

NEWSLETTER FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACEBUILDING
MARCH 2023 NUMBER 60

**MEDIATION, VALUES AND SKILLS
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL**

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In these newsletters we invite contributions and ideas, suggestions, and possibilities for our efforts to educate others about addressing the pressing issues of the day with intelligence, compassion, and a commitment to the greater good of humanity and the earth, i.e., nonviolent conflict resolution, improved communication and cooperation, successful negotiation and mediation. We also want to encourage the critical and creative thinking that can help individuals and communities move through obstacles and difficulties in more sustainable ways, i.e., with the interconnected health of all peoples, their economies, and their environments.

Sustainable Peacebuilding Fellowship
IN PERSON IN FORT COLLINS

DON GEYMON

**MEDIATION, VALUES AND SKILLS
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL**

Wed. March 1 from 1:15-2:15 MT
Lincoln Center, 417 W. Magnolia Street, Fort Collins, CO 80521

All are invited. Please share this newsletter with a friend or colleague.

MASTER THE BASICS OF MAKING PEACE

William Timpson, Ph.D. William Timpson, Ph.D. *William Timpson, Ph.D.*

For *Learning Life's Lessons*, I wrote that in September of 1793 the [American Revolution](#) officially came to an end when representatives of the United States, Great Britain, Spain and France signed the [Treaty of Paris](#). Britain formally recognized the independence of its thirteen former American colonies, and the boundaries of the new republic were agreed upon: [Florida](#) north to the Great Lakes and the Atlantic coast west to the [Mississippi](#) River.

The events leading up to the treaty stretched back to April 1775, on a common green in Lexington, [Massachusetts](#), when American colonists answered King George III's refusal to grant them political and economic reform with armed revolution. On July 4, 1776, more than a year after the first volleys of the war were fired, the Second Continental Congress officially adopted the [Declaration of Independence](#). Five difficult years later, in October 1781, British General Charles Lord Cornwallis surrendered to American and French forces at Yorktown, [Virginia](#), bringing to an end the last major battle of the Revolution.

During the talks U.S. Representative Benjamin Franklin demanded that Britain hand over Canada to the United States. This was not accepted but America did gain enough new territory south of the Canadian border to double its size. Despite five years of war and suffering, a new nation had been inspired. The following "tip" is adapted from #46 in *147 Practical Tips for Teaching Peace and Reconciliation*.

In *Concepts and Choices for Teaching*, Sue Doe and I (2008) make the case for mastery learning, especially when there are specific skills and information to be modeled, learned, practiced, assessed and refined and especially when the stakes are as high as a peace treaty between warring peoples. "Mastery learning is an instructional model promoted widely by John Carroll (1963, p. 64), Benjamin Bloom (1973), and others to ensure a foundation for learning and build student self-confidence by concentrating on concise segments of the curriculum and objective feedback.

"Founded on the principle that students should demonstrate competence at one level before moving on to the next, mastery learning rests on a foundation of faith in student ability to learn, indeed that nearly all will learn, *if* we provide sufficient time, adequate materials and appropriate instruction. When we organize instruction in this way, the consistent success which students experience can build confidence and enthusiasm for further learning. While much of Bloom's original work focused on students in inner city schools, the concepts that emerged are especially applicable whenever students need an academic foundation (e.g., for reading or math), a specific set of skills (e.g., laboratory equipment or computer) or wherever they enter with different backgrounds, aptitude, and motivation. Much good research supports mastery learning and many college and university instructors have adopted various aspects of this approach" (p. 175).

For anyone interested in peace and reconciliation studies, mastery represents a rich repository of research and practice for focusing on those essential skills of listening, empathic expressing, consensus building, negotiating, conflict management, etc. Seek out sources on mastery learning and think about the skills that you think are essential. What specific goals and objectives would you set, i.e., observable behaviors? Where and how could you see these skills modeled? Practiced? What assessments would be useful? Teachers at all levels do this routinely for the concepts that underlie all the academic

subjects. When will we do the same for the study of peace and include these concepts in our educational systems?

For example, Stephanie King notes the role of language for defining peace and its varied components. “Recently, a local pastor preached a sermon about peace. Just as I was preparing to hear another message about the evils of war and another call for people to love thy enemy, the pastor redefined peace in a way that changed my perceptions. Using the Hebrew word *shalom*, which is often simply translated as *peace*, the pastor explained the fullness of the meaning of *shalom*. Shalom does not only mean freedom from war, conflict, and discord, rather, a hope for shalom embodies the hope for all good things that God intended for people.

“The pastor told us that Shalom is often used as a greeting or a way to wish someone well-being. A wish or prayer for shalom means that you are wishing a person completeness, soundness, good welfare, health, and prosperity. This is peace. If a shalom-like peace embraces all the good things God intends for humans, then peace is ensuring no one goes hungry, then peace is ensuring each child has the opportunity for an education, then peace is ensuring that everyone has access to good healthcare, then peace is ensuring each person has a place to lay their head at night, then peace is striving toward greater justice for all. So, how can I help ensure shalom for others in this world” (pp. 57-58)?

Stephanie then offers an idea any of us can master: “Next time you greet an old friend or a new acquaintance, a coworker or a stranger, greet them with Shalom or some other culture’s word for peace. Wishing a person all the good things they could need is the first step in actively working toward peace for all people.” Consider including the basic concepts that underlie peace—open and sensitive communication, teamwork and cooperation, mediation and negotiation, critical and creative thinking for nonviolent change—in your thinking about an upcoming class, meeting in the community or among co-workers. We have to wonder whether a commitment to these basic concepts could have inspired a different history between the colonists and their British overlords?

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HOW CAN MEDIATION PREVENT THE NEXT WAR?
Jim Halderman

I believe we are at the tipping point, as Malcom Gladwell would say, of nation states finding alternatives to war as a means of settling conflict. Today there are thousands of organizations working to bring peace that did not exist 20 years ago. I want to share how I sincerely believe Rotary is capable of being that tipping point.

What we all are looking for is a sense of security, to feel safe in one’s own environment. The real question, then, should be “what brings us security?” On Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, the desire for security is number two following our basic needs of food and shelter.

So, what brings us security? And how can mediation help?

Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense under President George W. Bush, in 2007, gave a speech at Kansas State University. In that speech he made the comment: “I am here to make the case for strengthening our capacity to use soft power...”

Soft power? First, what is it, and second, how can I feel secure with it? Simply put soft power is

everything but guns. Soft power is not really soft or easy. It is not gathering to sing kumbaya. It is the hard, yet concrete, action and communication that individuals and nations take to resolve differences peacefully.

In the same speech Robert Gates went on to say: “What is clear to me is that there is a need for a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security - - diplomacy, strategic communication, foreign assistance, civic action, and economic reconstruction and development.” Also, at a meeting of the United Nations Security Council in 2022 there was repeated mention for the need to ... “take action to pursue projects, programs, and policies that address the underlying causes of conflicts including: poverty, inequality, ethnic tensions, lack of access to education, and unequal distribution of resources.” Doesn’t this sound similar to Rotary’s seven areas of focus?

In his talk, Robert Gates implored for an increased budget for peaceful means other than military. He knew he would not be popular when he got back home, but he was speaking from his heart. After all, our nation spends 80 times more on “hard power” vs. “soft power”. He knows “soft power” can make a difference.

Recently the Rotarian magazine listed some books, supposedly promoting peace, such as *Why We Fight*. After reading this one and so many prior on the “whys of war” I am left with an empty feeling. Our focus is misplaced with such material. All the understanding of the why we fight has done nothing for our security. I now know it is time to stop asking why we fight, why we go to war, and ask what are the alternatives?

There are several myths about war: It’s inevitable, it’s necessary, and on; but the primary concern when speaking of keeping the peace is the need for security.

So, the real question then must be: **“what truly brings us security?”**

Here is where Rotary comes in. In 2017 Rotary International signed an agreement with The Institute for Economics and Peace, or IEP, to work together to build peace. IEP offers 3 critical tools for Rotarians in the search for peace.

First, it is a tremendous data source. Fourteen years ago, the founder, Steve Killelea, was working on peace projects and realized there were no markers to know what worked or to recognize changes. He gathered several experts in the field and studied 1400 markers of 163 countries, 98% of the world’s population. The numbers his team put together annually illustrates trends in all aspects of society.

Second, Steve asked what is typical among the most peaceful nations. They recognized 8 consistent characteristics giving us guidelines on where emphasis needs to be placed. They allow us to quickly analyze any community and understand its strengths and weaknesses. These 8 pillars include what Robert Gates and the Security Council were describing, and more.

And third is the use of John Galtung’s, father of peace studies in the 1970s, the concepts of positive and negative peace. Negative peace measures internal security, violence, and militarization... or bad. Positive peace is defined as the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies... or good.

The attitudes refer to how we feel about government and our sense of security. We must ask ourselves if we truly believe peace is possible, and what is my sense of security. What can I do to

create a more peaceful world? Start with the knowing peace is possible. **Reality follows belief.**

Institutions are all the organizations that work towards peace, like Rotary. In all our work Rotarians do, local or global, we should overlay the 8 pillars as a guide to maximize benefit. The pillars are systematic thinking, how one aspect affects the entire environment. No one activity is a stand-alone event. We must ask how we are affecting the entire environment and how we can influence for peace?

It is not enough for the guns to be quiet. It will take the action of Rotarians doing the projects we have always done, only now, with an emphasis on peace using the guidelines of IEP. Peace does not happen by itself. It comes from the action each one of us takes.

The concept of peacebuilding sounds daunting. Like eating the elephant, we eat it one bite at a time. Insanity can be defined as repetition with the expectation of change. Change comes, first, from within, we **think** differently, learn new ideas. Then we take the action steps towards creating peace. **Peace does not happen to us; it happens by us.**

What we can do: Start a peace committee. We have an active district 5450 peace committee eager to help. Join and learn from the Rotary Action Group for Peace with all their resources.

It is critical to our planet, and to all of us, that we find a way to deal with our challenges, in search for personal security, in a more positive manner. Whether we are dealing with climate change, environment issues, war, or immigration, these are international problems that we cannot handle alone. We must work together. And that requires peace.

Yes, peace begins with you and me. Our words, our actions, all, should be of peace. Study and learn that peace can be the way. Again, Rotary shines by speaking, by acting, and by living the 4-Way Test. Seek the truth, be more accepting, ask more questions, and show more empathy. Start a peacebuilding committee and listen to the ideas that begin to come out of each participant. Use the skills of mediation when conflicts arise.

Rotary can be the tipping point. Major change comes from people and then governments will follow. The people making the changes for good are Rotarians.

Next year's Rotary theme will be: *Create hope in the World.*
Combine that with this year's theme and you have: *Imagine Rotary Creating Hope in the World.*

Go Wage Peace!

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MONEY, VALUES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Lloyd Thomas, Ph.D.

During these past few months of 2022, the topic of “mental health” has appeared in many social and news media. It has become a political and electoral topic as well. After working as a clinical psychologist in the area of mental health for 40+ years, I have learned there is a critical connection between one's mental health, one's value system and money. Thus, the title of this brief essay.

In the capitalistic economy of the United States, the “success” of *any* endeavor or achievement is usually defined by how much money you make or have accumulated. Poor people are rarely considered to be “successful” in life. This definition is not confined to the U.S.

In a recent article in the *MJPSYCH BULLETIN* (Oct. 2020; 44(5): p. 193-196), Lee Knifton and Greig Inglis write: *This article examines the relationship between poverty and mental health problems. ... We highlight how mental health problems are related directly to poverty, which in turn underlies wider health inequalities. We then outline implications for psychiatry. They conclude: There is now increasing recognition that mental health problems form the greatest public health challenge of our time, and that the poor bear the greatest burden of mental illness.*²

Someone once said that “In Congress we have the best people money can buy.” Indeed, according to Karl Evers-Hillstrom, *...Political spending in the 2020 election totaled \$14.4 billion, more than doubling the total cost of the record-breaking 2016 election cycle. And ... according to OpenSecrets’ analysis of Federal Election Commission filings, OpenSecrets previously estimated that the 2020 election would cost around \$14 billion. The extraordinary spending figure makes the 2020 election the most expensive of all time by a large margin.* I guess in order for people to be elected to Congress, they cannot be poor. They *can* however be incompetent...even criminal.

As a culture, we seem to define you as “successful” by how much money you accumulate or already have, even if you inherited it. The average NFL coach salary is around \$6,692 million annually. For other coaches, the average is \$5.5 million. That is what we pay for football coaches to “win” in as many football games as possible... even if they are not “successful.”

Clearly, if I live below “the poverty line” I am very likely to be thought of as “unsuccessful.” Nevertheless, I have met and worked with people who were financially wealthy and very unhappy... even mentally unhealthy and feeling miserable. I have also met people who were “poor” and living a healthy and happy lifestyle. Their level of health and happiness was not at all related to how much money they had or were earning.

What you believe to be successful depends on what you value, ...your “value system.” In 1776, the authors of the Declaration of Independence clearly stated what their values were: *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.*

The preamble to our Constitution reads: *We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare [underlining mine], and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*

As a clinician, I would invite you to seriously rethink what you value most highly...your health, your “Safety and Happiness,” the amount of joy you experience in your life, what you consider to be worthwhile, what overriding purpose you have for being alive, what value to bring to your relationships, how you spend the majority of your time, etcetera, etcetera etc. Perhaps

thereafter, you more likely might enjoy being alive and human no matter how much money you make or have accumulated.

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PRIORITIES OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

See the RI website: <https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/about-rotary/our-priorities>..