

Shoyo Sensei's Dharma Message

Harvard Law School Teaches Mindfulness for the Win - Win Solution

At Harvard Law School, the world's leading think-tank on negotiation and conflict resolution, whose graduates become the elite corps who handle the most difficult disputes on the planet, mindfulness has been an important subject taught. Prof. Erica Ariel Fox founded the Harvard Negotiation Insight Initiative that teaches mindfulness practices as essential to the art of conflict resolution. Its mission is to broaden and deepen the way one understands, teaches, and practices negotiation and disputes resolution by integrating insights from the world's ethical, philosophical, and spiritual traditions. "Fox asserts that mindfulness, not only is central to achieving that mission, but is also enabling negotiators to be more successful in getting to yes.

Harvard's program on negotiation revolutionized the practice of negotiation by arguing that the best and most effective way to settle disputes is to break out of aggressively adversarial zero-sum (I win, you lose) dynamics and adopt a win-win – or non-zero-sum – approach.

When I read the article, I remembered one case that Carole wrote in my study class of Buddhism, "Buddhism and Day-to-Day Decision-making," sometime ago. She wrote:

I was driving down the street, needing to get to an appointment. I noticed this lady in my rear-vision mirror driving in this big SUV weaving in and out of traffic. I was in the left hand lane and I needed to get into this right-hand lane to turn right. I turned my blinker on to merge into the middle lane. This lady, instead of letting me in, sped up and blocked the middle lane. I initially became upset at her lack of consideration, even muttering out low "What is the problem with this lady that couldn't let me in?" "What a mean driver!" I gradually became mad and angry with her, and even hateful to her!!

Then, she suddenly remembered the "Nenbutsu mindfulness" that was explained in class. Reciting Nenbutsu, she looked at her own anger and hatred. She wrote:

I then remembered what sensei said in class. I saw my own anger with Nenbutsu. Then, I could see a situation wholly differently: Perhaps this lady was off to the hospital for her child or her husband in a critical condition. I then related, slowed my car down, and let her drive by. My focus turned to concern for her and the welfare of her family, rather than my focus on not being able to get into the right hand lane. In the end, instead of being mad at this lady for a long time, I was able to change my emotion to caring for her."

By this way, Carole arrived at the win-win solution, indeed a revolutionary result. Nenbutsu mindfulness brought her the win-win solution like a Harvard Law School graduate.

For Shin followers, mindfulness is Nembutsu. Nembutsu (*Namu Admia Butsu* or *Na Man Da Bu*), makes us see our own mind of anger, hatred, attachment, greed, confusion, ignorance and more. This “Seeing” transforms these negative minds into positive minds of compassion, kindness, warm-heart, and more.

We only appreciate the Buddha Sakyamuni’s amazingly TIMELESS teachings.

Namu Amida Butsu
Shaku Shoyo