

CROSSING BRIDGES

In recent days we have seen the momentous meeting between the North and South Korean leaders. It seems that a great chasm has been bridged as the two men came together, crossing the border which has divided them for so many years. We often think of building bridges metaphorically, as an attempt to heal, broken relationships. In this case we must hope that the momentous meeting in Korea will be just the beginning of an ongoing process.

The two leaders understand and have lived through great changes in the history of Korea. They will need to be prepared to build bridges between the past and the future. It is unexplored territory and there are many obstacles to cross. They will need great courage and people around them, who are inspired to continue moving forward. Being filmed talking together on a bridge illustrates just how important symbolism can be. May they maintain a safe bridge of peace to surmount the many difficulties that will arise.

There is also the need for us to build bridges to cross over obstacles that stand in our way and which prevent us reaching new destinations. This is particularly important to everyone but particularly to Unitarians who are always looking to introduce new ideas which will carry the movement forward. Like the leaders of North and South Korea we will need to take what is good from our history whilst not being afraid of the new.

Crossing bridges can be a challenge at the same time as enticing. Will I be safe, will I be able to cross back whenever I choose? These are just two of the questions I ask myself.

On reflection though it seems that life consists of crossing bridges - that is part of what it means to grow as a human being. We can't avoid living and learning. We cannot and should not hold back from building and crossing bridges and then moving on. Life isn't always safe.

Different circumstances call for different responses. Mostly we need to take time, gather material, plan the pathway and make approaches to the obstacle as well as we are able. The bridge is erected, strong and wide, allowing many to cross over confidently and safely for many years to come, knowing the dangers that have been and must be avoided in the future. At other times

though, the terrain is too rough, the path too narrow allowing only the very able and the very brave to forge the way.

Yes it can be dangerous to be the first individual or first group to build and test the bridge, but support and encouragement from those who also wish to overcome and cross over the obstacle can help hugely. We will also need help from those who have gone before. Crossing bridges is the time when faith, belief and positivity are essential, lessening the danger and ensuring the goal is reached.

There will always be bridges to build and cross in all areas of our lives, sometimes easy and sometimes hard. But if we stop building bridges we stop growing, living and learning.

I am not one of the skilful or the strong, but I can still do what I can to help those who are, those who can build the bridges over which I hope to be one of the first to walk across. I will learn from them and trust to the lessons they have taught me.

In our lifetime we all have the opportunity, if we choose, to build or help others build bridges. We can stay where we are or build new networks, relationships and communities, and grow and flourish.