

People want to get along with each other. We are psychologically, physically, and “spiritually” built for this. We are here to do creative, amazing things—individually and collectively. And yet our fear, which so efficiently saved us from saber tooth tigers, has delayed our evolution into the expansive possibilities of personal empowerment and collective cooperation. We have continued to believe that we can only trust our small “tribes” of others exactly like us and that we must have these to protect us.

I believe that along with the Web, the field of conflict resolution has been critical in allowing for an increasing sense of global unity and, amazingly —considering all the seemingly terrible news circulating—a decrease in fear. It is not necessarily the number of “mediations” of various kinds completed that has helped make the difference, but the dissemination from our field of researched, effective concepts and tools that are becoming known in the wider Western culture—valuing win-win, listening as a way to get one’s own needs met, using neutrals effectively, personal empowerment in conflict, transformation in the midst of conflict, and more. With understanding of these has come a reduction in fear of the “other.” The Internet has brought us together—and conflict prevention and resolution will help us to stay there.

I believe that the Occupy Wall Street (and Portland!) movement is one outcome of an increasing sense empowerment. In addition, a sign of the unifying of practice and spirituality is the expected presence of William Ury at the Awakened World 2012 conference in Italy of leaders from various wisdom traditions, exploring “a call to action in a time of turbulence and opportunity.”

I am proud that we have been making a substantial difference and will continue to do so.