injurious outcomes of his good intentions. "Evil" disappears, so the evil-skeptics argue, where peacemakers interject sufficient education, listening, compassion, and patience. The evil-skeptic often finds in the concept of "evil" a theological distortion of reality. Carefully-crafted, compassionate conversation unmasks evil. Behind that veil wilts a confused human in sore need. When that person feels understood and valued, he will see the harm he creates and desist.

Mohandas Gandhi stood with the evil-skeptics. In Gandhi's view, no matter how monstrous a man's evil acts, beneath that horrid crust lay a soft heart ready to be touched by innocent suffering. Gandhi survived World War II. He advised Germany's Jews to resist non-violently, ending Hitler's national manhunt. Jews could offer themselves publicly and peacefully for imprisonment or slaughter. That spectacle would lionize human dignity. Gandhi believed that annihilation of innocents saps armies. If India were invaded, Gandhi said he would erect a human wall of willing unarmed victims, perhaps millions, as cannon fodder. (*Satyagraha*, §§ 165, 169, 178).

As a peacemaker, I travel only so far with Gandhi and evil-skeptics. One must begin in all circumstances assuming that those who injure do so uncomprehending. One educates. One listens. One shows perseverance in compassion. One corrects oneself, where necessary. These steps remedy most conflicts, and chasten most erring actors. But some prove recalcitrant. These persons intentionally erode meaningful community in familial, societal, or international relations. They persist despite compassionate listening and generous education and longsuffering patience. Adamantine pathologies drive such people. A cacophonous host of defects and mishaps (for example, substance abuse or psychoses or habitual violence) hurtle them beyond the pale of normal human relations. Responsive measures must meet the challenge of pathological evil. Coercion may, in the ugliest circumstances, prove necessary. Gandhi's pacifist vision fails in these dark fastnesses. Ideological non-violence would require one to spectate preventable horrors, rendering peacemakers a hapless audience to abuse or genocide. Aspiration to unattainable personal sanctity would hobble us. That I cannot condone. Gandhi would call mine a deficient spirituality. At some level, I agree. But still . . .

Many peacemakers are conflicted. The non-coercive bookend of peacemaking beckons, but seems to require that, in extremity, a coercive response remains possible. We long for utopian remedies in which the coercive bookend atrophies from long disuse. Sadly, at least for now, without both bookends, the upright books of life tumble.

Peacemakers #6:

BRAINWORKS

Kim and I recently finished *The Tudors*, an HBO series depicting the homicidal self-indulgence of King Henry VIII of England. Nightly, the Lancasters slip into a semi-comatose state in ritual preparation for sleep, melting into massive mauve La-Z-Boys like lumps of sun-struck butter. Sofie's dream-barks muffle beneath a lap throw. *Dexter*, *Six Feet Under*, *Sopranos*, Jack Bauer, *West Wing*, *Band of Brothers*, Tara's multiple personality gyrations,

Breaking Bad, and a long trail of Netflixed others murmur from our 1980s small-screen CRT Panasonic. Henry Rex's tale mimicked all the others. A hero (or anti-hero) confronts a villain (or anti-villain), stumbling over ethical hurdles while saving (adventures) or failing to save (tragedies) mankind (or its surrogate—a country, town, family, or friend). Right prevails (as justice demands) or doesn't (as infamy mandates). The storylines are fustily trite, yet quietly fulfilling. The stories touch me deeply, even when inane. Perhaps this betrays the shallowness of my pond. Or perhaps these tales recapitulate myths, abyssal narratives that loop ceaselessly just below the thin skin of consciousness.

Much conflict, and therefore much peacemaking, concerns the stories people tell themselves. Most people prefer to play the hero in their dramas. Conflict resolution often consists in getting everybody to set their white hats aside and consider a different tale, especially a less virulent narrative about their perceived opponent. People find this task difficult. So do their peacemakers. Surely, we are ignorant about much concerning people with whom we have conflict. We could inquire. Certainly, we are prejudiced about some facet of the habits, body, illness, sex, creeds, deviancies, race, dialects, friends, inflections, or clothing of an enemy. We could confess. Most, we fear creating anything better with "nasty" people, because we do not know with certainty the outcome of stories that have never before been told. We could get a grip. The same old story is not that safe or interesting. What, then, makes the Hero-Villain story so compelling?

Jaak Panksepp, professor at Washington State University and author of *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions*, studies the neuroanatomical structures from which emerges mammalian emotion. Dr. Panksepp argues that "affects," which include both emotions and the rudimentary drives we share with all mammals, undergird all consciousness. Unawares, we feel or desire. After the fact (if at all), we rationalize our urges. The brain structures that move us or make us feel what we feel are more primitive than the newer, bigger parts of the human brain. Consciousness blossoms (if it blooms at all) atop a stew of unconscious drives and affects. Our affects are not rational. Nor do they necessarily nestle well with one another. Affects are what they are: sleep cycles, urges toward chemical homeostasis, fear, seeking, anger, lust, social bonding, play. All cavort upon our basal sense of existence in the world, which Panksepp identifies as a function of a deep brain fraction called the mesencephalic periaqueductal gray (MPAG). Such consciousness is the way of mammals. It is our way. If the human brain were a tree (a coppice, to be exact), its roots would plunge deep in the soil of the MPAG. Its several trunks erupt lightward through a dark subconscious forest, lofting the affects that our hypothalamic structures generate. Its leafy canopy undulates with higher neocortical processing. At the canopy apex, consciousness skips fitfully across a field of arboreal green, scarcely aware that the giant organism laboring below determines its topography. To return to the Hero-Villain epic, we choose this dualistic story because, when affects rage, no other tale comes to mind.

For the peacemaker, the coppice of consciousness, this metaphor for neuroanatomical subtleties, prescribes a path. People's brains tell that story their affects demand. Fearful, agitated persons shoehorn players into one of the Hero-Villain myth's hackneyed roles. Peacemakers evade this casting by distraction. We calm participants. We talk of banalities. We avoid coercion. We offer respect. We preserve dignity. We balance power. On good days, we settle storm-whipped affects. Then, occasionally, a wiser narrative sounds marginally plausible to combatants, a different story peopled by fewer ogres and princesses. Peace, occasionally, happens.

This is a true story. It seems unlikely, though, that I shall cease loving 24.

Peacemakers #7:
COB CORN

How does human conflict emerge? Some proffer economic analysis: conflict emerges when many seek scarce resources. Others prefer a social systems perspective: conflict emerges when some oppose change that others advocate. A theological tale tempts many: conflict emerges when evil persons oppress God's chosen. I suggest a fourth alternative, which I call the cob corn theory of conflict genesis.

I volunteered with some thirty-five others, most of them strangers, at Food Lifeline a few years ago. Food Lifeline collects bulk foods from agricultural producers and repackages the foodstuffs for distribution at local food banks. On this particular August day, the agricultural donor was Kroger. The donation was cob corn, those little three inch frozen cobs one finds in the frozen food section at any big grocery. These cobs, however, arrived in palletized bulk cartons, thousands of cobs per container. The task for our daunted thirty-five was to don blue hair nets and disposable gloves, then divide the contents of these huge containers into family-sized bags of twenty or so mini-cobs each. Food Lifeline staff, vastly experienced with volunteers, merely showed us the pallet jack, freezer bags, labels, pallets, corn, and abandoned us to our own lights.

Tentatively, we probed the task. Muscled workers slowly organized boxes and pallets. Kids distributed bags. Small groups plopped twenty cobs into ziplocks, then filled boxes with them. Boxes stacked on pallets. Pallet-loaders applied labels. The burly among us moved our product away on rolling pallet jacks. Within twenty minutes, without an authoritative word or leader, the group coalesced into a corn cob bagging machine. All labored for three hours without conflict, amidst much laughter, despite sundry mishaps. When our shift ended, thousands of pounds of cob corn were reconfigured, and back in the freezer awaiting Monday delivery to area food banks.

The Food Lifeline cob corn project tapped a pre-programmed script buried deep in human brains. In small groups, we work to common ends hand in hand with friends or strangers, suppressing conflict by accommodating others generously in good humor. This is a normal human state. We evolved these collaborative tendencies in Pleistocene Africa on fluctuating savannahs that were home to our distant ancestors. Humans lack fangs and claws. What saved nascent humanity was task cooperation and social smoothing.

If one erodes the premises of the cob corn phenomenon, another pre-programmed response emerges. If one excises from the cob corn regime its face-to-face component, its common goal, its physical activity, or its accommodating sense of humor, then at each hiccup, humans bare teeth and raise fists. Even when prepared to fight unnamed opponents with inimical purposes, persons whom we have never met, groups with whom we have never cooperated, humans prefer to rattle sabers, withdraw, and emigrate from the problem. This human tendency to avoid violent conflict when possible has been a huge challenge for military organizations. In World War II, eighty to eight-five percent of American soldiers could not pull the trigger when face-to-face with enemy soldiers (Report of S.L.A. Marshall, Brigadier General. Subsequent Army training changes resulted in a ninety percent firing rate in Vietnam). Humans, despite our ignominious history of slaughter, brutality, and genocide, turn homicidal only under limited and quite specific conditions. Violence demands that victims be depersonalized. One must kill enemies without taking personal responsibility, say, upon command by a superior, or in "saving" one's comrades. The opponent must be stigmatized, rendering him a detestable cipher. A mere whiff of shared humanity can trigger the cob corn phenomenon and derail homicidal intent.

Our litigation system, unfortunately, fails to promote the cob corn phenomenon. Litigation opponents, though named, seldom meet. Antagonists are discouraged from speaking directly. Their disputes are framed not as common problems to be solved, but as polar opposites, only one of which has merit. Litigation rhetoric often dehumanizes opposing parties. In

courtrooms, attorney proxies wage battle. Judges adopt attire, position, and tenor designed to mimic the divine seat of judgment. Legalese, incomprehensible to clients, makes them itinerants in a foreign precinct. Courtrooms quash cob corn impulses.

Conflict emerges when the collaborative cob corn predicates suffer. In making peace, we pack cob corn.

Peacemakers #8:
TAILGATING

Just after dark, to keep him safe, I drove my friend Tom and his bike home from Shoreline. Our club, Rain City Rotary, had been bagging roadside trash on 15th NE. Tom and I traveled McAleer Creek Road, a narrow winding streamside goat track through Lake Forest Park. The speed limit was twenty-five miles per hour, a limit about which the City of Lake Forest Park seems quite serious. With darkness and blind curves, even that minimal speed may have been optimistic. Headlights barreled up behind me, dipping as the motorist braked sharply. He hovered feet behind my bumper, edging closer to goad me to pick up my pace. I stuck to my pottering guns. My much-delayed nemesis also persisted. Five minutes later, we rounded a corner to a one hundred yard straightaway, still double-yellowed with limited visibility and invisible driveways. Mad Max gunned it, swirled past me, lurching back into the right lane with scant clearance at my front fender. He arrived at the first Lake Forest Park stop sign seconds before my rusty little Nissan pickup. My unkind thoughts mirrored those of that hurried local, or so I surmised.

America cherishes productivity. In its name, we hurry. We work too much and rest too little. We act, then think. Our exhausted bodies lag behind our aspirations. We kick-start metabolisms with morning caffeine jolts and afternoon No-Doz. We get our bodies so ramped up that they demand sleeping pills to nod off. America's rush may reflect economic demands and aesthetic preferences. Every low-hanging limb must be lopped, every dollar plucked, every tooth askew straightened. Or perhaps the rush reflects our national character; we descend from dawn-to-dusk farmers and compulsive non-conformists rankled by doddering European tyrants. Haste can appear, to American eyes, reasonable, even patriotic.

Fragments of America's haste are deeply, trans-culturally human. In 1853 Britain, Matthew Arnold similarly complained of "this strange disease of modern life, with its sick hurry, its divided aims, its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts" (*The Scholar—Gipsy*). We humans have programs and don't want them jostled. Most of us are especially intolerant of delays caused by the idiosyncrasies of others. We rail (for the most part silently to ourselves, as propriety demands) at impeding human oddness. When our agenda is derailed, we rant about others' religious practices, sexual orientations, race, hair cuts or colors, cultures, national origin, diseases, disfigurements, mental illness, odd hats, stupid tee shirt slogans, bumper stickers, or football enthusiasms. The misshapen agendas of others discompose equanimity. We want such obstacles obliterated—now. Flickers of delay, doused with combustible impatience, inflame smoldering conflicts. Embers become conflagrations. Some fraction of intolerance is impatience singeing social etiquette.

Peacemakers extol patience, but struggle to quell their own bustle. Suffering clients often tell their heartfelt story over and over. One glazes. Aggressors frequently rant about opponents' inanities. Tick tock. Peacemakers themselves want client disputes to conclude neatly, say, by 4:00 p.m., so that dinner can be timely consumed. Conflict resolution demands fortitude before tumults of banality. Peacemakers take a deep breath, and ask if there is more, silently hoping there is none. Peacemakers wish their hearts spoke otherwise. With patience, client torrents of verbiage eventually abate. Occasionally, listening commences.

Law schools teach civil procedure and analysis, but not longsuffering. Peacemaking demands more forbearance than many lawyers muster in their legal labors. We lawyers can unlearn our hurry and insistence. Patience and peacemaking skills often solve problems that defy legal resolution. A good day for peacemakers contains a long-litigated morass settled by supra-legal, intimately human, approaches. Peace demands that the peacemaker fold her hands, take a deep breath, and bide her time. There comes the right moment to bridge chasms. One waits. One watches. Good will cannot be coerced.

Back at McAleer Creek Road, I might have seized a wide spot, pulled over, and let Mad Max careen past to confront his celerity demons. The quivering little peacemaker in me tells me I should have relinquished the lane. Unaccountably, I ignored that voice. Lessons in patience yet to learn....

Peacemakers #9:
MARTIAL LISTENING

Lawyers, long-inured to litigation, criticize peacemaking. They say that the weapons of peacemakers are, well, puny. What is empathy when compared to contempt proceedings? What is deflecting a dispute toward joint problem-solving when measured by the criminal indictment? How does confidence in the possibility of peace stack up to a summons and complaint? What might curiosity unearth that a hundred pages of interrogatories fails to expose? War lawyers munch coercion for breakfast. They salt their raw meats with assertion and pepper with threats. Worst for the litigator, peacemakers whine. Litigators spit them out. They are a stench in the nostrils. Peacemakers harp, like ill-parented children: the wasteful expense of litigation, the emotional carnage, the futility. The inured litigator knows martial values: discipline, equanimity, and the mettle of humans under stress. Mamby-pamby well-wishing serves none. Take up the sword, so litigators counsel. Litigators nod at Athens's negotiation with Melos.

During the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.), Thucydides reports that Athens opened a dialogue with the people of the small Aegean island of Melos. Melos had been settled by Athens's mainland opponent, Sparta. The Melians retained loose ties to their mother city. Melos chose neutrality in the Greek civil war, as is wise for tiny persons ill-situated between sparring giants. Thirty ships from Athens dropped anchor at Melos, brimming with troops. The Athenian delegation flatly demanded immediate surrender. The Melians argued that Athens abandons justice, which should concern all peoples. Melos neither sides with Sparta nor presents any threat to Athens. The Athenians countered that the strong do as they wish and the weak as they must. Melos replied that history is long; today's victors become tomorrow's vanquished. Athens will one day wish people valued justice. Athens thanked Melos for its concern, but enjoined Melos to look to its own well-being. Athens noted that its empire comprises many small principalities; failure to compel one today invites all to rebellion tomorrow. Melos suggested that Sparta might defend Melos. The Athenians laughed; Sparta is corrupt. Whatever Spartans enjoy, they deem just. Athens restated its offer to Melos: surrender, pay tribute, and live. Melos, after due deliberation, declined, reiterating its neutrality. Athens besieged Melos, killed all fighting men, and enslaved the women and children. Athenian immigrants repopulated Melos. Athens ultimately lost the Peloponnesian War. Sparta installed a puppet government over proud Athens, which paranoid sycophants eventually executed Socrates (399 B.C.) for his seditious corruption of youths.

I listen to litigators. I see litigators wince at peacemaker happy-talk. The litigators are right; peacemakers should spit out their Kool-Aid. Peacemakers need to let the unbridled ugliness that some disputants sow seep into consciousness. All parties are not misunderstood, unheard puppies. Some are wolves, best muzzled. Remember the Melians. I hear litigators tout the martial values of courtroom conflict. Courtrooms burst the thin-walled ego of puffers.

Litigation inculcates sterner stuff: hardiness, vigor, discipline, honor, calm in the face of extremity, occasional dignity, dramatic action in response to dire predicaments. I agree with my litigator friends. Most peacemakers are wedded to a culture of indulgence that has spawned hippie anarchists and funny religions and mumbo-jumbo optimism. Peacemakers must set aside the heady hope for peace long enough to smell the latrines.

To my litigator friends, I say: Peacemakers have swords. Peacemaker swords are “weapons of mass construction.” Ears are one such weapon. Ears can be militant. A peacemaker listening is a soldier on patrol, armed, action-ready. The martial listener confutes the definition of battle that fixates the parties. The listener asks and seizes answers, exploring responses with incisive curiosity. The listener presses stories without accusing. The listener paraphrases to confirm comprehension, mirrors to build rapport, and takes a guess when parties seem stuck. The martial listener moves beyond receiving communication accurately. Peacemaking listeners drive talk toward solutions. Listeners agree where they agree, emphasize missed commonalities, and disagree without disrespect. Peacemakers know disputants quietly long for restored community. Like soldiers at arms, peacemakers seize that prized turf for clients.

Perhaps in peacemaking lie values even a litigator might adopt, were she listening with martial intensity.

Peacemakers #10:
DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Lawyers conduct difficult conversations for a living. It might help legal practitioners if client secrets and duties of confidentiality did not preclude us from recounting with great specificity our clients’ struggles and conflicts. I suspect that, decades ago, three scotches into an end-of-day yammer at the local watering hole provided context for telling such stories with low risk of client injury. Those lingering alcohol-drenched huddles now seldom occur, at least in my world. The need to tell these stories drives some lawyers to writing novels. Fictionalizing attorneys portray client dilemmas, but invent a world to do so ethically. I fictionalize now. But, of course, this story “happened.”

Helen’s mind was failing. She could feel herself losing bits: a grandniece’s name, her summer slippers, where one buys that excellent granola. Helen needed a bit of help, and knew it. She seized the bull by the horns. Helen invited her thirty year old, recently-divorced granddaughter, Clarice, to live in Helen’s too-big house. In exchange, Helen hoped for companionship, shared meal duty, and the occasional memory jolt. Their arrangement worked wonderfully. Clarice saved a bit of money and was getting back on her feet financially. Helen’s dementia progressed, but she was happier with a roommate. Rumbling began. Grandson Robert griped that grandmother Helen favored Clarice. Helen’s son, Raymond, and daughter, Zellie, had never been intimately involved in Helen’s decline; Boeing demanded too much of them. Both worried that Clarice might be horning in on their maternal inheritance. And not without cause did they stew. Helen pondered why she would leave her estate to two distant children when beloved Clarice provided care daily. As Helen declined, contention bubbled, then boiled. Clarice cut back her hours at work to be more available for Helen. Ray and Zellie howled. Helen grew disgusted. Helen called my office, wanting to revise her Will. After telling her story, Helen asked my advice. I told her that reducing her children’s share of her estate in favor of Clarice invited a will contest after Helen passed. We spoke frankly about Helen’s eventual death and the internecine bloodbaths that so frequently follow

the passing of a well-heeled matriarch. I asked Helen if she might want to attempt to address the underlying problem directly, rather than just speak from the grave through her Will. Helen was skeptical. Two days later, she called. She wanted to try.

Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen (“SPH”) wrote *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, a fruit of their labors in the Harvard Negotiation Project. Difficult conversations are those that make you gulp in contemplation. SPH argue that every such discussion is really three: talk about facts, talk about emotions, and talk about meaning. The fatal temptation lies in defending positions. When parties advocate positions, difficult conversations arrive stillborn. SPH advocate a different approach. One must adopt a learning, not asserting, posture. What do others think? Why do they think those things? Stand in that person’s shoes. Inquire. Paraphrase; it will keep them talking. Reframe ugly verbiage as “strong feeling” talk. Summarize to make sure you got their view right. Acknowledge others’ feelings and contributions. What would you be feeling? Step up alongside. Experience their experience. Quash feelings of offense. Share how others’ actions impacted you. But don’t accuse. Assume others well-intentioned, but ignorant of your needs. Identify how each player contributed to the problem. Own your piece of the problem and say so. Describe your own feelings. Don’t demand people not feel what they feel. Though feelings change, no one can change their feelings at will. Acknowledge feelings. Apologize, if necessary. SPH advocate exploring how the difficulty is affecting your identity. Avoid denial and hyperbole. Know there is more to you than the criticisms of others. Find a revised, but balanced, view of yourself that includes new information emerging from the difficult conversation. That can be painful. It is not, however, fatal. When you understand all the players, suggest solutions. Hear proposals. Compromise, if appropriate. Adopt a plan of action, if possible. If no common approach is workable, frankly acknowledge that fact. Agree to keep thinking about the problem. Thank people for talking openly.

Helen’s family gathered at my big gray conference table. Tea and cookies waited. The family shared, sometimes well, sometimes irritably. An hour, then two passed. Tears splashed. Grudging admissions met thanks. Helen did not revise her Will. Ray and Zellie would inherit. All agreed Clarice should be paid the market value of her services to Helen. And Helen made a standing lunch date with Robert every Wednesday at Scott’s Bar and Grill. A good day of mediation. A difficult conversation.

Peacemakers #11:

PREDICTION

What effect has the belief system of the peacemaker upon outcomes in human conflict? Is the peacemaker a mere facilitating functionary in the process of conflict resolution, or is she a player in the outcome? Every lawyer answers the following questions, aware or unaware of doing so: What sort of animals are humans? Is man congenitally prone to coercion? Is mankind a bent twig, fatally abrading its issuing branch in every inclement gust? Or is humankind bootstrapping itself from gory African predation toward global hyper-cooperation? Is violence essentially human, like language and complex ideation and upright ambulation? Or is the human legacy of bloodshed a jarring rapids to be painfully negotiated in our long seaward tumble toward a mutually respectful future?

Do an experiment with me. Predict the outcome of this story.

Joe and Sasha sit across their kitchen table. Cold coffee puddles in their mugs. Sasha has just told Joe she wants a divorce. Joe is flabbergasted. Joe blurts choice imprecations he first learned from foul-mouthed junior high buddies. He shoves his chair back, preparing to storm out. Sasha suppresses a sneer. Joe's outburst will not sit well with her yoga girlfriends—or Joe's mother, for that matter. Neither makes eye contact. Breathing sounds shallow, rapid. Peter, their nine year old, walks into the kitchen for water. Both parents shudder and simulate normalcy. Joe fingers his newspaper. Sasha fusses with dirty breakfast dishes. Peter breezes out the kitchen door, oblivious.

As one believes, one predicts. Where one becomes a member, however temporary, of a social system, one's predictions teeter toward facticity. Considered alone, raw facts bear alternative constructions. In interpretation, one bridges uncertainties about Joe's and Sasha's circumstance (as in any detail-starved situation) with one's own expectations. Will Sasha and Joe bludgeon one another in litigation? Will Joe kill Sasha, or Sasha Joe, in a domestic violence nightmare? Will they mediate a new normalcy as mature adults navigating fundamental change? Will they, for good or ill, reconcile? If you become Sasha's or Joe's attorney, your expectations about their likely outcome will prejudice their outcome in favor of a resolution that conforms to your beliefs. Your belief system will not be the *only* pressure in their negotiation, but it will be *one* pressure. Of special concern is the possibility that your expectations might become the *determinative* pressure in their negotiation. So, your beliefs matter to Joe's and Sasha's negotiation.

Thomas Hobbes (English, 18th century) styled human life nasty, poor, brutal, and short. The cause of human misery is mankind. Left to his own devices, a man wars with every other. Ultimately, for self-preservation, survivors appoint a Leviathan to aggregate their lethal powers, relinquishing to a monarch their several privileges of homicide. Might the ego-maniacal excesses of the British Empire be one result of Hobbes's popularity? Friedrich Nietzsche (German, 19th century) painted mankind as sheep waiting for slaughter at will by supermen exempted from social norms, as eagles soar far above the slavish morality of bleating lambs. Hitler embraced Nietzsche. Might one fount of the Nazi horrors be the belief systems of the many whom Nietzsche convinced? Grim views of human potential abound. Augustine's original sin, Calvin's total depravity, Darwin's survival of the fittest, and Ardrey's violent African ape shape the expectations of many.

Not all close the human book at its damp crimson pages. Mohandas Gandhi (Indian, 20th century) argued that every man harbors a good heart. Evil is an appearance, not reality. When confused or threatened, some persons behave badly. Those who err must be opposed, but gently, nonviolently, without disparagement. One ends war only by making the enemy a friend. Influenced by Gandhi, India drove Britain from its hegemony over the subcontinent, mostly nonviolently. Martin Luther King Jr. (American, 20th century) confronted racial prejudices bluntly, but nonviolently. He and civil rights activists suffered, some fatally. But, influenced by King, millions self-criticized, finding within themselves that of which King complained. Many moderated their prejudices, and the United States made room at its social table for the descendants of slaves. Peter Block (American, 21st century) builds restorative communities. He urges members to stop recriminating about systemic injustice, and remediate the present ethos of one's own particular small group. Healthy small groups make this meeting right now the sort of place they dream of inhabiting years from now. Such communities, Block argues, are the natural home of healthy humans. Dacher Keltner (American, 21st century) argues, based on recent neuroscience, that humans are built for relating, for compassion, for doing good. Human-effected

horrors evidence natural human systems gone terribly awry. My point here is this: One can, without being glib, find in humanity a core of goodness that warrants predicting good outcomes. The bloody facts about mankind are equivocal.

My own prediction about Sasha's and Joe's circumstance has changed in the last decade. Once, I sighed as I led a Joe or a Sasha to temporary orders hearings and trial, knowing their family would never again be peaceful. There was nothing better to be done, so I believed. My view has changed. Given adequate supports, Joe and Sasha may respect one another during conflict, treat one another with dignity, and work out, as mature adults, an altered normalcy. Joe and Sasha can effect meaningful, well-conceived adult change without bitterness or recrimination or breaking their bank. Fantastically, my expectation positively affects the outcomes of my Joes and Sashas.

Lawyers exert tremendous influence on the pained circumstances of their clients. The peacemaking attorney brings to conflict a well-warranted prediction of good outcomes. A lawyer's prediction may well become her clients' reality.

Right now, I predict a good outcome if the cynics and grouches among us ruminate on this insight.

Peacemakers #12:

IRENEA

Peacemakers need a word. What is the antonym of violence? Of coercion? Mark Kurlansky, author of *Nonviolence: The History of a Dangerous Idea*, complains that no proactive word for nonviolence exists. The only word available is the negation of the word "violence" or the negation of the word "coercion."

Gandhi coined the term "*satyagraha*," for nonviolent noncooperation, which terminology has, frankly, never caught on with peacemakers. For Gandhi, satyagraha was clinging to Truth, which is spirit-force (that is, god). Practicing satyagraha builds the deepest tiers of character, and entails more than passive resistance. Satyagrahi (those who practice satyagraha) engage civil disobedience of immoral laws, and refuse to cooperate with corrupt governments. Satyagrahi decline violence or lesser coercions, and refuse to intimidate or humiliate opponents. Satyagrahi march, write letters, refuse honors, and make themselves publicly annoying to the powers protested. Satyagrahi spin thread and weave cloth (to break the British stranglehold on Indian textiles). Satyagrahi teach basic hygiene and spiritual discipline to the Indian people. Gandhi led salt marches, to show the Indian people their innate independence from overseas salt provided by British importers. Gandhi even protested by fasting, declining to eat until social grievances had been addressed, or when his own followers strayed into violence. The intense Brahmanic religiosity of Gandhi's description of satyagraha, when combined with the unfamiliar word and difficult pronunciation, inhibits widespread adoption of Gandhi's coinage.

I propose the term "irenea" (aye-re-**nee**-a) as an alternative coinage for the goal of peacemaking. The word "εἰρήνη" (eirene) is an Attic Greek term meaning peace. The Greek term enters English as "Irene," a woman's name, and "irenic," an adjective meaning peaceful, or "irenicize," a verb meaning to take steps to make peace. Irenea denotes wealth in social capital based on international cooperation. Individually, irenea denotes personal and interpersonal health and resilience. Irenic communities practice social equity and political equality, and aim at sustainable economies. People who do irenea promote peace. They foster cooperation and communication; they inculcate dignity and respect. Irenic communities deal with deviancy by carefully but fully re-integrating offenders into a human community. An irenic community addresses its commonplace challenges competently. Irenea promotes cultural education and tolerance of the differences of others and their cultures.

Ireneia rejects coercive solutions. Coercion squanders social capital in organized murder (war) and punitive sanctions for deviants. Coercion creates an unstable and hostile international

environment. Coercive social settings sacrifice personal and interpersonal health to power and acquisitiveness, resulting in general human frailty. People who do coercion promote violence. Economic abundance is subverted to subsidize war and incarcerations. Social and political inequities burgeon under coercive regimes. When coercive cultures spin out of control, war ensues. Coercive communities respond ineffectively to commonplace challenges of living. Conflicts of the most pedestrian sort consume vast communal resources. Coercive communities perpetually teeter due to threats and predations of enemies.

One might mistake irenea for Utopia. An irenic community is not heaven; it is riven by common human foibles. But where people practice irenea, social competence to address commonplace problems grows. Members learn peacemaking; they make peace. Where coercion aggregates money, irenea builds social capital.

By this point, critics of hopefulness, ensconced in their cynical bastions, heave great sighs. Where, Lancaster, is your irenea? Did human horror skip past your addled cerebrum? Remember Somalia, the Balkans, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, North Korea, Darfur, and the legion insanities, less genocidal but no less cracked, that jostle for column inches in local newspapers? I have not blinked. Perhaps it is irreverent to hope in the face of so much senseless tragedy. Or perhaps it is pointless to allow knowledge of misery to rob one of well-warranted optimism.

Irenea is hidden before our eyes (like a red bird—see the first essay of this series). Humans stride like giants toward irenea. Though we are more aware than ever before of the homicidal-genocidal frenzies that leap from the human breast, the number of those lacerative excursions plummets. Matthew Ridley (*The Rational Optimist*) notes that eighty-seven percent of contemporary hunter-gatherer societies suffer war annually. The death rate for hunter-gatherers from homicide and war averages one-half of one percent annually. Were the twentieth century as bloody as Paleolithic hunters, two billion people would have died violently. Steven Pinker argues (*The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*) that the existence of governments and habituation of billions to civilizing behaviors has caused warfare and death by homicide to plummet over the ages. Primitive tribal skirmishes were nine times as deadly as the warfare of the twentieth century, and homicides in medieval Europe transpired at 3,000% of today's rate.

Humankind wends toward irenea. The proponents of violence and coercion are being slowly shouted down by the quiet voice of irenic pressures. This human transition is bumpy and long. Irenea's span is measured in the life of our species, not in mere millennia or centuries. As such, irenea's horizon lies further off than most can peer, even when squinting. Perhaps irenea will become more visible with the advent of global-linking technologies such as the internet and cell phone.

Were Everett, or even (god-forbid!) Seattle, to become irenic communities, there would still be a place for courts and lawyers. Our jobs would be different. Courts would work out placements for difficult deviants and resolve intractable conflicts. Lawyers would stand at the irenic front, making peace violently (as Jesus might have put it). It is not absurd to hope for and act to create a better life in a better world. Our cynicism may be wholly unwarranted. Hopeful expectation may prove not half so good as what actually comes to pass. Eeyore-ic doomsayers among us may be puzzled, yes, utterly flummoxed.

Deliberating irenea and adopting peacemaking as a template for professional practice has changed my lawyering. Take a minute or some hours. Irenea might do the same for you.

This is the last essay in this Peacemakers series. Some colleagues have responded. If these essays have provoked thoughts, I would be most intrigued to learn your responses. Email me. brad@lancasterlawoffice.com