

Opening to Happiness

"This has been my vocation, to make music of what remains." Itzhak Perlman

By Marci McReynolds

It was the perfect opportunity for a meltdown, had I wanted one. New to town, I had missed my exit three times, driving back and forth on that pot-holed strip of I-5 in Seattle between 520 and I-90, late at night, in the pouring rain, after a long day of work and evening workshop, my glasses back at home by my bed where I longed to be.

Exasperated, the Big Girl Tantrum part of my brain started to whine, to bemoan the state of the highway, the constant rain, my ever having moved away from the sure place I had known for the past 22 years, the state of my life and glasses, the state, the country, the state of the world, and beyond.



But thankfully, Pollyanna, the resilient part of my brain who can turn lemons into lemonade, piped in cheerfully with "but this problem and this new life

are good exercise for my brain and will keep me young!" I soon found an exit with Magellan-like skill, explored a new part of Seattle I had not seen before, and was home with a smile on my face in good time.

Michael Singer, in his book "The Untethered Soul," says there is one basic choice in life that we make every moment of our lives, no matter what is happening: to be happy or not to be happy. When one is happy, he says, one is open, to others and whatever is happening. When one is unhappy, one is closed or resistant/judgmental about something (not to be confused with discernment.)

Taken to heart, whenever we find ourselves unhappy or mad at someone or a situation we find ourselves in, we can ask ourselves some simple questions: "What am I closed or resistant to? What am I judging? What would I need to open to in order to become o.k. with this? Where am I am being asked to grow?"

Thich Nhat Hanh says "Anger is a lack of understanding." When we are angry we can ask ourselves what it might be that we don't understand about the other person, the situation, or even ourselves. Anger can become a potential catalyst for learning, for opening, for forgiving, perhaps even ourselves.

As mediators we can usually see where parties are closed to some aspect of the situation which is keeping them from coming to resolution (and happiness). There are questions and ways we can use the three R's to help our parties begin to see where they are closed and to find a way to open.

On January 20, from 4:00-6:00, I will be leading a workshop for you, our volunteers at BMP, in how to first apply these principles to your own lives, learning ways to become more open to what life hands you, in the process hopefully becoming happier. Then we will learn approaches to helping parties in a conflict open more to what is and to see new possibilities within the conflicts they are experiencing. I hope to see you there.

Marci McReynolds is our new co-manager for BNMP. She is a mediator, educator, actor, and improvisational vocalist (looking for musicians to play with...)

From your resilient staff...

By the staff of BNMP

“What changes I have been a part of!! The mediation program began as a pilot project in the code enforcement department and then became part of the Planning and Community Development Department. From starting out providing telephone conciliation and mediation for neighbors, the program has expanded to providing pre mediation conferences, telephone coaching, facilitations to large community groups on city initiatives, multi-party facilitations, foreclosure mediations, anti-harassment mediations, parent teen mediations, elder mediations. My personal resiliency tools are exercise and grandchildren! When a mediation or facilitation doesn't go well, I always ask myself, “What are the lessons learned?” - *Cheryl Cohen, co-manager*

“Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them—that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like.” - Lao-Tzu

“Many of my peers are retiring while I am starting a new job that I love in a new city, leaving my family and old friends down the road a piece. I see my old friends just as much as before when I go back and t my visits with my children have more depth because of the focus of time. Being out on my own for the first time in many years, I am discovering that I can trust myself to be positive, even and productive. I feel blessed to be here, at this time in Bellevue and in my life, and that many wonderful things are possible. “ *Marci McReynolds, co-manager*



“Every time you are tempted to react in the same old way, ask if you want to be a prisoner of the past or a pioneer of the future.”
- Deepak Chopra

“A few nights ago I was watching Mel Brooks encourage his audience to “hope for the best, but expect the worst.” I have always found that it helps to have my hopes and expectations more closely aligned. I have one of the best jobs I can imagine. I get paid to help people realize that the world works better when people hate each other less, and to find ways to encourage that compassion one fence line dispute at a time. Every new colleague or volunteer that I meet who is also drawn to this work helps to renew my hope for the future. Hope for the best, and the best will come, eventually..” - *Natalie Daniels, program assistant*

Parent—Teen Update

By Galit Arad-Trutner and Pam Orbach



The Parent Teen mediation program has been out visiting schools, talking to school counselors and setting up opportunities for parents and teens to have dialogue this year in a variety of settings. You might have seen us at the library, or at your school registration day. Keep an eye out for us... If it is tough getting your parent or your teen to hear what is important to you, do give us a call. We do a great job of making sure you can be deeply heard and understood, and our service is free. We can make a difference.

Our Teen mediators are inspiring us as they become seasoned mediators. We offer particular thanks to Edwin Carlos and Zach Robin who are leading workshops to support students who find it difficult to attend school. We also have one teen bringing Nonviolent Communication to a club at his school; wanting to share what he has learned in the program, and another student initiating conflict circles at her school. We couldn't be more proud of all our mediators. Good luck to our seniors as they apply to college, and we celebrate new growth as our junior mediators begin to step into leadership in our program.

BNMP Training Opportunities For Mediators and Conciliators

2016 Conflict Coaching with Robin Amadei

We are bringing Robin back! Robin Amadei is a well-known mediator, attorney and trainer. Her 3-day conflict coaching course has had great feedback. Space is limited. Register by calling us at 425-452-4091, by contacting Robin directly at 303-604-1960, or by email: ramadei@aol.com.

Attendance at all sessions is required.

Fee: \$550.00 for active volunteers and \$595 for all others, if you register by April 15.

Wed., May 11—Fri., May 13, 8:30a.m.—4:30p.m. at Bellevue City Hall

Neighborhood Program In-Service: *Opening to Resiliency w/ Marci McReynolds*

Wed., Jan. 20, 4:30-6 p.m. in room 1E-112

Refreshments served beginning at 4p.m..



Congratulations to our new Conciliation Trainees!

Tracey Hsia; Barbara Robison; Diane Li; Carl Wolfeich; Tatyana Mishina; Bill Courshon; May Cheng; Tina Ngo; Jody Schwartz; Irina Busenbark; Bina Bakhtiar; Gail Dupar; Barbara Taylor; Kelsie Malyon; Ann McKinstry Gerner; Gloria Kern

Program Staff:

Program Co-Manager:	Cheryl Cohen	452-5222
Program Co-Manager:	Marci McReynolds	452-5288
Program Assistant	Natalie Daniels	452-2897

City of Bellevue website: <http://www.bellevuewa.gov>
(Look for the Mediation Program under "Neighborhood Information")

Volunteer Profile:

Jay Shukla



Without change, we wither and die and the world is changing rapidly.

Jay Shukla describes himself as an adventurer, walking curiously into new situations and circumstances. At 18, he hitchhiked across Asia and Europe and has been moving ever since. Jay has lived and worked in the diverse cities of London, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Delhi and New York. He believes his last great migration was 2 years ago, when and his wife, Korean born Danialle, drove across the US and arrived in diverse, vibrant and Beautiful Bellevue.

Jay has adventured across many job functions and now works primarily as a certified business and executive coach. His mission is to create “Breakthrough Capability” in individuals, teams, organizations and communities. His specialty is building cross cultural competence.

Creating bridges in the community today is no less important than in the days of the ‘Wild West’ when the ranchers fought to keep the ranges open and the sodbusters arrived bringing winds of change.

Jay has a deep respect for the visionary staff and leadership of the City of Bellevue and is committed to seeing this city prosper and thrive.

**BELLEVUE
NEIGHBORHOOD MEDIATION PROGRAM**

City of Bellevue Department of Planning and Community Development
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