PARADIGM SHIFTS: AN ARGUMENT FOR STUDYING PEACE

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In these newsletters of the Rotary District Peacebuilders, we want to invite readers for contributions and ideas, suggestions and possibilities for our efforts to promote the foundational skills for promoting peace, i.e., nonviolent conflict resolution, improved communication and cooperation, successful negotiation and mediation as well as the critical and creative thinking that can help communities move through obstacles and difficulties.

When you dig below the surface, these are the same skills and ideas we can see in various Rotary activities, for example, in Community and Global Grants. By sharing what we learn, we hope to spark new thinking about what can be done locally, on college campuses, elementary and secondary schools, in churches, other organizations as well as in communities of all sizes, formally and informally—wherever people are looking for new and constructive ways through conflicts.

You can look through previous newsletters that have been archived on the District 5440 website: https://www.rotary5440.org/SitePage/peace-building-newsletters

What aspects of peacebuilding would you like to see addressed? Let us know what you think:
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Lloyd Thomas

NOTE: Lloyd Thomas, Ph.D. is a longstanding member of the Fort Collins Rotary Club, a licensed psychologist and a life coach. We asked him if we could use this piece on paradigms that he had written for his regular newsletter. Contact him if you would like to receive his newsletters. He can be reached through email: DrLloyd@CreatingLeaders.com

Shifting Personal Paradigms

The term "paradigm shift" was coined by Thomas Kuhn in his now classic book, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" published in 1968. Kuhn demonstrated how almost every significant change in science begins with a break in the old way scientists conceptualize the way things are" (the old paradigms).

For example, the great Egyptian astronomer, Ptolemy, believed the earth was the center of the universe. Along came Copernicus, believing the sun did not move through the sky, but that the

earth moved around the sun...and a scientific revolution took place. The old paradigm was overthrown, or at least shifted to account for the new information. A new map was created and everything took on a different interpretation. Now almost everyone believes that it is "true" that the earth goes around the sun, and not vice versa. But this is also just a map. The whole question is one of perspective. Both the earth and sun are suspended in empty space. If you were viewing the earth from the sun, the earth would seem to rotate around you. If you viewed the sun from the earth, the sun would seem to rotate around you. From another paradigm, both the earth and sun are suspended in empty space. Their motions are caught up in the larger rotational motion of the galaxy, and the galaxy itself is rushing away from the source of the Big Bang at a tremendous speed. It is all in a point of view, and as we have seen, your point of view is your current interpretation based upon your particular map of the universe.

Stephen Covey, a highly regarded business consultant relates the following story:

"I remember a mini—paradigm shift I experienced one Sunday morning on a subway in New York. People were sitting quietly—— some reading newspapers, some lost in thought, some resting with their eyes closed. It was a calm, peaceful scene.

"Then suddenly, a man and his children entered the subway car. The children were so loud and rambunctious that instantly the whole climate changed.

"The man sat down next to me and closed his eyes, apparently oblivious to the situation. The children were yelling back and forth, throwing things, even grabbing people's papers. It was very disturbing. And yet, the man sitting next to me did nothing.

"It was difficult not to feel irritated. I could not believe that he could be so insensitive as to let his children run wild like that and do nothing about it, taking no responsibility at all. It was easy to see that everyone else on the subway felt irritated, too. So finally, with what I felt was unusual patience and restraint, I turned to him and said, 'Sir, your children are really disturbing a lot of people. I wonder if you couldn't control them a little more?'

"The man lifted his gaze as if to come to a consciousness of the situation for the first time and said softly, 'Oh, you're right. I guess I should do something about it. We just came from the hospital where their mother died about an hour ago. I don't know what to think, and I guess they don't know how to handle it either.'

"Can you imagine what I felt at that moment? My paradigm shifted. Suddenly I saw things differently, and because I <u>saw</u> differently, I <u>thought</u> differently, I <u>felt</u> differently, I b<u>ehaved </u>differently~.   My irritation vanished. I didn't have to worry about controlling my attitude or my behavior; my heart was filled with the man's pain. Feelings of sympathy and compassion flowed freely. 'Your wife just died? Oh, I'm so sorry! Can you tell

me about it? What can I do to help?' Everything changed in an instant."

———From: "<u>The</u> 7 <u>Habits</u> <u>Of</u> <u>Highly</u> <u>Effective</u> <u>People</u>" by Stephen Covey

I submit to you that can <u>make</u> <u>change</u> your "path of least resistance." You change simply and easily when you <u>MODIFY</u> <u>YOUR</u> <u>BASIC</u> <u>PARADIGMS</u> <u>(MAPS)</u> <u>ABOUT</u> <u>YOURSELF,</u> <u>YOUR</u> <u>BODY,</u> <u>YOUR</u> <u>LIFE</u> AND <u>YOUR</u> <u>DEATH</u>. And those cognitive habits most in need of modification are <u>YOUR</u> <u>EARLY—DEVELOPED</u> <u>VIEWS</u> <u>OF</u> <u>THE</u> <u>WORLD</u>...YOUR <u>CHILDHOOD</u> <u>COGNITIVE MAPS</u>. <u>PERCEPTUAL SHIFTS YOU MAY WISH TO MAKE:</u>

- From fear to love;
- From anger to joy;
- From defense to trust;
- From hiding to expressiveness;
- From "victim" to choice;
- From closed to openness;
- From mind control to "heart" control;
- From analysis to intuition;
- From performance (doing) to being;
- From reactivity to "proactivity;"
- From response to flowing;
- From external control to internal control to no control;
- From living by "works" to living by faith to living by grace;
- From darkness to light;
- From knowledge to wisdom;
- From narrowness to expansion;
- From sleep (dream) to consciousness (awareness);
- From body/mind to Spirit;
- From judgment to acceptance.

Robert N. Meroney

NOTE: Bob Meroney is an Emeritus Professor of Fluid Mechanics and Wind Engineering with a long career at Colorado State University. He has been an active member of the Fort Collins Rotary Club and regularly researches a range of topics on modern life, issues and politics that serve to spark deeper conversations among friends and colleagues. If you have questions or ideas, you can contact Bob: Robert.Meroney@ColoState.EDU.

Arguments for a Peace Education:
"As the twig is bent, so grows the tree" … Pope, 1734

This phrase was coined by the 18th century poet Alexander Pope.[1] The accepted meaning is centered on the idea that early influences have a permanent effect. Childhood and subsequent adult perceptions are based on a mix of education, nurture, example and peer influences. Child psychologists tell us education and literacy can have a defining effect on one's perceptions about life and can determine whether one is open and accepting or closed and suspicious about other people and different ideas.

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[1] Alexander Pope also wrote: *"To err is human; to forgive, divine", and "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."*

According to UNESCO, there are about 1 billion non-literate adults, or 26 percent of the world's adult population.[2] Women make up two-thirds of all non-literates, and 98 percent of all non-literates live in developing countries. The three countries with the lowest literacy rates in the world are South Sudan (27%), Afghanistan (28.1% and Burkina Faso (28.7%). It is not a coincidence that these same countries have among the highest poverty levels and almost continuous war and conflict. A possible solution is the promotion of public literacy which is known to enhance and facilitate peaceful resolution of public disagreements.[3] Education has also led women to advocate for peaceful solutions which protect their families.

In a statistical study of poll results in Pakistan, Madiha Afzal (2012)[4] found that:

> *"...as women become more educated, they are less likely to support militancy and terrorism relative to similarly educated men, whereas uneducated women are more likely to support militancy and terrorism relative to uneducated   men."*

> *"Given that the support of the family (and mothers) is important for new recruits as well as terrorists embarking on suicide missions, the gender dimension identified in this paper is especially important: educated women can prevent their sons and family members from joining terrorist groups and participating in attacks."*

On the other hand, Afzhal also found that education does not automatically guarantee sympathy with American interests. Indeed, higher education of women actually increased negative views about the political motives of the United States.

One must, of course, differentiate between "literacy", which facilitates the ability to learn and discern, and "indoctrination", which stifles original thought and can radicalize youth. Sadly, there is historic evidence of how intense political brain washing in Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, Communist North Korea, and ISIS controlled middle-eastern regions can mold youth into accepting uncritically a set of directed beliefs. Ammar Omar and Saphora Smith reported how ISIS produced school literature and textbooks to promote student radicalization.[5]

> *"Children who have been brought up on ISIS' curriculum have been desensitized to violence and exposed to a destructive ideology,"*

[2] Worldatlas: 25 Most Illiterate Countries https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-lowest-literacy-rates-in-the-world.html

[3] When literacy clears a path to peace https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2011/09/07/when-literacy-clears-a-path-to-peace/

[4] Madiha Afzal (2012), Are the Better Educated Less Likely to Support Militancy and Terrorism? Women Are." https://www.cgdev.org/doc/Events/Women%20Education%20and%20Support%20for%20Terrorism%20in%20Pakistan.pdf

[5] Amar Chikh Omar and Saphora Smith, 2017, *Generation ISIS: When Children Are Taught to Be Terrorists*, NBC News https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-uncovered/generation-isis-when-children-are-taught-be-terrorists-n812201

One must conclude that promoting literacy and education is critical to the future existence of World Peace, but that specific teaching materials, books, and a peace-oriented curriculum should be promoted.

Lindsey Pointer

NOTE: Lindsey Pointer has been working on the use of restorative principles in the criminal justice system. She defines herself as a restorative practices facilitator, trainer and researcher and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Restorative Justice at Victoria University in New Zealand with support from a Rotary Global Grant Scholarship and the [Fulbright] Program from the U.S. State Department. If you have questions or ideas, contact Lindsey: lindseycpointer@gmail.com

Restorative Practices Teach Students How to Handle Difficult Conversations

I recently had a conversation with a few friends about the advice we had received growing up from adults (mostly parents and teachers) when another kid picked on us. The wisdom and guidance we had received varied widely and included among others, "hit him back," "ignore him" "she is just jealous," "laugh it off," "tell the teacher," and "he must have a crush on you."

Adults often end up intervening in conflict between children, which is certainly sometimes necessary, but there is also great value in providing kids and teenagers with the necessary tools and confidence to have these difficult conversations themselves.

A 2016 article from Psychology Today highlights some of the benefits of implementing restorative practices in schools. The first benefit listed is that restorative practices give students the tools they need to resolve conflict themselves. This quote from a student at a school in Virginia (you can read the full report [here]) illustrates the empowering impact of this method.

> "Me and my friend were playing around in class and we actually solved [a conflict using] the Circle. It was fun but it was serious too and we did it all by ourselves. Cause my friend that used to be in the facilitator circle training, me and her we was just playing at first but my other friend, the girl I'll call my friend and the girl I'll call my sister, they was arguing about something or whatever. So me and X said, 'let's have a circle.' and then we was playing - we was playing though, and then it actually solved their problem. Now they talk. So we actually did a Circle, all by ourselves." -12th grade female

In addition to teaching students how to facilitate a circle process, the foundational restorative questions alone also provide young people (and adults!) with a framework through which to view and ultimately discuss conflict. Rather than ignoring a behavior, telling someone to stop because they are breaking a rule, or punishing them (either yourself or through an authority), a restoratively framed conversation focuses on the impacts of that is happening and what is needed to make things right. The three central questions are:

1. What happened?

2. Who was affected and how?
3. What is needed to repair the harm and make things right?

School is a place for academic learning, but it is also a place for learning how to be with other people and to resolve conflict in a healthy way when it arises. Taking the time to teach students the tools of restorative practices can have a huge impact on their life in school and beyond.

New Zealand has done an impressive job of implementing restorative practices in schools. Many of the Ministry of Education resources are available online and can be found [here](#).

William M. Timpson

NOTE: Bill Timpson has been on the faculty at Colorado State University in its School of Education for many years and a member of the Fort Collins Rotary Club where his focus on sustainable peacebuilding in Burundi, East Africa, has been supported by two Global Grants. following is adapted from his (2002) book, Teaching and Learning Peace (Madison, WI: Atwood). If you have questions or ideas, contact Bill: william.timpson@colostate.edu

Best-Case Thinking

Elise Boulding (2000), a sociologist by training, is one of our best known scholars on peace. In *Cultures of Peace,* she offers a compelling overview of the road we've taken, our preoccupation with the tragedies that dominate the news—"if it bleeds, it leads"—and why we need to study peace, a much more complex topic than the endless reviews of battles won and lost that tend to dominate what historians report. Across the globe there is an enormous investment in security but little of substance going toward the study of peace. In the U.S. we have four well-funded military academies that offer four-year degrees at public expense but no comparable peace academy. We need a new paradigm, a shift to more "best-case thinking."

> *In general, societies tend to be a blend of peaceable and warrior culture themes—the balance between the themes varying from society to society and from historical moment to historical moment. In our time, the tensions between the two themes have become a heavy social burden as a worldwide military forcing system linked to a destructive, planet-harming mode of industrialization and urbanization is distorting the human capability for creative and peaceful change. No sooner did the fears of nuclear holocaust fade with the end of the Cold War then the fear of genocidal ethnic warfare, reducing once proudly independent countries to a series of dusty battlegrounds, rose to take the place of earlier fears. Urban violence—now manifesting itself in gun battles in the cities and neighborhoods and even the schoolyards and playgrounds of the industrial West— has unleashed other terrors. If every society is a blend of the themes of violence and peaceableness, why is the peaceableness so hard to see? It is there, but not well reported. The tendency of planners and policymakers to prepare for worst-case scenarios leaves societies unprepared for the opportunities involved in best-case scenarios* (4).

Think about what you have learned about history. What explicit and implicit messages are reinforced through these narratives? Brainstorm a list of examples of nonviolent responses to conflict situations. Who were the key players, leaders, and 'behind the scenes' people and groups involved in these conflicts? What methods, besides violence, were used to actualize change? Reflect on how peace, nonviolent, and cooperative paradigms might alternatively transform present community, societal, national, and global conflicts into mutually beneficial outcomes for humanity and our fellow planetary inhabitants.

References

Boulding, Elise (2000) *Cultures of peace: The hidden side of history.* New York: Syracuse University Press.