

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN DISPUTES AND RESOLUTIONSM

OF MEDIATIONS, MARATHONS & BREWS

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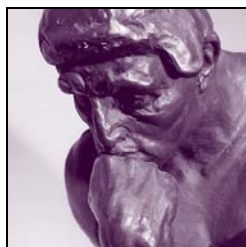


Some, perhaps many of you know that I get my exercise by running. Several of you may have learned that I brew my own beer. All of you, of course, know me as a Mediator. By now, you are probably trying to figure out how in the world I intend to connect these disparate dots into the world of mediation. As I am want to say often in our sessions, stay at the table with me for a few more moments...

MARATHON MUSINGS

Known to many as the ultimate test for a distance runner, the marathon's historic base lies in a battle in Greece with the Persians in 400-something BC. For the runner, it is a quest to conquer the physical and mental challenges over the course of 26 miles, 385 yards (41.3 kilometers).

Come this November, I will again face the challenge and will run the famed New York Marathon. An inspiring journey through all of the boroughs of New York City, it is considered by many a runner as *the* marathon (perhaps second only, if at all, to Boston) here in the States.



Each of you will receive a letter from me explaining that this run is for charity, and seeking your help.

What we know is that running a marathon requires prolonged effort and endurance. These concepts will give us a segue between marathoning and mediation... but first to brewing.

OF HOPS, MALT & YEAST

No folks, your friendly mediator has not proceeded precipitously over the proverbial edge. People pass time in various ways: some paint, some collect, some shop, some are musical, and yes, some of us brew beer.

"The journey we call Mediation can be long, arduous, challenging, intense..."

Earlier this summer, my Brew Brother Rob (an outstanding and creative architect) and I entered one of our brews in the Orange County Fair Home Brewing Competition. Our "Smokey-Oakey-Bastard" garnered a Blue Ribbon – first place – in one of the several internationally recognized categories. Using as a base a cloned-improvised recipe drawn from the infamous Stone Brewing Company's Arrogant Bastard Ale, we set about creative endeavors using Peat (as is done with fine single malt scotch), oak chips soaked in Talisker single malt scotch, and a selection of special hops.

Perhaps our adventures that brought brewing success were borne of brewing outside the hops...giving us our next segue to mediation.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

The journey we call Mediation can be long, arduous, challenging, intense...the list is longer than the space we have for this short Ezine. See if these connections work for you:

- Like in a marathon, getting to the magic moment of resolution

in mediation frequently requires prolonged effort, patience and endurance.

- The mental challenges for your mediator, like those of the marathon runner, call for constant reframing to reduce the sting of positional statements and help the disputants move beyond the paralyzing parameters of their conflict. In marathoning we call it mind games.
- Brewing, like mediation, can involve a simple, seemingly rote process. As with brewing, however, to create the special outcome, requires going beyond the basic recipe – a willingness to engage in creativity even at the risk of having to pour out the wort and having to begin anew.
- Often resolution comes from combining ideas that create cognitive dissonance; in brewing, on paper the concoction seems unworkable...yet worth the adventure. In mediation, even the most troubling ideas can bring about a positive outcome, even when we discard them and are forced to look further. As with the marathon and getting to that last “point 2” of the course, getting to settlement often requires us to dig ever deeper to bring it home...

So friends and colleagues, thanks for your endurance and willingness to walk the perilous edges of creativity. Here’s to your many successes and prolonged efforts to help build bridges between disputes and their resolution. Cheers, and enjoy the dog days of summer...



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**ING NEW YORK CITY MARATHON
COUNTDOWN: 89 DAYS**

