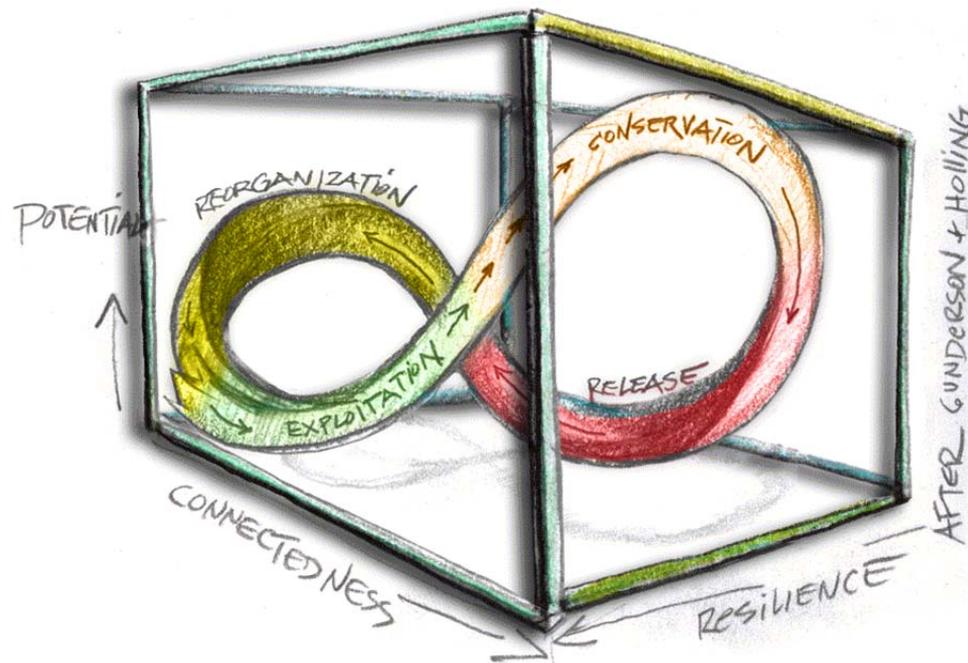


# GHC CONVERSATION 2013

## SUMMARY

### Resilience: Intentional Practice for the Social Sector



May 1-4, 2013 • Scottsdale, Arizona

## INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

Our fifth *Conversation* took place in Scottsdale, Arizona from May 1 – 4, 2013. As in all prior years, the organizing intention of this *Conversation* is to create a clearing, an opening, and an invitation to test assumptions and to welcome some level of personal disturbance...so as to see with new eyes the things we *think* we know well—philanthropy and the social sector. It is a platform for a robust exchange among like-spirited colleagues in search of new meaning.

Co-designers, contributors, and participants in this reflective gathering were:

**Marv Baldwin**, CEO – Foods Resource Bank (*Western Springs, IL*)

**Gay Cook**, VP for Programs and Strategy – The Colorado Trust (*Denver, CO*)

**Dianne Coopman**, Director – St. Mary's Janesville Foundation (*Janesville, WI*)

**Gary Hubbell**, Principal – Gary Hubbell Consulting (*Milwaukee, WI*)

**Ken Hubbell**, Principal – Ken Hubbell & Associates (*Little Rock, AR*)

**Kevin Matheny**, Chief Development Officer – Concordia University (*Portland, OR*)

**Pat Modrzejewski**, President – Providence Health & Services Foundation (*Burbank, CA*)

**Kim Scott**, President & CEO – Trillium Family Services (*Portland, OR*)

**Tom Soma**, Executive Director – Ronald McDonald House Charities of Oregon & SW Washington (*Portland, OR*)

**Don Taylor**, National Practice Leader-Nonprofit, Public, and Social Enterprise – The Chandler Group (*Minneapolis, MN*)

**Pearl Veenema**, President – Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation (*Hamilton, ON, Canada*)

Synopsis prepared by Gary Hubbell, with deep appreciation  
to the participating women and men who brought  
wisdom, experience, trust, and soul  
to *Conversation 2013*



## DRIVING FORCES AND FUTURE SCENARIOS

We launched our discussion of resilience in the context of one's ability to see and navigate, which led us to consider forces of change at work in our world today. Imagining potentially disruptive forces that may shape 2030, we named: technology; the likelihood of cataclysmic events; levels of cooperation and collaboration; language becoming more inclusive and intentional; the potential end of non-profit tax status; polarization (especially in government); terrorism; a redefinition of ourselves as human beings; talent management and development; health care transformation; global population growth; global mobilization of people for causes; unusual weather patterns; elimination/evolution of currency; energy and infrastructure; health, community well-being, and food security; minorities becoming majority populations; and changes in the religious landscape.



## SCENARIO IMPLICATIONS – HOW WILL WE SEE AND NAVIGATE?

This discussion of potentially disruptive forces led us to review existing future scenarios, including the four scenarios of 2030 that were developed last year at *Conversation 2012*. We concluded that these four scenario stories from 2012 are still plausible. There is a way to navigate these scenarios. In each scenario (some more than others), opportunity arises where creativity gets attracted and leveraged. Legacy institutions (like libraries, hospitals, universities, etc.) are in the middle of significant disturbance right now. These institutions are going through the tensions of technology, social change, learning, and community, with some working hard to defend turf and tradition. These tensions could explode in a novel way with young people. Failure to adapt and any continued resistance of privileged players could lead to us going forward in a clutching, disturbing way.

What view am I holding about my organization and my operating reality? Individual participant reactions include:

- Embracing the change; hanging around with others who also embrace change.
- Asking questions. Allowing tension. Moving into the tension in a way that opens us to seeing in a new way. Instilling an openness to tension, to question, to dialogue.
- Those who can't deal with ambiguity have the most trouble with tension.
- *Organisms* and *organizations* share the same root.
- I have to have the courage of convictions when tough choices have to be made.
- Improving the depth and level of conversation in my organization. Making time and space for this kind of work that adds value to the work even when we're so busy.
- What is our responsibility to those who don't embrace change and get left behind?

Numerous questions and observations arise when considering disruptive forces and constructing potential scenario stories. Among them:

1. What is the impact of exponential growth on our future?
2. Might a number of unintended consequences combine?
3. Can “community” design and lead real concerted social change and convene the stakeholders...and get it done?
4. The effort at community level improvement requires strong leadership—and is iterative and continual.
5. Will the “winning” philanthropic trends be larger scale, corporate, and lean?
6. Can government, community, agencies, and business align on social goals?
7. Can corporations accelerate social philanthropy (within self-interests)?
8. Are we called to adopt a Native American perspective which says, “We don't inherit the world from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children?”
9. How do we handle tension? Do we resist or do we invite? Two choices: accepting and letting go. Consider our leadership roles within our organizations.

## INTENTIONAL PRACTICE FOR THE SOCIAL SECTOR

We asked ourselves what these future scenarios suggest about the path for philanthropy in North America? Comments include:

- Philanthropy is moving away from being transactional.
- We're caught in some mixture of transaction and something else (still undetermined, hard to recognize or define).
- Will corporations end up having to fund more things for which government removes funding? Is that philanthropy or vested interest? (Does it matter, as long as the impact is honest and emanates from good intention?)
- Are we in the social sector fully approaching our work in a way to have real and lasting impact? Do we suffer from an unintentional myopia where we only (or largely) see the issues our own organization is dealing with? Just as limiting, are we blindly (and artificially) limiting our thinking to the nonprofit (social) sector? If true in either case, does that impulse flow from a source of hubris, arrogance, fear, and/or ignorance? The sector changes slowly over time (despite the constant shifting of buzzwords, fads, and cool simple things. Won't true sector resilience emanate from some type of unified vision among the sectors—government, private sector, and philanthropic organizations?
- The previously ill defined and elusive "culture of philanthropy" seems to now be giving way to a "culture of meaningful engagement."
- What role do incentives play in all this? How do incentives influence the basic roots of society? We don't as well create traction among others by simply framing issues in a morale context; we do, however, gain traction by linking the moral context with the economic context (e.g., making sure the public schools don't fail because they are a source of future employees).
- We are trusting the community to know best.
- There is a dichotomy of seeing ways to protect vulnerable communities vs. seeing ways to make money (meet a need). We must focus on shared community values. Adopt the mindset: "I can make money and I can help this place thrive."

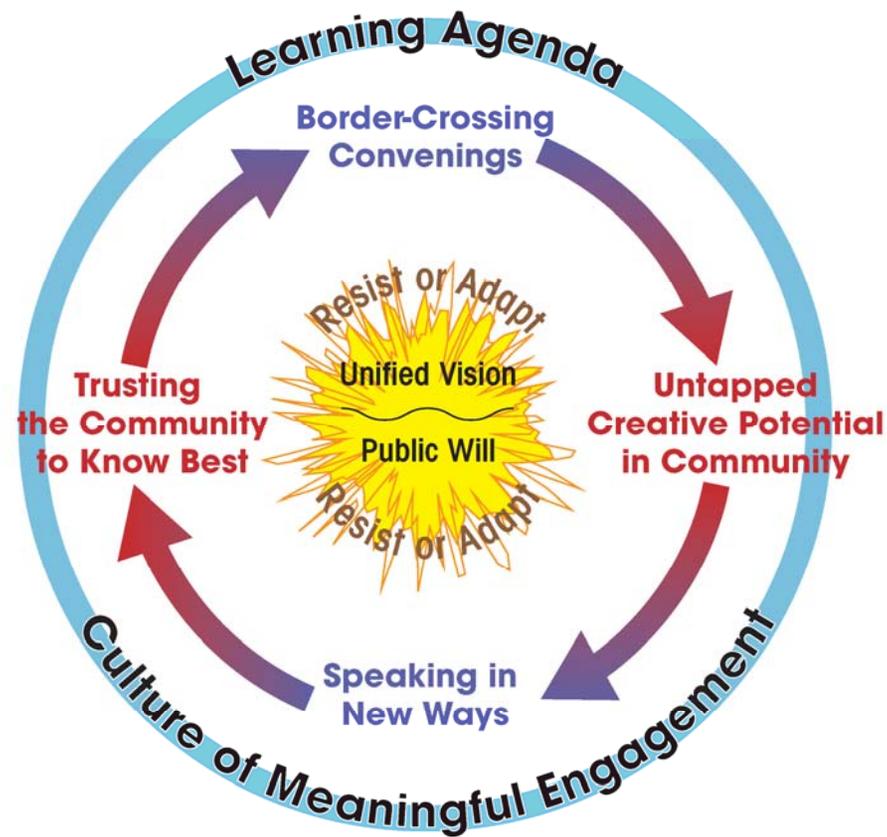
Finding it difficult to push our thinking and conversation to sector-wide levels, we asked, [What are the big opportunities for the sector?](#)

[What is the liberating wild card? Where are the opportunities to change the narrative?](#)

- Something or someone has to act upon complexity to get something happening.
- There is untapped creative potential in many communities. In a couple of the 2030 scenarios developed at *Conversation 2012*, we saw that opportunity is created is where creativity is attracted and leveraged. Likely, this creative potential resides in thousands of young, different people in communities.
- What if we could create public will to move mountains around an issue (e.g., recycling, civil rights movement, anti-smoking)?
- There is opportunity in boundary crossing convening in a way that's open, caring, loving, patient and respectful of voice, power, and culture.

- Branding "causes" and "revolutions" by doing things jointly.
- A willingness to come together; a willingness to listen to diverse others; coming together and then going outward to test and try and then reconvening to share and learn.
- To provide the leadership in the communities where we serve.
- Break down walls - it doesn't matter what sector is involved; the boundaries are often artificial.
- Speak in new ways. Change the way we frame local issues that removes walls and barriers. Talk in ways that opens and liberates.

A diagram emerged that came to reflect the arc of discussion to this point.



## SYNOPSIS - DAYS 3 & 4:

### UNFOLDING RESILIENCE: PERSONALLY AND FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

From the far-reaching discussion of our first two days, we concluded that this complexity represents our learning agenda. Using a mix of personal reflection time, small team sessions, and whole group interaction, our collective focus was on unfolding resilience both personally and organizationally, with a goal to build adaptive muscle in each of us.

Referencing the optimal/preferred 2030 scenario labelled “Elevated Intentions,” one of us described how he envisions himself living through this path to 2030, working through the Elevated Intentions style. As I rehearse this future, he said, I have to care differently and let go of some of my emotional attachment to things and ideas. I have to detach myself from outcomes. Others of us began to consider the extent to which we have rehearsed any of these futures, with an eye toward imagining what would be required of each of us. When one of us said, “I’ve got to get to a different place” we quickly remembered that this is not about seeking a destination. The question we each have to come back to is, “what do I want to manifest?”

Your energy follows your attention. Step forward and the path will appear.

If you are to lead, you need to invite both personal and organizational disruption. If you are living in an elevated intention you can't *control* the choices of others; at best you can *influence* us said, “I have to trust myself and the world I to see what I see. I can only give them the Another echoed this sentiment, saying “I can't mortality.”

As you move forward, you have to give away information, etc). Trust that others are doing good work in the world. Tell stories as a way of teaching. You can only hope to inspire and influence the outcome. If you've come from a place of authenticity and consideration, you will attend to the *right* things wherever you can. You can't be emotionally attached to the outcome. Your contribution is how you show up. You have to avoid over thinking things to the point of not getting anything done. What you can do is invite people into a sacred vision (or conversation) about shared community. This is a natural action that is contributory and hopeful. Seek to inspire, not impose. Tell stories. This is a way to live with the tensions and to create a new reality, which could be debilitating or liberating and exhilarating, depending upon how you choose to frame it.

**Key Question**  
What do you want to manifest?  
(The alignment of attention and intention)

the intentions of others. One colleague among live in...because I can't wait for everyone else opportunity to come along with the vision.” wait! I have an urgency born of my own

more and more of everything (wisdom, power,





- G. **Ask often**, “How do we demonstrate healing presence in the tension filled world of health reform? How do we do this in the community?” Harness the community needs assessment - looking to many of the community organizations to explore mutual goals of community. Who will convene this group? We can. Look at strategic growth in the construct of our system. Trust in God.
- H. **Challenge the leadership team to be more**; challenge us to go beyond what we do well and go beyond our familiar. Continue to expand our vision beyond the present and beyond our neighbourhood. Invite people generously and with more hospitality. Extend our arms more - to fill our moment with our future. Go where we are most effective. Embrace our best traditions. Listen and keep the conversation flowing. Let the small stuff go. Live like Saint Paul – don’t get bogged down in who doesn't want to come along and embrace those that do.
- I. **Shift our focus** from being a great provider to something more in the community. Being part of a great community. The reciprocity of capital (including intellectual capital). Connecting with community by designing your offerings for everyone's benefit.
- J. **Let go** so I can build organizational resilience. Convene, engage, and empower a passionate team. Then my job is done. Create the vision in the similar way to how we created our values.
- K. **Create connectedness and intentionality** among two service regions with different cultures - each are like ecosystems that have evolved. Becomes a self-governing culture (as I am not the only leader).

This lightning round of sharing individual reflections enabled us to identify and chart the common themes. We divided the group into three Wisdom Teams, each of whom met separately to take this conversation deeper and to report back in ways that added generative value to our discussion. A brief synopsis of each report follows:

- *Group 1:* Show up with our best selves. Take each of these themes to the fullest extent. Keep them alive every day as best we can. If you remove ego and competition from the desire to leave a legacy, what we can best do today is to: a) show up in an authentic, soulful way; and b) know that this work is a shared role—not just "the leader's" role. This is about blend vs. balance as a way to visually frame this work. Balance suggests separateness. Making this balance sustainable is the essence of resilience.
- 
- *Group 2:* A humbling acknowledgement is that organizations can never rise above their leaders. Our task is building community, which is a compounding process. It is a return on intention and investment comprised of three parts: BE, ACT, and TRUST. To BE means to care for and nurture ourselves so we can do likewise for our teams....so they can....care for and nurture themselves....so they can care for and nurture those we serve....so they can care for and nurture themselves....so they can.....(which creates resilience without dependence). This is not complicated.
-

- *Group 3:* Leaders must recognize that organizational resilience is tied to leaders' listening. We need to suspend judgement, be patient, demonstrate that what's been said has been heard, and respect the value that it brings. You demonstrate respect for the process by communicating or acting on what you've heard. Being intentional in practice is blending the fabric of our day. This posture creates awareness, a light to what may have been missed, an openness to what time gives us. Doing so helps reduce the frenetic pace and the "churning." This way of being fosters a transfer of knowledge and wisdom in a story-telling way, which adds depth to the "strategic learning organization" beyond the hollow words. Knowledge is not age-based. We all have some things to learn *and* to teach. Diversity is central to organizational resilience if we understand and appreciate differences in multiple ways (e.g., cultural, learning styles, leadership styles, cultural competence, etc.). We must engage in ways subtle and indirect as well as intentional and direct.

### RESILIENT POSTURE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

We asked ourselves how this "resilience posture" fosters innovation in our firms, foundations, teams, and organizations. Here's what we said:

- If I can keep my focus on my intention, I don't have to be the sole innovator; I need to empower all others do to so.
- Learn to be OK with tension and don't try too much to "get through it."
- In my organization, the context of the innovation is the technical side of what we do, not the impact side of what we do. This requires us to have a redefinition of innovation. What is the language in our organizational culture? It's often language that is about the technical and only about our organization. Innovation is about a different way of *being*, which is different than a new technology or a new program.
- Our energy is framed by the questions we ask. Meaningful and deep questions enable a leader to foster shared design/solution ideas. It's important to know what people hold in their hearts about the organizational mission. Tapping into this creates energy.
- Avoid the trap of having to have answers. We can only care for and nurture ourselves so we can do likewise for our teams....so they can....care for and nurture themselves....so they can care for and nurture those we serve....so they can care for and nurture themselves...so they can.....(which creates resilience without dependence).
- Just be yourself. It resonates and enables.
- I see innovation in a different context, where one works to find the congruence with one's core intention. You can't go to the new reality in one step. How do we design our way into an organizational space for change and alignment? Certainly, we'd have to focus on values enlivened, bust silos, foster different types of conversations, and convene some mutual dialogue that is more authentic and collective. How will we respond and what will we invest in terms of structure, time, money, and talent? By gaining internal congruence we reduce the internal silos and enhance our teams' authenticity. We'll each have to widen our networks of collaboration

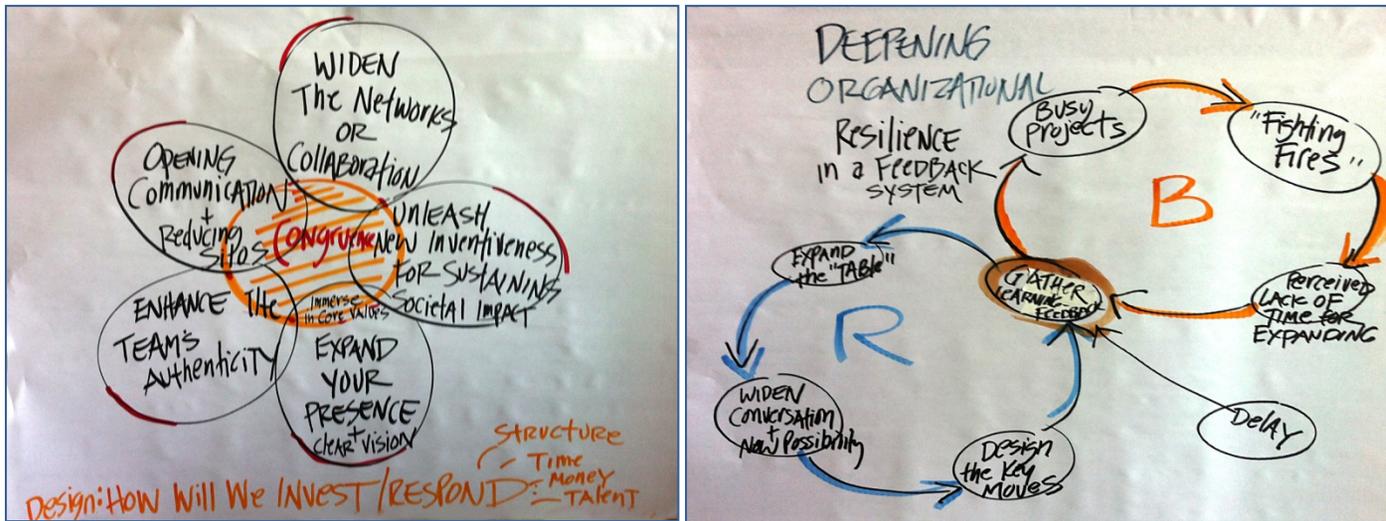
in order to unleash inventiveness for sustaining some real social impact. We can't keep programming our way to the desired reality. Key questions for us are: How do I expand my presence and clear vision? How do I stay well and focused and move all of these things forward in some balance? To do so requires me to hold the pure belief of connection, possibility, fairness, and love...and this helps animate the way do my work.

- *BEING* in a different—and more intentional—way will produce *WHAT* we're going to *DO*. For one, it's about unframing things; for another of us, it's about having a framework for how to act on her intention. One example given of how to do this would be having a different seating structure in rooms of our colleagues in order to shift and open their mindsets. I agree that I must *BE*, yet in order to *BE* in a way with my staff like I am in *GHC Conversations*, I need a frame or a structure for how to do this.
- Courage + Congruence = COURGRUENCE - having the courage to be in the commitment. Do I have the courage to live the way I want to live in my organization that may truly take me out of the organization that doesn't need or require me? This is a big question.

**We also asked ourselves:** What will you invest and what kind of process would you design to create/unleash "a new way" forward for your resilient organization? In a conceptual emergency, you don't need a roadmap, you need a compass. How would we recreate our work to trigger bigger ripples and amplifiers of our work?

- One colleague quoted a line from the movie, *The Godfather*: "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer." We can't do this without recognizing tension and understanding that everyone sees things differently. A second participant challenged the use of this language, observing that it sets up an artificial duality. A third contributor suggested that most of us live in this duality, based on others being in different places and mindsets from me. She concludes that accepting that this duality is real for some, necessitating that we simply accept it and BE with it.
- Referencing Parker Palmer's Touchstones (introduced at the start of Conversation 2013 as framework and tone of this Conversation), we concluded that we should use these touchstones for ourselves TO BE and to BE IN THE MOMENT.
  - Think about how to begin and don't try to answer all the next steps with strategy. Simply begin.
  - Take your way of being into your larger team. Culture is a way to get to what we're looking to inculcate. Start with your senior management team so people see and feel your innovation and want to be part of it. We shouldn't hand a set of values to employees.
  - Shared values need to emerge from within to create ownership. The process should go back to revisit values in order to engender ownership and shift them as needed for those employed at this moment. We all need a platform for treating each other in full fairness.

- Consider the idea of a "culture dashboard." Our Intention Wall is almost like affirmation cards. If these culture dashboards flourish, won't all other organization key indicator dashboards flourish?
- One key is switching your intention so that it's open and more full of spirit than it is now. Be intentional about your values and your culture. Can you imagine asking your organization, despite what we've been appreciative about, whether we have yet to bring our shared values to the world that we're trying to evoke? Answering this question will help you surface your organizational pictures of intentions (much like our Intention Wall/Garden of Intention created during the opening of GHC *Conversation 2013*).



These — and all graphics herein — by Ken Hubbell

###

## Collective wisdom

(A poetic synthesis of **Conversation 2013** for those at the table in body or spirit)

by Tom Soma

People of similar heart,  
we persevere through turbulent times.  
Structures and infrastructures in flux.  
Priorities awry.  
Privacy eroding.  
The ecosystem pushing back.  
A narrowing concentration of wealth  
threatening our means and methods of exchange.

Our sector,  
our nation,  
our world,  
are *all* swirling.

We need a new understanding  
a new language,  
a new way through.

\*

In the wilderness,  
deep roots are essential  
to survival.

Prior plans—especially if harbored in our *minds* alone—  
fail to serve us well.

When the landscape is disorienting,  
it's time to slow down,  
listen more deeply,  
consider other approaches,  
and most importantly,  
just *be*...

A more intentional journey  
requires the summoning of our hearts.

As we seek to build adaptive muscle,  
we must recognize that  
*answers* aren't necessarily *openings*.

Openings emerge  
far more readily  
from *questions*—  
and the first questions we ask  
ought to be  
of ourselves.

Is the world better  
because I'm here?

Am I better  
because I'm in the world?

Am I *strong* enough to *trust*?  
To *let go*?  
To *allow*?

How might I approach *all* inquiry appreciatively?

What will I manifest?

How shall I dance my soul awake?

\*

There is not ONE way.

There are *MANY*...

As leaders,  
our *responsibility* is to invite disturbance,  
listen artfully,  
speak inclusively,  
eliminate walls,  
and discard any illusion of *control*.

We *can't* impose  
even the *best* of intentions,  
But we *can* invite  
and *inspire*...

\*

Acknowledging not only the *presence*,  
but the profound *value* of tension,  
of ambiguity,  
of *difference*—

and likewise,  
the extraordinary *power*  
of both *gratitude*  
and *vulnerability*—

do we have the courage to lead  
toward congruence?  
Toward resonance?  
Toward *one-ness*?

\*

Answers aren't to be owned.

Solutions aren't to be possessed.

Both understanding and progress favor the humble.

If we replace fear with courage,  
problems with dreams,  
habits with imagination,  
and begin to act collaboratively,  
in solidarity,  
we *will*  
find ways through...

We can *be* the change.

\*

"Someday"  
is *not* a day...

*Today*  
deserves our rapt attention,  
our humble intention,  
our abiding gratitude.

Rest assured,  
the future *will* emerge.

The ultimate question  
for each of us  
is,  
“Will I?”

GHC *Conversations* are convened and hosted by



Planning ▪ Strategy ▪ Philanthropy ▪ Coaching

*In order to strengthen adaptive organizations for inevitable change and greater impact*

3143 East Hampshire Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53211 ▪ 414-962-6696 ▪ [www.garyhubbellconsulting.com](http://www.garyhubbellconsulting.com)

Graphic listening and co-facilitation by Ken Hubbell



*Helping Groups Practice the Art of Change®*

401 W. Capitol, Ste. 301

Little Rock, AR 72201

501-372-1716

[www.kenhubbell.com](http://www.kenhubbell.com)