

Gratitude: to Susan Marie Swanson who taught me to think about metaphor in exactly this way and to Annika Fjellstad who introduced me to the fabulous poem by Lu Xun.

And we only know the middle.

"You get the bucket from someone else and you are going to hand it on."

Barbara Taylor Brown said: Consider being part of a bucket brigade.

Lu Xun said:

"Hope cannot be said to exist.
Nor can it be said not to exist.
It is like the paths that cross the earth.
In the beginning there were no roads
but when many people walk one way
a road is made."

William Stafford said: "There is a thread you follow . . . it does not change . . . while you hold it you can't get lost."

Stafford wrote this poem 26 days before he died. It is called "The Way It Is" and you can readily find it on the web.

Here are three that I love:

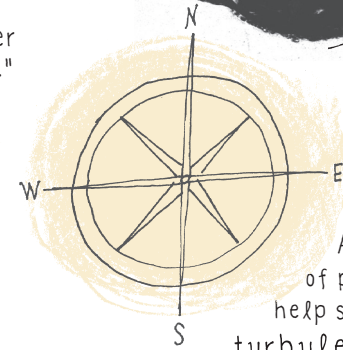
A sturdy metaphor can strengthen us

This little zine contains snippets of wisdom I've gathered over the years. They speak to my condition. I feel led to share them here in the hope that one or two practices may help you as well.

Dear Reader:



The Talmud states,
"You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it."



Orienting the Heart:

A tiny compendium of pointers that can help steer a path during turbulent and troubling political times.



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Way will open
(We begin by orienting the heart and trust the path will be revealed more fully as we go.)

Searching for a "third way"
(. . . when differences run deep. This is a creative, restorative, visionary act.)

Tikkun Olam *
(. . . so that we might be patterns, examples.)

Let your life speak
(. . . so that we might be patterns, examples.)

Kindness and Listening are Key

A brief vocabulary for community builders and activists

How to hang in there for the long haul

In 1997, Don Irish, long-time peace activist, penned a list of 21 suggestions for young people in the movement. Here are a handful of them:

- * Everybody/everything is connected to everybody/everything. A holistic approach to life is more effective, comprehensible, and satisfying.
- * You can't do everything — but you always can do something. . . . Do what you can, where you are, with what energies and talents you have.
- * Redefine success in your endeavors for societal change. To gain a portion of what is attempted, without retreat from one's goal, is success. To keep hope alive during dark times is success.
- * Focus your challenges on issues/problems, not attacks on persons. . . . People are what they are for reasons that need to be understood, though not necessarily excused.
- * Find joy and satisfaction in small gains.
- * Remember that means and ends are inextricably linked.

Gratitude + Further Reading:

Don Irish's list was published in Fellowship Magazine. I could not find the page archived on Fellowship of Reconciliation's website. For Don's full list check out my website RegulaRusselle.com

* My list is inspired by Rabbi Jonathan Spira-Savett's "7 Hebrew Words and Phrases Every Activist Should Know," TIKKUN OLAM is one of these phrases. The others here are from Quaker and Buddhist traditions.

"A reading is akin to love. It draws us toward someone or something. It is like following a path through the mist." — BRENDA GRAVES

