



RENEWNEWS

*RENEW helps people who juggle work, family and
Community commitments sustain (or regain) their
enthusiasm, effectiveness and purpose*



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Hammer and Tongs? Consider Civility! **Linda Hawes Clever, MD, MACP**

Maybe I think of hammer and tongs because I recently had a molar extracted with hammer and tongs (I'm not kidding). Maybe it's because renovating even a beautiful building involves jarring jack hammering that can put tempers on edge. Maybe it's because so many are disagreeing and being disagreeable these days. Maybe because so much is at stake in relationships, communities, our nation – and tensions grow. And maybe because I have seen so much peace and progress grow from RENEW Conversation Groups that this seems like a good time to write about civility.

Fisher and Ury's classic *Getting to Yes* outlines practical ways to achieve agreement by negotiating. We have found that Getting to Yes can also happen by conversing. The word conversation starts, in Latin, with "con" which means "with" or "together" as in "consensus." *Versus* means "turn." The word conversation implies being open to or willing to "turn with" someone else. It is not a rant or rave. It is best done in person, in a safe and comfy place (from "comforte", Anglo-French 14th Century, "pleasant, agreeable"), assuring confidentiality.

One beauty of a conversation is that "it doesn't just re-shuffle the cards; it creates new cards."¹ The goal of a conversation is not victory. The goal is to reach new understandings, a workable solution or a new approach. Your spine (and values) stay strong yet your shoulders relax and your fists unclench.

To master the arts of conversation

- **You listen to understand, not reply**
- You need to be curious and show it. Softening a question with curiosity avoids confrontation: "I wonder..." or "This may sound strange yet..." or "Perhaps..."
- You tell the truth
- You mention what you have learned and restate what you understand. This shows respect.
- You find areas of agreement as quickly as possible
- You cite your sources of information and ask others for their sources. Actually, you insist on data sources.
- You are willing to take a risk and to use your sense of humor
- Silence can be OK. It allows people to reflect upon thoughts and feelings. You can get organized and adjust. Silence may prevent unpleasant or unkind words. It can help you maintain dignity.
- You are "quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." (James 1:19)
- You know that pausing to breathe gives you the opportunity to think, "Will what I am about to say or do, help or harm?" When you exhale longer than inhale, your peace and calm centers activate.

Using these powers, people in RENEW Conversation Groups with disparate backgrounds, attitudes and responsibilities have developed perspectives and suggestions that make a positive difference.

Hammer and tongs may work in dentistry and construction, yet civility offers ways to heal. Conversations bring us together so we can turn toward new answers and solutions — and move ahead.

1. Zeldin T. Conversation; London: Harvell 1998, quoted by Richard Smith and Tony Delmothe. British Medical Journal 2002; 324:1171.

RENEW News Summer 2024

Sonoma-Mendocino-Lake Medical Association and San Francisco Marin Medical Society 2024 Physician Wellness Leadership Awards

Elisha here, RENEW's program manager, along with Board members: Eliza Lo Chin, Brittany Imwalle, Sally Jenkins, Dennis Patterson, and Anne Pera. We're bursting with pride to announce that RENEW's President, Linda Hawes Clever, MD was honored with a prestigious award from Sonoma-Mendocino-Lake Medical Association and San Francisco Marin Medical Society on April 26, 2024 at the 2024 Physician Wellness EXPO. Recognized for her outstanding leadership and dedication, Linda received a Lifetime Achievement in Wellness Leadership Award. This award is a testament to Linda's long commitment to medicine, health and well-being, within RENEW and beyond.

Congratulations Linda on this incredible achievement and your endless inspiration!



Stay tuned for more updates as we continue to go for new heights!



More Exciting News!



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