

## **Hope-Sowers: How to Be Positive in a Negative World**

Dr. Olive Poliks  
Tine Olive Branch of Stress Management and Conflict Mediation  
350 Old Indan Trail West Aurora, IL 60508  
630)215-7178  
olivebpoliks@earthlink.net

How can we genuinely and authentically see hope as we confront the ugliest truths faced by those with whom we work? The tremendous harm that we do to each other and ourselves and the pain that nature sometimes inflicts on us are challenges to us as Hope-Sowers. Cheerleading in the face of rape, murder, corruption, serious illness and abuse of all sorts is not only ineffective, it shows disrespect for the true nature of suffering.

Hope Sowers can learn lessons even in the most tragic events. The lesson of "Katrina" was the revelation to the world of the poverty that had been there for years. The soul of the United States was touched and the entire country was in a dialogue, trying to discover a common ground about who we are and what we want to be.

Negativity is one of the primal responses to life and is difficult to overcome. Negativity is one of the ways we bond with others. Who has not seen that in their own Staff Lounge? Friends are people we can complain to or be critical with, as opposed to being "nice" in public. Our public face is too often far different from our personal beliefs and private actions.

Reflection is one of the keys to einpoweiring both ourselves as Hope Sowers and sharing that hope with those with whom we work. a need to share with others questions like...

What can I learn from this?

What are the gifts hidden deep inside all this pain?

Which directions can this lead? What and where am I going from here? With whom?

What can I do today...NOW, that will change the direction my life is going? There are gifts in practicing the art of being a HopeSower,

The discovery that you and I are not alone. Like Gandhi, we "Want to be the change we wish to see in others."

There is comfort in always being teachable.

There is healing in developing a forgiving heart. For yourself and others.

There is freedom in letting go of hatred, pain and shame.

There is a redefinition of grace. Somehow, you and I are being directed to a greater good.

Our hope is that we CAN sow the seeds of hope in a negative world. This is what it means to be a Hope-Sower.

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