

1:

Reconciliation and Dialog

By Dag Hareide, Ljubljana 26.9.2016
Conference on Reconciliation in Slovenia, Slovenian Meditation Society

Reconciliation? Sprava? How does the word taste? Too serious for the everyday talk? Too religious maybe? I had only heard the word used in church services. Jesus Christ reconciled me with God. But in the 1980's I suddenly heard guerrilla fighters and politician in Southern Africa say: the war is over. No it is time for reconciliation! Today I can hear it in many areas – therapy, court, mediation, organisational development etc.

A simple definition for reconciliation could be: **To make people friends after a painful conflict.** But isn't that often too much to expect?

Levels of reconciliation

Peace researcher David Crocker distinguishes between three levels of reconciliation following a conflict. I have reworded it slightly:

1. The first level is agreeing on not harassing each other and not resorting to violence. The parties may still despise and dislike each other and avoid cooperation.
2. The next level is reciprocity. People coexist daily according to laws and democratic regulations and official cooperation, but social interaction and friendship is not demanded.
3. The third level is the “thickest” and richest. Healing, restoration and forgiveness have happened. The parties have a common frame of reference making it possible to interact socially. There is a will to mutual compassion between former adversaries.

Most people will probably associate the term reconciliation with this third level. And I will use the word in this “thick” and rich sense in this lecture.

If the parties do not wish reconciliation, the mediator should not force this upon them. Some cases may be too trivial. If you were unfortunate to bump into a car, it seems unnecessary to talk of reconciliation when trying to agree on the price of the damage,

Some cases may seem too horrible. It is difficult to expect a rich reconciliation in cases after murder or war. In such cases a kind of agreement describing what level of coexistence is expected in the future may be satisfactory. That a violent man accepts to stay away from his ex-partner can be considered a good result.

2:

A woman from Croatia stated at a war hearing in Copenhagen in 1995: “To find reconciliation may be like finding radium, one has to dig out many tons of mountain to find one gram of what one is looking for.”

The mediator does however carry with her a dream: to help achieve reconciliation between the parties. The mediator not only respects and trusts the parties, but respects and trusts the dialog itself. The dialog has a potential that surpasses the expectations of the participants. The experience from Scandinavian mediation in criminal cases tells that the serious and violent cases give more breakthroughs and more reconciliation than the light ones.

The mediator must watch over hope till the parties themselves recover it.

The elements of reconciliation:

***Love and truthfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.
The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.***

The Book of Psalms 85: 10, 12

This verse from the Bible puts four ethical values, four human deeds as a basis for the blessing of land and people. I think we here have the building stones of reconciliation:

- 1) Truth/Truthfulness
- 2) Justice
- 3) Peace/Security
- 4) Mercy/Forgiveness

Each of these words is rich and has several possible interpretations. They presuppose each other and you need all of them to make reconciliation.

But they easily oppose each other. A book in Norway have the title: “The Man that Loved Justice”. The story tells how his extreme passion for justice destroyed any hope of peace and mercy.

I will use most of my speech to analyse these words. It will be theoretical and ethical. Without clear value basis – most conflicts will crash. I suggest that you recollect your own conflicts when I talk. Keep some personal examples in your back head and test my theory against your own experience.

3:

Truth

*It is hard to tell the truth, for surely there is only one.
It is alive, however, and therefore has a living, changing, face*
Franz Kafka

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission gradually distinguished between

- 1) a *personal* truth of “wounded memories” – personally told experiences
- 2) a factual or *forensic* truth which may be documented and verified by the legal system,
- 3) a *social* truth which arises as historical consensus from the process based on shared memories and facts.

What is interesting is that this commission regarded each of these as equally true and created institutional room for each of them. They had official hearings where people told their stories, a separate legal committee and other people summarized their findings in reports. The one kind of truth is not necessarily more true than the other. They are all partial truths and limited in their own special ways.

Truth in court and mediation

The court process is founded on the idea that it is possible to establish one objective, legal truth. To get “the truth on the table” as we say in Norway. To accomplish this, it is necessary to ignore most of what exist in a human life

A classic case in Norwegian courts are one neighbour that want to cut a tree that another neighbour wants to let stand. These neighbours have many elements in their relation: The boy plays electric guitar in the night and annoys the neighbour, the two woman had a terrible quarrel about something else years ago that both cannot forget, and on the other side they both want to keep the local school that the authorities will shut down. The tree is at most 10 % of their relation and their conflicts. The court however will look into only that separate tree. They will search in different laws for the paragraphs that can be used, measure meters to the fence etc. to establish a legal truth about the conflict. And by doing this they have ignored most of the conflict between the people, and then also the possibility to repair their relation.

4:

A mediation does not start with such a pre-understanding of truth, but with the meeting of people. It starts rather from the idea that here are several truths and the parties must recognise this and respect this if possible. The personal truth is of course subjective, full of feelings and of pain. As such it is important. Feelings are also facts.

It is important that enemies can meet and share their subjective truths before it is polarised and frozen into ethnic or political truths. I mentioned a trivial story about a tree. But it could be traumatic killing, for example one of the incidents that lead to the war in Macedonia in 2001. A group of Albanian speaking youth came towards a road block with Macedonian speaking soldiers. One of the boys were shot. Later this story was retold in two versions. The Macedonians said that the boy carried a hand grenade. The Albanians said it was a mobile phone. And it was retold within each group so it was almost impossible to find an Albanian or Macedonian that had the opposite view. This was never clarified nor reconciled. We need to use dialog and mediation to avoid the truth getting segmented and frozen into different ethnic truths.

Tens of countries have had Truth Commissions which leave out the other building stones in reconciliation such as justice and forgiveness. They may like in Bosnia find that the number of dead were not 200.000 that everybody said, but about the half. They are helpful, but they often lack the dynamics that really help people with their personal pain.

Personal truth are necessary so people can tell their stories, factual truth is important as a basis for a common agreement and social truth as a basis for a shared understanding resulting in improved relations.

Truthful speech

Finding the truth is an existential longing. Speaking truthfully is an ethical demand. Both are important for reconciliation. Truthfulness will probably do better in a dialog when nobody claims ownership to the truth. Unlike in court and with police, the mediator does not interrogate. Where the interrogator tries to expose a lie, the mediator will foster truthfulness. Whereas interrogation must have a portion of mistrust, the mediator must wholeheartedly aim for the trust. It is the easiest and what is natural in human meetings. You have probably experienced how stressful it is to make a big lie. It requires extensive intellectual preparation and mind control not to be taken as being inconsistent. The mediator's task is to clear the way for the spontaneous life expression.

5:

*In the openness of speech there lies the trust that what is said will be believed.
Openness of speech is a spontaneous life expression. Knud Løgstrup*

Justice

Justice is a many-faceted concept. There is a *procedural justice* which refers to equal treatment of the parties in a fair process. There is also what is known as *distributive justice* referring to the outcome of a mediation: such as what is the proper price of a property. Both are important, but I will here concentrate on what's normally the most burning issue; That some feel violated by the actions of the other party. Something unjust and painful has happened to me. The hope is that mediation shall restore justice. This becomes a matter of what is *justice as a response to violation and harm*.

Restorative justice

The English Term *Restorative Justice* has become the most important concept in describing what mediators wish to accomplish. And I suppose this group knows a lot about this. The concept originates from the victim offender mediation, but has spread to areas such as school, workplace, social work etc. Some people have started talking about "Restorative Practices". "Restore" entails repair, rejuvenate, re-establish, get well, renovate.

Restorative justice breaks with the traditional opposites of many debates, such as the traditional debates of conservatives against liberals. The conservatives are concerned with setting limits and having control. This is best done through punishment and disciplinary reactions, a punishing justice. The liberals are concerned with empathy and the possibility of personal improvement for the wrong-doers. This is best done by understanding and helping them. Restorative justice transcends this debate and tries to include the best of both positions while at the same time criticizing them. This table illustrates this:

High on control / low on empathy Speaks <i>to</i> the wrong-doer Punishing justice Ideal type: "the judge"	High on control / high on empathy Speaks <i>with</i> the wrong-doer Restorative justice Ideal type: "the conflict mediator"
Low on control / low on empathy Speaks <i>about</i> the wrong-doer No justice Ideal type: "the commentator"	Low on control / high on empathy Speaks <i>for</i> the wrong-doer Explanatory justice Ideal type: "the therapist"

6:

The conflict council in Norway have for more than 25 years worked with restorative justice. They are fast, efficient and handle 8000 cases a year. All mediation is done by lay mediators, not professionals, but normal citizens. They solve 80 - 90 % of the cases. The police and politicians used to think 20 years ago that this was a too mild and unprofessional, and kept the serious cases away. Now they are entering more and more cases with violence and serious conflicts.

One example is a young robber that forced a woman in a shop to give him money at gun-point. He didn't care much about the judge or even ending in jail. It gave him a break from his drug problem. But meeting the lady was the hardest experience. He shivered and blushed when the lady told him about what he had done to her life, her nervous breakdown, her nightmares. Meetings like that are neither easy nor mild.

Restorative justice says something about a desired outcome. The point is to not hand out penalties according to some rules, but to do something to repair damages and restore good relations with the person who has been violated. The point is not to explain away what has happened ("poor kid has had a troubled childhood"). The person who has violated another must assume the responsibility for this and apologise, pay, perform some work or whatever else may help to repair the damages.

Participatory justice

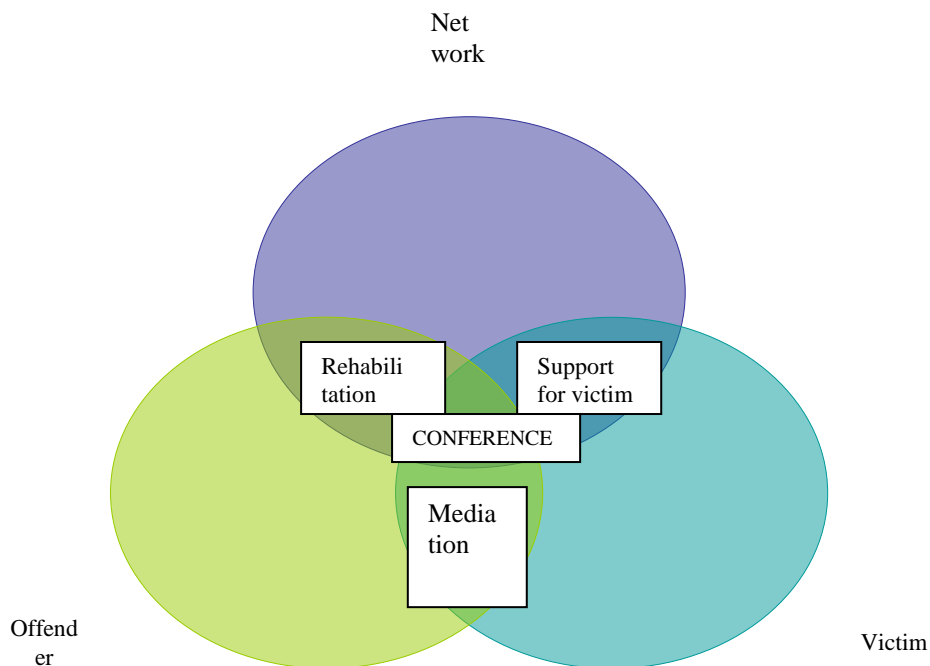
The question arises: Who may participate and take part in the mediation process? The modern mediation movement in Nordic countries started with an article by Nils Christie. He said in short two things: 1) conflict is a valuable property - and 2) lawyers and social workers have stolen the conflict from the people. Since conflict is a valuable property, the people involved should be the owners. By handling the conflict well – you can gain knowledge, empowerment, clarification of norms, better relations. The lawyers hinder a meaningful meeting between the offender and the victim. The state takes over and owns the crime. The victim becomes a spectator. The social workers and psychologist are even worse because they make conflicts into individual diagnoses.

The slogan became "return the conflict to its owners". This implies that all parties touched by the conflict shall be allowed to participate in the mediation process. In conflict councils, school mediation and parent mediation the two parties meet as equals in a meeting lead by a mediator. But some people are still missing. Hardly a conflict exists which has only two parties. How many are affected by a divorce? Well, many more than the two married.

7:

How many are affected by an act of violence or vandalism? It spreads fear and contempt, and affect a number of the people around the act although they may not have been directly involved. This is why mediators are becoming increasingly more concerned with all who feel affected by the conflict. This has led to rapid growth in several new forms of mediation like network meetings, community conferences, family conferencing.

We may illustrate this in this mental map from Paul McCold.



This approach may be characterised with the appropriate term “empowerment”.

It is not empowerment when child protection professionals simply decide what to do with the child and enforce this from above. It is empowerment when family, friends and network together conceive of a plan. This is the method for family conferences.

It is not empowerment when the victim of an act of violence is reduced to a witness in a trial and the state has stolen the case. It is empowerment and participatory justice when victim, her supporters, offender and whoever else has been affected by the conflict get together at a conference to find solutions to the conflict. It is a question of people’s power, of democracy.

8:

“The essence of democracy is not determined by election, but by conversation/dialog, negotiation, by mutual respect and understanding, and from this a growing sense of the interest of the whole”

Hal Koch

In mediation justice is about restoration and participation. It is the experience of the mediation movement that this constitutes a better basis for reconciliation.

Peace and security

What do we mean by peace? Peace is in its minimalistic definition: absence of direct violence and threats of violence. This is called *negative peace*. I will call it security. Many people would rather use the word peace to describe a *positive peace*. This is a peace which holds qualities such as justice and truth to ensure that this peace will last.

UNESCO has named this “culture of peace in six simple sentences: 1) Respect all life, 2) Practice active non-violence, 3) Share with others, 4) Listen to understand, 5) Preserve the balance of nature, and 6) Create new forms of solidarity. This is what I call reconciliation at highest level.

Negative peace, security, is a precondition for mediation. Positive peace is, like reconciliation, mediation’s optimal goal.

Mediation is often done following serious acts of violence. “Mediation must not become yet another incidence of abuse” is a basic principle for mediators. It would in that case be better to have no mediation at all. Security is an outright demand. The assessment should not be left to the parties. The mediator has an independent responsibility to know whether he may securely go through with the mediation with no incidences of violence and no repetition of abuse in the form of threats.

However, one should not use this as an excuse for not telling the truth. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission went through many months of hearings with enormous media coverage. They opened up painful wounds from the victims, telling the worst stories of murders and torture and revealing the perpetrators. This lead of course to the shaming of many individuals. But in this extremely violent country not one incident of violence was reported relating to this process. I think that the openness and the transparency of the process itself gave the security.

Forgiveness

The Nobel Peace Laureate Desmond Tutu wrote a book and called it *No Future Without Forgiveness*. It is a strong statement. I think he is right. But when forgiveness is addressed in conflict mediation there tends to be less of the future and more of the past. This is because forgiveness presupposes **guilt**. It is my assertion that you cannot talk about forgiveness unless there are some recognition of guilt. When people in a conflict discuss the question of guilt – they often start to accuse each other and compete who is the least guilty and most victim. In some conflicts it seems as everybody has been a victim some time in history. As a result, mediators often chose to leave out the question of guilt and rather focus on the future and solutions. Does this block the possibility for forgiveness? Maybe not?

In the law and the legal system, you will find guilt. A sentence in a murder case may vary from zero to 20 years depending on whether the deed was negligent, intentional or premeditated – thus depending upon how guilty the killer is. A judge tries to measure out objective guilt. The court and the law speaks of guilt, but not of forgiveness. They may pardon the guilty through its authority and superior power. But only the victim may give forgiveness.

Psychologists have traditionally written a lot on guilt, or rather the feeling of guilt, but not so much on forgiveness. This latter topic has not appeared in any serious way until the last decades. The pair of words guilt and forgiveness has enjoyed best growth conditions in the religious sphere making secular mediators sceptical. I will nevertheless predict that in another ten years this will become a more central issue in the mediation movement – when you for example will take upon serious violations in the history of a country.

Why speak of guilt, many mediators ask? Is it not enough to look at it as a conflict? And rather talk about solutions in the future? I do not believe that guilt should be an issue in all mediation. The Norwegian prison pastor Paul Leer Salvesen mentions however three reasons for inclusion of guilt and forgiveness in some instances:

- 1) It is a part of popular language from the bottom to the top. You hear children in kindergarten say “it wasn’t my fault”.
- 2) It becomes urgent in cases of radical asymmetry: when a 15-year-old is abused by a 40-year-old, or women are raped by soldiers, it may be disrespectful to speak of conflicts between parties. In such cases the concept of guilt expresses something essential which must be included.
- 3) It is impossible to forgive a conflict or something that just happened accidentally. Only what is perceived as guilt may be forgiven. The acknowledgement of guilt gives hope for forgiveness.

10:

What guilt is (not)

The guilt that is forgiven is *different from a feeling of guilt*. We have for example children of people who worked with the occupiers during the world war. They feel guilt, but I would not say that they have guilt. A feeling of guilt is a therapeutic issue. A lack of feeling of guilt is often described as psychopathic. Too much of it is described as a neurosis. Mediation is not therapy and does not necessarily try to solve the feeling of guilt.

Guilt is *not responsibility*. I may assume the responsibility for things I am not guilty of.

It is a betrayal of something fundamentally human when a defence lawyer persuades a defendant he knows to be guilty to plead “not guilty” at the start of a trial. When calling in people to mediation in criminal cases in conflict councils, the mediator generally makes sure she knows whether the offender acknowledges her part in the actions. This point of departure is however not about legal guilt, so the offender might more easily tell the truth. This is a most important advantage of mediation in comparison with court case.

So what is guilt? Guilt arises from one party feeling violated by the actions of another. The offender often does not realise this until meeting the victim in a dialog. So: “Guilt is what arises when an I violate YOU”. (Paul Leer Salvesen) The guilt is in the relation. It is a violation in a relation that may be forgiven.

What forgiveness is (not)

Forgiveness is of course different from forgetting or ignoring what has passed. Forgiveness is rather the opposite. If forgiveness is granted in the presence of guilt – the forgiveness will remind us of a violation.

Forgiveness cannot be demanded. Forgiveness is a result of personal initiative. The mediator should be careful to pressure the violated party. I guess I am not the only one with uncomfortable childhood memories of being forced by an adult to accept forgiveness. “Dag, forgive your sister!”

The question nevertheless hovers there during mediation. It must be offered voluntarily and when and if the time is right. This may sound straight forward but does often lead to an intricate power play. The offender may from religious or moral correctness silently demand forgiveness and inflict guilt on the violated party for not granting forgiveness.

11:

The victim may on the other hand refuse to forgive and inflict guilt and bad conscience on the violating party. This may again lead to a competition of who is the most victimized. In many mediations it is not easy to establish one party only as having been violated.

Fundamental to forgiveness is: *Renounce revenge against the violating party.* This is a minimum of forgiveness. But people will often put more into this. They may change thoughts and/or actions concerning the offender into something more positive. This may vary from greeting each other cordially to restoring a heartfelt friendship.

Forgiveness may happen without the offender asking for it or caring about it. A violated person may get stuck in bitterness or self-pity. In this way the offender will keep troubling her victim even if they never meet again. A unilateral forgiveness may remove the offender's indirect power over the victim. Forgiveness is in this respect different from reconciliation. Forgiveness may be granted by one person unilaterally; reconciliation involves both parties.

Revenge seem to be the opposite of forgiveness. But it somehow has a similar effect. It is sought in order to re-establish a balance, a new gravity in a violated soul. Forgiveness may also give peace and balance to the violated party. It never ceases to amaze me how totally differently violated persons react. I have met several parents whose children have been killed in the wars in Balkan. They may choose the very opposites: revenge and damaging the enemy – or working for peace and never again use violence. It is hard to predict who will react in which way.

I'm sorry?

The violating party will often just say "I'm sorry". But this may sound limp and indistinct in mediation. "I'm sorry" is used in everyday speech for quite insignificant issues like I'm sorry for coming late – and everybody may judge from the tone and body language that the person is not very sorry. Some people say "sorry" every ten minutes when they walk in a street. When saying "I am sorry" it is important to give it space and reflection. There are unknown powers in a request for forgiveness and yet more in a positive answer – when the dialog is sincere and voluntary.

12:

Love your enemy

Reconciliation is the longest road in conflict mediation. It is painfully built on truthful speaking of different truths, restorative justice, secure cohabitation and forgiveness.

We have recently celebrated the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in Norway. Every year many new books are published bringing new information. Since the winners write the story in the beginning, we now hear more stories from the losers. I read about Norwegian girls who got children with German soldiers. They tell stories of being bullied - even their children and grandchildren. I read about families with forefathers that fought and died for Germany on the eastern front. They are still prevented from looking after the deceased. We still work with truth, justice, forgiveness. This is the country that awards the Nobel Peace Prize and wants to teach other countries about reconciliation.

How long did it take before the Finnish people could talk openly of the Finnish civil war around 1920? What does it mean when the state of Sweden apologises to the Roma people and others for forced sterilisation many decades too late? I think it is always better late than never.

The road is long.

The Nordic countries are strongly influenced by Christianity as I suppose is Slovenia. The majority of people will say that Christian ethics is love of one's neighbour. But this is only half the truth. And half the truth might turn into half a lie. Jesus' teachings according to the Bible is rather love of one's enemy.

So what does it mean to love one's enemies? Maybe it is best understood from what is "different from and more than".

Loving one's enemies is *different from and more than being kind*. Being kind may turn into avoiding conflicts. If you shall love your enemies, you must get an enemy first. I promise, this happens quickly if you work for truth and justice for the outcasts in society. A Swedish family wrote a book they called "Matthew 7.12". It refers to the golden rule: "Do unto others what you want them to do to you". The book is about what happened when they consistently took care of a drug addict and how they got adversaries and enemies in Swedish society as a result of so relentlessly loving this "outcast".

13:

Enemy love is *different from and more than sympathy and empathy*. The Nobel Peace Prize Winner Martin Luther King said “It is a good thing Jesus told me not to like my enemies, but to love them”. He couldn’t like the people who hit him, hated him, mocked him. Disliking someone is hard to avoid. This relates to feelings. Feelings are facts. There is not much you can do about that at the moment. Pretending not to have those bad feelings from some kind of misconceived piousness makes things worse. But love is not just feelings, love is first and foremost actions. “Love your enemy”, says Jesus; “Pray for them, bless them, do good to them” Actions.

Loving one’s enemies is *different from and more than friendship* as well. For the most part we speak with those we like, those who are like us. With people with the same opinions, faith and interests. Friendship is incredibly important for me, but what is friendship? Well, it is to prioritize away those we do not like. “If you want to make peace, you have to work with your enemy”, says Nobel Peace Prize Winner Nelson Mandela.

I will mention the following story from a Norwegian peace mediator Petter Skauen who met a general under his work for peace in Guatemala. The general had ordered the massacres of thousands of Indians, using helicopters to carry them and then drop them into burning volcanoes. The general visited Sweden where he had been inspired by Swedish policies about hunting moose, big animals. He said: “It is the same thing as with the Indians, one has to keep the population down.” There was no irony in this! And Petter Skauen had just entered mediations with this man and they were on the road to meet the leaders of the guerrilla movement in Oslo. This story has an amazing outcome. This general is now working for peace - in his own and in other countries. This rarely happens. But when it does happen it comes as a result of someone speaking and working with an enemy. I think of course that such a person should serve his punishment in jail, but I just as much think that people can change and reconcile.

In our daily duties all this enemy love stuff may sound somewhat overdone. Confucius, the wise Chinese man, asks reasonably enough: “If you are to love your enemies, what then shall you do with your friends?” Our energies are limited. But I include this epilogue on enemy love as a reminder of transcendence. For a society to live in peace I guess it is good enough that most of us do not resort to violence and behave decently. But I also believe that society depends on some radical and creative minorities who love their enemies. Or else societies will first degenerate into polarisation, loneliness and cold war.

14:

This is what I see for example today in cities in Bosnia. People who to me look alike, speak same language, still are complete divided according to ethnicity in different schools, different cafés, different religious groups, different political parties. If nothing happens there, we will see the cold war develop to another warm war. We need the small committed group of people to transcend the we-and-them dichotomies that are constantly kindled in the world: between ethnic groups, religions, classes, professions, political parties. Peace on earth depends on many moderate, friendly and decent people, but also on some few who practice enemy love.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, it is the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead

The first step towards reconciliation is disappointingly simple. Many – especially academics want to have it advanced, preferably on the level of a master or bachelor. But the first step is annoyingly simple. *Talk to your adversaries and enemies – start a dialog.*

Four methods for talking - the need for dialog

The first to use a flow of words against his enemies instead of hitting them on the head with a club should be considered the founder of civilization.
John Cohen

To create peace, says Nelson Mandela, you have to talk with your enemies. I will classify four methods of talking in conflict situations in public. They tend to function in different areas, and they have clearly different objectives and results I will distinguish between DEBATE, DISCUSSION, NEGOTIATION and DIALOG.

1. DEBATE

The word comes from Latin “debatere” and signifies "to knock down". The point in a debate is to win. The method is both to convince through your own rhetoric as well as weakening your opponent. Metaphors describing debate are often retrieved from war: "I crushed his arguments", "Your statements cannot be defended", "He attacked all the weakest cases", and "His speech was aimed at the target group". The debate appeal to emotions and cultivate the "striking" remark. This typically takes place in political TV debates before elections. It is the dominant method of conversation in the “hard news media” and flavors the debates in the power bases in a democracy: parliament, government and court.

15:

In homes the debate could be called quarreling. We might then define debate as “systematic quarrelling with listeners in public”. Debates rarely nurture the ethos of listening. I remember once I should participate in one of my first radio debates. A friend advised me: “Dag, pick out three things you want to say – and say it repeatedly whatever happens”. It is a rational advice for a debate, but it stops me from listening to the other. I will however say that the debate has a rational function in clarifying contrasting positions.

2. DISCUSSION

The word comes from the Latin "discutire" which means to separate, to tear apart. The focus is to look closely at and distinguish and scrutinize the words and arguments. It is essential 1) to be precise with definitions of your concepts and 2) to refer to empirical evidence, which shows that what you say agrees with reality. Your personal feelings are not relevant. Discussion makes a clear distinction between the personal and the matter-of-fact. In this sense it should not appeal to emotions. Ideally factual argument wears the gravity and directs the discussion. The goal is not necessarily to agree, but to gain knowledge through disagreements. Discussion typically takes place in academia and research. They appear in political public debate through comments from “experts” with a claim of the authority of objectivity. Roger Fisher and William Ury in their book: “Getting to yes” focus on discussion in mediation. In their four step method the first and last point build upon the ethos of discussion. They start with “Separate people from the problem” and end with “Insist on using objective criteria”. Discussion is especially useful as an element when there is a rational atmosphere and a possibility for a win-win solution. But sometimes the parties prefer a loose – loose solution. I rather beat the shit out the person that killed my daughter and take my time in prison. When conflicts escalate the rational win – win method becomes too tame.

3. NEGOTIATION

Negotiation comes from the Latin words “neg” + “otium” which mean “not leisure” or rather “business activity”. Negotiation prepares for action. Negotiation can be used as a name for the whole process of conflict resolution – and as such it might include debate, discussion and dialog. Or it might be used – as I do here – as a typical manner of conversation. It is a conversation where the goal is to agree on what to do or not do. The talking will therefore be pragmatic and functional. Parties can choose to be tactical and deliberately hide relevant information. The focus will be on your own interests and what is possible. Negotiation has an inbuilt calculated element of distrust. Negotiation happens

16:

everywhere. It takes typically place in decision-making in business, bureaucracies, associations and families.

4. DIALOG

The word comes from the Greek "dia logos"; through the word. Thus, it might simply be another word for a conversation. The concept has become popular in many countries. It signifies often hardly anything more than that we talk together. It is probably used because it sounds slightly more serious and thoughtful. It gives a feeling of being more important – to say “we will have a dialog” as compared to say “we will talk”. I will use a definition which draws on the experience from the work of Nansen Center for Dialog and Peace. They have had hundreds of dialogs between enemies and adversaries especially in Balkan, but also in many other countries. Here the word dialog has a narrower and deeper meaning. The aim and purpose is to understand the other. It differs from the three others modes of conversation.

Unlike the *debate*, the point is not to win or to knock down the other. And metaphors of war are unsuitable. But alike the debate it easily evokes feelings. It might however be a richer specter of feelings. Debate fosters feelings like anger, indignation, envy and the sweet taste of success. All this might come forward in a dialog, but there is also room for feelings like empathy and vulnerability.

Unlike the *discussion* there is no distinction between fact-of-the-matter and the personal. The person with her history and her needs and feelings is the fact of the conversation. You should meet the other, not only her opinions. There is an opening for the personal and thus also the spiritual.

Unlike the *negotiation* the goal is not necessarily to agree. We have experienced that after the conversation the parties are disagreeing even more than in the beginning. They didn't know that the difference was so large. But still the dialog turned out as a success according to its purpose. You can understand and know the other part better than before, and this human aspect can have a reconciling long term effect.

I think all young people should learn to talk in all these four manners. But most of all we need people who can dialog. To participate in dialog, I must be willing to listen on several levels. And I must be open to change not only of my opinions but also my world views and personal dislikes. I believe dialog is the riskiest form of conversations. Dialog therefore happens mostly between people who are close to each other – like family and friends. It is rare in public life, and exceptional between opponents and enemies. The tragedy is that it is least used where it is most needed. You need courage to dialog.

17:

Rules for a good dialog

I have put together this list of points for the ideal dialog based on experience from the Nansen Peace and Dialog Centre and from religious dialogs in Norway, with special thanks to former director Inge Eidsvåg.

1. The goal is not to win a debate, nor necessarily to agree, but to understand each other.
2. Invite the Participants to accept procedures for how we should talk with each other.
3. Start by getting to know the person, not her opinions.
4. Do other things than talking, meet each other's many identities.
5. Only equals can speak freely, create equality in the space where you talk with each other.
6. Compare ideals with ideals and practice with practice – not your ideals with other people's practice.
7. Do not start with the most difficult part; you do have to address it after some time, however.
8. Be honest and open. Do not keep hidden agenda. But you shall decide where the limits are for openness.
9. Do active listening. Do not just listen to the words; listen to the body and the silence as well.
10. Do not hunt for the weaknesses in the other party; hunt for the strengths. Do not try to make the other feel insecure; try to make him feel safe.
11. Accept and give space for expression of feelings.
12. In a dialog strength is shown by the one who is willing to change – which is the opposite of what takes place in a debate.
13. Count on it going on for a while. Dialog takes time.