

ROTARY DISTRICT 5440 PEACEBUILDER NEWSLETTER  
FEBRUARY 2019 NUMBER 18  
**PEACE LITERACY AND RISK TAKING**

William M. Timpson, Bob Meroney, Lloyd Thomas and Del Benson, Fort Collins Rotary Club  
Lindsey Pointer, 2017 Rotary Global Grant Scholarship Recipient

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. **The Rotary Foundation has six priority areas: (1) Promoting peace; (2) Fighting disease; (3) Providing clean water; (4) Saving mothers and children; (5) Supporting education; and (6) Growing local economies. It has been argued by staff at Rotary International (RI) that long with promoting peace, “sustainability” is another cross-cutting priority that connects with all the others.** RI has directed efforts in these six areas to enhance local and global impact and staff indicate that their most successful and sustainable projects and activities tend to fall within these areas: See the RI website: <https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/about-rotary/our-priorities>

NOTE: The latest *Peace Science Digest* Special Issue focuses on Climate Change, Security and Conflict and parallels our Newsletter Number 15 for November which emphasized Peace Building and Climate Change. See: <https://peacesciencedigest.org/>

**PEACE LITERACY: PRESENTATION TO THE FORT COLLINS ROTARY CLUB**

Wednesday Feb. 13, 2019 by Paul Chappell

Paul K. Chappell is an international peace educator and serves as the Peace Literacy Director of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. He graduated from West Point, was deployed to Iraq, and left active duty as a Captain. He is the author of the seven-book Road to Peace series about ending war, waging peace, the art of living, and our shared humanity. The first six published books in this series are *Will War Ever End?*, *The End of War*, *Peaceful Revolution*, *The Art of Waging Peace*, *The Cosmic Ocean*, and *Soldiers of Peace*. Lecturing across the United States and internationally, he also teaches courses and workshops on Peace Leadership and Peace Literacy.

Chappell grew up in Alabama, the son of a half-black and half-white father who fought in the Korean and Vietnam wars, and a Korean mother. Having grown up in a violent household, Chappell has forged a new understanding of war and peace, rage and trauma, and vision, purpose, and hope. His website is [www.peacefulrevolution.com](http://www.peacefulrevolution.com).

Emerging from a century of almost continuous warfare combined with the Rotary Foundation's commitment to promoting peace and this current year's focus on literacy, this topic is proving to be much needed and compelling for U.S. citizens, in particular.

## 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](mailto:Robert.Meroney@ColoState.EDU).*

### TAKING RISKS FOR PEACE: PEACE MARTYRS

Is peace worth dying or suffering for? What do we know about what has been written?

What is the meaning of “peace”? It seems there are at least two concepts: a) *peace as freedom from disturbance* (synonyms would be tranquility, calm, quiet, silence, inner peace, freedom from fear, and balance), or b) *peace as the absence of war* (synonyms would be law and order, harmony, accord, amity, nonaggression, nonviolence, and the absence of conflict). Both are desirable, but what is “risk”? Again, there are different types: a) risks to property, investments, or wealth, b) risks of personal reputation, goodwill, happiness, or tranquility, or c) risk of one’s own life or personal safety or that of a loved one.

My professional career area involved safety and risk analysis. I routinely looked at risks associated with nuclear power, chemical spills, pollution, storage of liquid natural gas, bridge failures, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Often it was useful to compare the risks of these issues to everyday risks that most people don’t even think about but are often far more likely to occur. Most people tend to fixate about risks that are extremely unlikely to happen, while voluntarily subjecting themselves to situations far more dangerous.

Let’s consider how much risk we are willing to take for the concept of world peace? First consider the ultimate penalty of risk, just how frequently do people die per 100,000 population due to activities in which they often voluntarily participate:<sup>1, 2</sup>

- Base Jumping 1,700
- Grand Prix Racing 1,000
- Hang Gliding 179
- Riding in a car 150
- Motorbike Racing 100
- Childbirth 24
- Riding in a motor vehicle 16.3
- Canoeing 10
- Scuba diving 3
- American football 2
- Sky Diving 1
- Bungee Jumping 0.2
- Skiing 0.08
- War (per conflict, 2000)\* 5

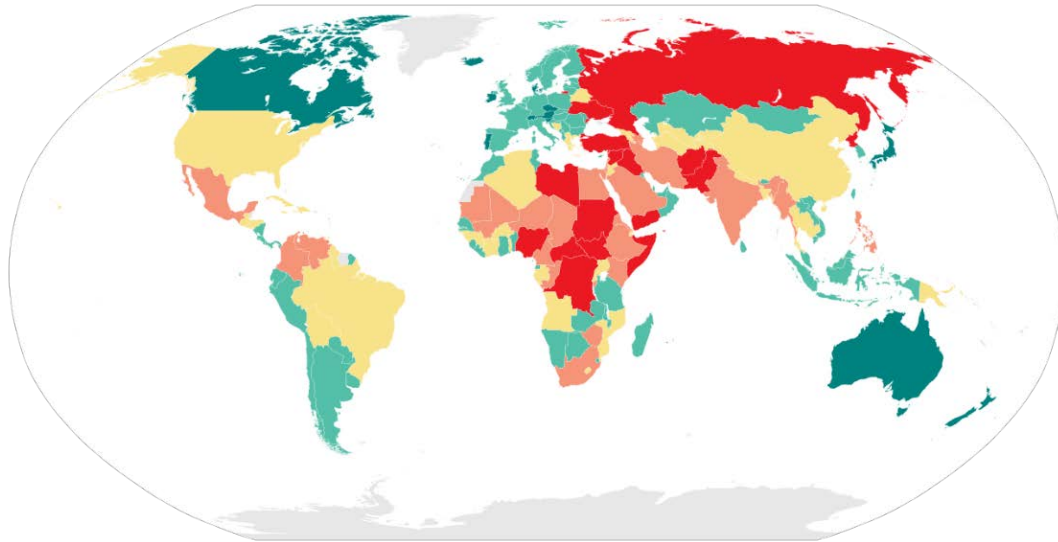
\* Average civilian and military deaths per conflict, 15 year moving average as of year 2000, <https://ourworldindata.org/uploads/2018/09/Bubble-and-lines-FINAL-03.png>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tetongravity.com/story/news/your-chances-of-dying-ranked-by-sport-and-activity>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64\\_02.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64_02.pdf)

On the other hand, the existence of peace is more than the absence of death or actual war. A dictatorship can impose a strict regime in which there is no overt conflict, but life is miserable. Since 2007 the Institute for Economics and Peace headquartered in Sydney, Australia has published a Global Peace Index (GPI) that measures the relative position of a nation's Peacefulness. The GPI examines some 23 measures of peace, but 17 measures examine indications of internal peace and level of militarization and not conflict deaths within or outside the nation's boundaries.<sup>3,4</sup> Sadly, the United States ranks 121<sup>st</sup> out of 163 nations ranked with only a "medium" level state of peace.<sup>5</sup>



Global Peace Index ■ Very high ■ High ■ Medium ■ Low ■ Very low

Who then are the peace activists and martyrs prepared to risk speaking out for peace?<sup>6</sup> These individuals proactively have advocated diplomatic and non-military resolution of conflict through nonviolent means and methods. Although many have not suffered physically for their views, others have been humiliated, incarcerated, tortured, and died for their beliefs. Consider the following sample of peace martyrs:

- 399 BC Socrates, the “gadfly of Athens”, died for persistent criticism and fact checking of the Athenian establishment,
- 1865 Abraham Lincoln died for opposing racism,
- 1943 Hans and Sophie Scholl died for opposing Nazism,
- 1948 Mahatma Gandhi died for trying to spread communal harmony,
- 1963 Medgar Evers died for leadership in the Civil Rights Movement,
- 1968 Martin Luther King died for advocating nonviolence and peace among men,
- 2008 Obora Toshiyuki, Onishi Nobuhrio and Takada Sachimi were jailed for advocating the continuation of the Japanese pacifist constitution written in 1947.

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global\\_Peace\\_Index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Peace_Index)

<sup>4</sup> <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2018/06/Global-Peace-Index-2018-2.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The US GPI score at 2.3 out of 5.0 ranks just above those in the “low” level state of peace, i.e. above Myanmar but below Armenia. Very low peacefulness is found in Russia (154) scores 3.16, North Korea (150) scores 2.95, and China (112) scores 2.243. Iceland, New Zealand, and Austria (1, 2, and 3) score 1.096, 1.192, and 1.274, respectively.

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_peace\\_activists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_peace_activists)

Given the example of these heroic peace martyrs, why are we so often reluctant to stand up for principles of peace?<sup>7</sup> Other than the obvious fear of pain and death, perhaps it is because,

- We over-estimate the probability of something going wrong,
- We exaggerate the consequences of what might happen if it does go wrong,
- We under estimate our ability to handle the consequences of risk, and
- We discount or deny the cost of inaction and sticking with the status quo.

But perhaps the biggest risk in life is not taking one. Taking risks can be beneficial, and we can expect:

- To learn and grow from risks,
- To overcome our fear of failure,
- To create a worthy heritage for others,
- To be an example to others, and
- In the end, No Regrets.

When the “roll is called up yonder”, who would you rather stand beside? The peace activists and peace martyrs noted above or dictators like Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Mao Zedong, Robert Mugabe, Saddam Hussein, Poi Pot, Bashar al-Assad, Idi Amin, Kim Il-sung, Francisco Franco, etc. who destroyed peace.

### **Lloyd Thomas**

*NOTE: Lloyd Thomas, Ph.D. is a longstanding member of the Fort Collins Rotary Club, a licensed psychologist and a life coach. Contact him if you would like to receive his newsletters. He can be reached through email: [DrLloyd@CreatingLeaders.com](mailto:DrLloyd@CreatingLeaders.com)*

### **TAKING RISKS IN 2019: WHAT CAN RESEARCH TELL US?**

Today is the first day of the year 2019. Will this year be the one in which you attain all your "new year's resolutions?" Have you already set your goals for 2019? Are you ready to take the deliberate risks to make your desired changes manifest in your life. Nobody knows from heartbeat to heartbeat how much time you have left to create your desired outcomes in the future. Taking the risks required to move you into an unknown future can be daunting as well as anxiety provoking. So today, I want to write about effective risk-taking.

Risk, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. For some it is riskier to skydive than to sign a 30-year mortgage. Others believe becoming a parent is more risky than downhill skiing. Some people who get a thrill out of risking death and disability are sometimes intimidated by a major commitment to such an outcome as marriage. Without risk, you can't make money by investing. Without taking any risks at all, you never learn or do anything new...like fulfilling your new year's resolutions.

There are those of us who prefer one level of risk over another. There are those who seem to have more guts than brains, who prefer the all-out, go-for-it, sensation-loving, death-defying, thrill of uncertainty. These "daredevils" thrive on that uncertainty. They also are better handlers of crises. They have had more practice. They cope with stress better because they have rehearsed and refined their personal coping behaviors through managing the "thrill" of risk-taking. They often find more effective solutions to problems, and find them quicker, because

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/margiewarrell/2013/06/18/take-a-risk-the-odds-are-better-than-you-think/#477be3fc45c2>

they have accustomed themselves to finding fast solutions to difficult situations. They have mastered challenges before.

Compared to non-risk-takers, persons who regularly take risks tend to experience less fear and anxiety. Risk takers have tested their mettle again and again, so they have learned to use their fear to their advantage. They have a strong confidence in their own coping skills. Studies have shown that people who take risks are usually self-motivated and are more creative. They like to make up their own minds, and they are receptive to novelty and uncertainty. They do well in unprecedented situations which require creative solutions.

Does this mean all of us should run out and become greater risk takers? Yes and no! Yes, if you engage in known, deliberative, productive or positive risks. No, if you are prone to destructive or negative risks. What is the difference between the two? Positive risks are those risks which lead to outstanding achievement in sports, business, science, art and even in interpersonal relationships. Examples include: competitive sports, public speaking, long-distance running, scuba diving, etc. Positive risks are almost any activity that boosts your level of arousal and allows you to refine your own coping skills.

Negative risks include activities like: heavy drinking, reckless driving, experimenting with drugs, cheating on one's spouse, gossiping, gambling, shoplifting...and all other antisocial or unhealthy activities that lead to weakening your ability to cope with life, or generate greater misery and stress within it.

In his book, "risking," psychiatrist David Viscott, offers some guidelines for deciding whether or not to risk. I've modified them and offer them to you below.

1. Don't risk out of fear, anger, hurt, guilt or depression. These feelings should be resolved on their own, not through a risky action.
2. Don't risk just to prove yourself...to you or anyone else.
3. Risk with a clear goal in mind and don't combine risks unnecessarily.
4. Know the possible loss involved and become aware of everything that can go wrong...and why. If you don't expect the loss, you don't understand the risk. Ask lots of questions. Become informed. Don't deny or ignore problems or hazards. Fully understand the nature of the risk.
5. Don't pretend you're afraid if you are. Only fools do not fear danger. If the fear does not go away, maybe you are risking too much. Monitor your fear level and use it to gauge your continuing to risk.
6. Do it! Once you have decided the risk is worth taking and the time is right, act decisively. In the face of resistance, don't give up too soon. But don't continue to risk once you know you've lost. Let a bad situation come to an end as soon as possible.
7. Take the time to learn from your mistakes and correct those you can. Sometimes even when the act of risking is underway, mistakes still can be fixed. Allow for self-correction.

Taking risks is a skill. Strengthening or honing that skill in 2019 just might increase your ability to begin and persevere in fulfilling any goals or desired outcomes you want to attain this year. Learn it and you add a lustiness and a joy (beauty?) to being alive.

## 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. What follows is adapted from his 2009 book, 147 Tips for Teaching Peace and Reconciliation, co-authored with an international group of peace scholars that included Ed Brantmeier, Nat Kees, Tom Cavanagh, Claire McGlynn and Elavie Ndura (Madison, WI: Atwood). If you have questions or ideas, contact Bill: [william.timpson@colostate.edu](mailto:william.timpson@colostate.edu)*

### LOOK LOCALLY AND TAKE ACTION: USING PEACE LITERACY

Read the local newspapers and check your city's websites for programs and groups that are addressing conflict, reconciliation and peacemaking. In business, government and nonprofit agencies, we can see the same issues and needs. In *The Third Side*, Bill Ury (1999) notes that within "many organizations, facilitators are working with cross-functional teams to overcome interdepartmental issues. Managers are learning to mediate among their teammates, their employees, and often their multiple bosses. The success of a company is coming to depend on the ability of its people to resolve the innumerable conflicts that crop up between manufacturing and marketing, sales and headquarters, employees and supervisors, and to seek a 'triple win'—a solution good for each side and for the company as a whole" (10).

Look for opportunities to get involved, learn some new skills and make a difference. For example, some communities have active restorative justice programs where volunteers are welcomed. Various boards and commissions will routinely surface contentious issues that would benefit from some understanding of the principles of mediation. Faith-based groups are often found working with the less fortunate and raising difficult questions about the inequities that exist. Your business or organization may need to address conflicts or tensions. Volunteer to get something started. Ask for some discussion. Volunteer to facilitate some work in this area or invite in someone else with mediation skills. Below is an example from my work in Northern Ireland.



Hundreds of years of conflict festered and exploded in response to British colonization that took control and exploited the Irish people, their land and resources. Resistance and violence were predictable up to very recent times when the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 offered a pathway to peace through disarmament and various efforts at reconciliation between the Catholics and Protestant overlords.



Creating a local way forward, two carpenters and an office manager tapped into European Union Peace funds to create a new business (1) recycling wood that was headed for the landfill, (2) teaching new "green" carpentry skills to local youth, and (3) putting these former "enemies" together to reduce hatreds and build new friendships and relationships.

## **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: [lindseypointer@gmail.com](mailto:lindseypointer@gmail.com)*

### **TAKING THE RISK TO BE VULNERABLE**

#### **WHAT WE KNOW FROM RESTORATIVE JUSTICE RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

At its core, the restorative justice process is asking participants to take a great risk. For the responsible party (or offender), it is asking them to be fully accountable for their actions, to commit to hearing how other have been affected by those actions, and to working towards making things right. This responsibility-taking requires tremendous courage and vulnerability and is something many of us would rather avoid.

For the harmed party (or victim), the restorative justice process is asking them to open themselves to a person who has hurt them. To take a risk in being vulnerable and sharing the story of how they have been impacted, trusting that the other person will receive their story graciously and will do no further harm.

The restorative justice process often results in incredibly healing and transformative outcomes for all involved and in a more positive view of humanity and a whole. But to get there, each person must first take the incredible risk of vulnerability.

As you look ahead at the rest of 2019, take some time to consider the areas of pain in your own life and relationships. Are there people who you have been hurt by who you could take the risk to open up to, sharing honestly and kindly how you've been affected and your hopes to make things right moving forward? Or are there people in your life who you have hurt? Could you gather the courage to take responsibility for those actions, to open to hearing their side, and to work to repair the harm that has been caused?

Conflict is difficult and scary, and often the first response we have is to put up walls. However, as restorative justice shows us, it is taking the risk to be vulnerable with each other that paves the way for reconciliation and healing.

## **Del Benson**

*NOTE: Del Benson is a Professor and wildlife specialist for Extension at Colorado State University. His work is with wildlife and recreation enterprises on private land, conservation education, hunter attitudes and behavior, public input to resource management decision making and campus environmental management. He had conducted research on land management for wildlife and recreation in Colorado, Morocco and Honduras. His 1999 book Wildlife Stewardship and Recreation on Private Lands received The Wildlife Award for Conservation Education. Another book of his, Living With Nature and Wildlife: Doing Our Part, is a primer for students and teachers to learn, in simple terms, how the environment works and how people can do their part to manage it.*

## CIVILITY BUILDING

### *Peace is a state of Becoming and not of Being: What we can Learn*

Humans are never likely to be at peace, but they should strive to be more peaceful and civil towards each other, the environment, and even to themselves. I cannot pragmatically imagine a peaceful utopian world where all resources that humans need, and desire are abundant, distributed fairly, and are sustainably secure. Conflicts are inevitable.

Peace often relates to avoiding, such as freedom from disturbance, oppressive thoughts and actions, or war. Expecting peace is risky because attaining it has never actually existed in the world, community, family, partnerships, or in oneself; consequently, we are at risk to assume and to practice otherwise. Peace is a state of becoming--striving, experimenting, reaching toward--but never a state of being. The dynamic and fragile process toward peace never ends; it has many formative steps; outcomes to evaluate; and feedback processes to understand.

Learning about becoming peaceful starts with attaining new knowledge, skills, and attitudes; progresses when learning is converted into actions; and is a risk to one's persona when stepping into opportunity. I have resolved on practicing peace through actions that promote civility and conflict management starting with a mindset, using words to frame ideas, and finding outlets to house synergistic actions.

### **Building Civility Building**

A major risk, vision, and action step for civility is to build an iconic "**Civility Building**" where Rotary, Colorado State University, City of Fort Collins, Northern Colorado, and the world uses collaborative space to teach, conduct research, and to practice civility toward humans and the environment through outreach programs.

Many programs could already fit into the **Civility Building** structure including:

- Rotary's peace centers, causes, 4-Way Test, community and people of action programs;
- CSU's peace, reconciliation, sustainability, one health, mindfulness, and free speech;
- Fort Collins's community and environmental engagement and first responders;
- Everyone's' art, music, writing, speaking, social, psychological, educational, legal, political, business, international, and environmental initiatives.

Civility with Rotary Clubs, District and Partners for  
the next 100 years!

- Listen
- Talk
- Act
- Reflect
- Report
- Respect





Is the **Civility Building** risk worth our joint endeavors? Will we risk working together to put ideas and words into actions and outcomes literally and figuratively on the ground for people to join with us? Can the risk of a **Civility Building** elevate our routine work toward something more cooperative, synergistic, wide reaching, locally and internationally renowned, and more amazing than the status quo? Can we find entrepreneurs willing to risk financial support and business acumen to match our people in action programs for amazing **Civility Building** that reaches out into the community and world?

What is the risk of not acting? Can we become players and not victims? Tell us if you will act with us.