

Brian Egan

I believe there is always a chance for accord. No matter how long or bitter the struggle, no matter how entrenched the combatants, no matter how different the philosophies or cultures or situations of the opposing sides, it is never too late, nor the situation too hopeless.

Accord is not cowardly. Accord is not capitulation, surrender, or betrayal. It is simply the acknowledgment that a reasonable solution is far preferable to the continuation of hostilities. Accord is the agreement of the brave, of those who have the inner strength to live with what may be less they sought, of those who can sacrifice a little of the self to gain more of the Whole.

I believe that forgiveness is not a requirement for the end of conflict. Forgiveness cannot be demanded, or even expected. Forgiveness is a gift from the heart of another, and only they can say whether the time or conditions are right, or whether forgiveness is even possible.

Even so, I believe it is never too late to apologize. An apology is not something to be given on the condition of another's apology – an apology is not a tool of barter, but rather a clearing of one's own soul. It is an admission that things could, or perhaps should, have been done better, differently, or with more sensitivity. It's not an end, but rather a tool for clearing the rubble from the path that can lead to accord.

I believe that if the desire for resolution becomes stronger than the instinct to fight, more powerful than the desire to hold on to positions regardless of the cost, the flame of the conflict will flicker. The true power of the mediator does not lie in a capacity to overcome grievances or to engineer repairs. It lies in the ability to instill hope, and to craft a vivid and achievable vision of peace.