

Education for Peace: Post 9/11, Bali, Madrid, Beslan and Jakarta

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My old friend, economist and peace researcher, Kenneth Boulding, wanted to live to the 21st century because he thought that it would be the Century of wisdom and maturity. I am rather pleased that he did not live to see it because he would have been disappointed and depressed by the widespread 21st century regression to fear, threat and violence in all walks of life but especially in politics. He would have been shocked by the expansion of bottom up and top down terrorism and the gratuitous use of violence in politics. I am sure he would have condemned the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and those in other parts of the world. But he would have been equally concerned to condemn disproportionate and illegitimate responses to terrorist threats such as the war in Iraq.

Since he was an optimist by nature, however, and a strong believer in positive futures he would have returned to his strong and unswerving belief in the power of education to transform behaviour. I can hear him now figuring out ways of ensuring that violence and the vicious cycles of revenge that currently afflict so many parts of the world might be replaced by more virtuous cycles and non violent processes. Indeed in an excerpt from a 1992 sonnet entitled *For the Learning of Peace* Kenneth said:

Now, when the world so desperately needs peace
We all need endlessly to learn and teach
And teach and learn, as far as we can reach
To make cruel war decline, and peace increase.
For peace, with all its blessings in its train
Comes from unused potential in our brain.

I want to direct attention, therefore, to some ways in which we might move on from the traumatic events of the past three years in order to utilise the full potential of our brains for peaceful purposes. In particular I want to focus on educational programs and policies which might ensure that such incidents are much less likely in the future.

Political leaders have a critical role to play in peace processes but I place more personal hope in popular wisdom and the transformative capacity of educational and life long learning processes. By concentrating on education for peace and the generation of non-violent solutions to problems we may stand a better chance of making the rest of the 21st century more peaceful than if we follow our political leaders and succumb to the politics of fear and revenge.

Leland Miles, a past president of the International Association of University Presidents', once noted that 'Peace is not a discipline, but a problem, in fact the "ultimate" problem. And all academic fields can help provide solutions to that problem' (Harris & Morrison, 2003:1). This is why we, at the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland, draw on the wisdom of psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, as well as political scientists to try and understand this problem. We need to develop the best possible understanding of the complex forces and dynamics generating violent and non-violent behaviour so that we might enhance the latter and diminish the former.

This is not an ideological pursuit. It requires a rigorous adherence to truth and a willingness to accept multiple paths to peace. The quest for a peaceful pedagogy in pursuit of a more peaceful world does not occur, however, in an ethical vacuum.

In addition to truth seeking, for example, effective peace education requires:

1. A commitment to community—especially learning and civic communities within which individuals can realise their individual identities; achieve security and participate meaningfully in decision making that affects their individual and collective well being.
2. A commitment to justice and fairness. There is considerable scientific evidence, for example, to show that much aggression flows from frustration and actual or perceived inequality.
3. A deep appreciation of the importance of love and compassion in all human relationships. These qualities are critical to the enhancement of positive rather than negative reciprocity and the flowering of human potential. They need to be understood and learned. This occurs normally and naturally in loving families but needs to be learned more deliberately in families that are dysfunctional or in violent environments.
4. A rigorous scholarly and practical understanding of what is meant by peace and peaceful processes and what sorts of structural conditions are conducive to peace and which are not.
5. A deep awareness of the importance of individual and collective empathy especially across ethnic, cultural and national divides. In particular good peace education involves radical attention to different contexts for human behaviour. 'Text without context is pretext.'
6. A belief in personal "sovereignty" and powerfulness. Nigel Young, Professor of Peace Studies at Colgate University states that 'Peace education has...to be an empowering process—whether in a classroom or in the community; those who press for peace education have the responsibility of showing that ordinary people, children or adults, can do something about the problems raised—that they are problems created by human beings and can now be solved by them' (Harris & Morrison, 2005:84):
7. A strong and positive belief in the future. It was the French existentialist Albert Camus who stated that the nature of human consciousness requires a belief in the future. Another way of saying this is that without a vision the people perish. When the future looks gloomy and bleak, and individuals are afflicted by threat and destructive potential it's important to have an optimistic sense of the future otherwise individuals are unable to conceptualise the creation of non-violent alternatives or any alternatives at all.

So although peace and conflict research, and peace education, fit within the social sciences and humanities they have a strong ethical normative base. We do want to change the world so that violence is diminished and preventable death avoided.

The Biblical Psalmists, 2,000 years ago looked forward to the time when 'Love and faithfulness met together and justice and peace kissed each other' (Psalm 85). Despite this ancient aspiration, Justice, Development, Peace, and Reconciliation remain elusive irrespective of globalisation processes and a hugely enhanced global productive capacity. The first task of a peace educator, therefore, is to identify the problems that need to be addressed en route toward developing a more peaceful world.

How do we explain to the world's poorest, for example, that the richest fifth of the world's people consumes 86% of all goods and services while the poorest fifth consumes just 1.3% of this amount? How do we justify the fact that the three richest people in the world have assets that exceed the combined gross domestic product of the 48 least developed countries or that the

world's 225 richest individuals (of whom 60 are American with total assets of \$311 billion) have a combined wealth of over \$1 trillion which is equal to the annual income of the poorest 47% of the entire world's population? How do we explain to Africans that the average African household today consumes 20% less than it did 25 years ago while Americans spend 8 billion a year on cosmetics or \$2 billion more than the estimated annual total needed to provide basic education for everyone in the world!

How do we explain to our children and grandchildren that more than 50 million people were killed in internal and international wars and conflict in the 20th century?

How do we resensitise ourselves to the specific individual meaning of the indirect structural violence or poverty and the appalling impact of direct violence? Why do we in Australia, for example, stand relatively mute in the face of the death of 84 Thai Moslems yesterday? Or the 40 Palestinians killed last week or the endless Iraqis killed by both insurgents and coalition forces? How do we explain and understand the millions that have been killed in the Great Lakes region of Africa over the past twenty years? Or the entire displacement of the Chechen population by Stalin or the 40,000 Chechens killed in the current Russian/Chechen conflict? The preventable death of anyone, anywhere in the world, diminishes all of us as human beings.

These are the tasks confronting educators. One of the first tasks of effective Peace Education, therefore, has to do with working out ways of ensuring that these problems are diagnosed and understood but also how they might be addressed and resolved. We have to confront the fact that sooner or later our diagnostics have to be accepted and responded to by the powerful. How do we, as citizens as well as peace educators, ensure that power and politics advances the common good rather than narrow sectional interests or the interests of the powerful?

This means that we must ask:

1. How we constrain the powerful in order to make them democratically responsible and accountable, and
2. How we utilise political power to maximise freedom, justice and harmonious relations between peoples.

There is always a delicate balancing act between the rights and responsibilities of citizens versus those of states in relation to all of these objectives. Over the centuries, however, democratic polities have endeavoured to strike a balance between individual liberty, civil and political rights, and national security and wider state responsibilities. Sometimes the balance swings in favour of citizens, sometimes in favour of states. At this particular moment in history, the bias is very much in favour of national and state security with sustained attacks on individual liberty. Whether this is a passing or a permanent phase is an important question for all of us.

Kenneth Boulding in his book *The Three Faces of Power* provides a useful tripartite definition of power which helps us explain something of what is happening within the world right now. To refresh your memories, his three faces of power are: threat power, economic (or exchange) power and integrative power.

Threat-based concepts of power rest on the threatened destruction of someone else's person or property or alternatively the threatened withdrawal of some benefit currently in place or which might be in place. Threat-based power, however, is always risky because it is impossible for the threatener to control responses, and social science has highlighted that most people respond negatively to threat and sanctions. It is also highly likely to generate violent outcomes.

Economic power is defined by Kenneth as 'What the rich have more of than the poor.' This means that we have to develop some concept of net worth in accounting terms and how this net worth is arrived at. People become rich through economic productivity and successful accumulation. But they also become rich through theft and exploitation. (Or the processes whereby ostensibly mutually beneficial exchanges benefit one party more than another). In any event, the power of the market is another critical face in the Boulding power trio. Economic power can be used to advance the common good or to promote self-interest. The challenge, for most citizens, therefore, is to work out ways in which economic wealth and exchanges maximise welfare and justice for all rather than benefit the few at the expense of the many.

Integrative power is what Kenneth calls the power of legitimacy, respect, loyalty, affection and love. He argues that this is the most fundamental form of power and critical to the success of all others. Certainly, as he points out, illegitimate threat and illegitimate wealth are very unsuccessful compared to legitimate threat and legitimate wealth. Illegitimate power of whatever kind will always tend to produce defiance and resistance.

None of these faces of power exist in absolutely pure form, and each connects to the other in sometimes positive sometimes perverse ways. The reality is, however, that threat-based power (which is critical to the domain of the state) is most likely to generate resistance and violence. The other two faces can and do produce more positive outcomes most of the time.

The challenge facing us in the peace research field therefore, is how we can expand exchange based economic power and integrative power, while reserving threat-based power for those extreme circumstances in which threat has legitimacy, and is likely to yield positive rather than negative outcomes. This is something similar to the argument that Joe Nye has been promoting about the assertion of "soft power" over "hard power" in the pursuit of US foreign policy objectives.

The promotion and sustenance of economic and integrative power is very closely linked to the promotion of justice and fairness. Both of these faces of power, however, (economic and integrative) need clear rule-based systems of justice and a rule of law which applies equally to the governed and the governing. They need judicial systems which are willing to move beyond revenge and punishment towards ideas of rehabilitation, restitution and more optimally restorative concepts of justice. In addition to these things, integrative power requires a thriving civil society and widespread acknowledgement of the limits of state coercive power. Integrative power is critical to the idea of community. It is within communities rather than nations or nation states that people realise their deepest ambitions. These communities can be families, neighbourhoods, professional groups, friendship groups, trade unions, recreational and religious groups etc.

So if Kenneth Boulding is right, wherever state systems or non state actors rely primarily on threat, force, coercion and punishment, entrepreneurial economic activity will be challenged and integrative power or the self sustaining power of community will be challenged also.

I would like to argue that one of the most devastating consequences of September 11th and the subsequent declaration of the oxymoronic, never ending war against terror, has been the willingness of many modern industrialised states to regress towards threat-based power and place significant question marks over the self governing capacity of individuals and groups to organise their own economies and communities in ways which will generate higher levels of stability and peacefulness.

In this way, terrorist threat has challenged the enlightenment project as states play on real threats and imagined threats and then develop fear-based systems inimical to enlightened politics and the flourishing of free communities.

Al Qaida, as we know from bitter experience, are masters in the application of threat-based power. For their supporters, however, they work also to ensure economic well being and justify their actions on a basis of Islamic legitimacy. My former colleague, Rich Rubenstein asserts that:

Terrorism is violence by small groups claiming to represent massive constituencies and seeking by “heroic” provocative attacks to awaken the masses, redeem their honour, and generate an enemy over reaction that will intensify and expand the struggle (Rubenstein, 2001:1)

Unfortunately, on a basis of this definition, I think it is fair to say that the US and Coalition responses to Al-Qaida’s threat, and the military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq have been disproportionate and have indeed generated an enemy over reaction which has now propelled us into a very vicious cycle of violence within the Middle East and elsewhere. As Olivier Roy put it in a recent edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique*,

Under the pretext of President George Bush’s declared war against terrorism, the West seems ready to enter into a global conflict that it avoided during the cold war. Bush and Osama Bin Laden both want to persuade us that the world is divided—they and us, believers and non-believers, barbarism and civilisation. (Roy, 2004:1)

The question, therefore, is whether there is any inclination and movement at this moment to consider alternatives to force, coercion and military threat in the struggle against terror and terrorism? The related question is whether these are likely to be successful? Related to both of these questions is whether there is any commitment on the part of the most powerful industrialised nations in the world to act in ways which advance justice, freedom and peaceful relationships and a resolute adherence to the rule of law, human rights and the promotion of sustainable community or communities which is where most of us live, move and have our social and political being? What I would like to propose is that unless we, in the West, are willing to practise a bit of political Jujitsu or Aikido and do something disarming we may indeed be fated to a never ending war against vague enemies for a very long time.

William Long and Peter Brecke (2003), in an interesting new book entitled *War and Reconciliation* note very remarkable levels of success in civil wars where the protagonists were willing to develop and apply what they call a “forgiveness model” to the conflict. This model did not seem to yield the same results in relation to interstate conflict but the approach itself is worth considering as a possible alternative to a never-ending war against terror.

They argue very strongly for a reassertion of the power of emotions in decision-making and for identifying ways in which such emotions might break impasses and generate virtuous actions to replace the vicious ones. These are all important elements of successful peace education. This forgiveness model as summarised by Stuart J Kaufmann has four phases.

The first phase is **acknowledgement** of the harm done by the conflict, which allows participants to overcome the emotions of anger and shame that the conflict engendered. The second phase is a **changed identity** including a new understanding of the other party. This involves overcoming grief and fear in order to see oneself as something more than a victim in the relationship, and to see the other as something other than an enemy. The third phase is accepting “**partial justice**” and giving up revenge. The fourth phase is a

call for a **new relationship between the parties**...[all of these phases] contrast this model of conflict resolution with the rationalist bargaining model. (Kaufman:145-46)

Applying this model to the never-ending war against terror and the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya and Israel/Palestine is very salutary. It is clear that antagonists on all sides of these conflicts remain locked in a vicious cycle of threat, violence and revenge. They all still sustain the illusion that they will be able to prevail militarily even if most of the conflicts listed above seem more in the category of a hurting stalemate or the brink of imminent defeat rather than on the verge of victory. There is an assumption in all of these wars—led largely from Washington but echoed in London and Canberra, Moscow and Jerusalem—that threat and overwhelming force will “win the day” and that the West and Civilisation will defeat all terrorists and prevail militarily.

On the other side—wherever and whatever that other side is—there is an equally strong conviction that while the Coalition of the Willing has huge military resources at its disposal—these apparent strengths are also their weaknesses. This is the point of asymmetric warfare—when confronted by overwhelming force—those who lack such force will probe for weaknesses, exploit them and try to turn these to their advantage. If terror tactics work these will be adopted. If some other tactic is called for this too will be adopted. These individuals and groups, which are a very disparate group and cannot all be lumped under the Al Qaida label, believe that the Coalition, Russia and Israel can and will be immobilised and maybe even defeated by bottom up terrorist activity.

Both sides to the war on terror, therefore, have decided that their political or religious objectives will be achieved largely by military means. Thus we have exactly the opposite of the forgiveness model. In fact, we have a vengeance model at work extracting revenge for September 11th as well as the Morocco, Madrid, Bali, and Jakarta bombings and the ongoing terrorist incidents between Russians and Chechens and between Israel and Palestine.

Applying the Longe and Brecke model to the policies and practices of all sides in the so-called war on terror demonstrates how committed the sides are to policies that will result in harm to all and advantage to no one.

To take the issue of **acknowledgement**, for example, there has been no acknowledgement (except for propaganda purposes), of the harm done and hurt caused by whoever was responsible for 9/11 and all the other terrorist acts that have taken place over the past few years. On the contrary, those who have used such terror tactics have been impressed by their disruptive capacity. Terror can and does paralyse. Because of this and because of the media's appetite for blood—if it bleeds it leads—we are treated to endless examples of barbaric behaviour, such as executions on the Internet, kidnappings, suicide bombings, and senseless assaults on all sorts of civilians and others assumed to represent oppressive power.

Unwillingness to acknowledge responsibility tends to confirm the demonised and dehumanised stereotypes that both sides hold of the other.

Because the West is engaged now in a never ending war against all terrorists there has been no acknowledgement of the top down harm done to innocent civilians in Palestine, Chechnya, Afghanistan or in Iraq by Israel, Russia, the US, the UK and other members of the coalition.

The killing of 40,000 Chechens and the displacement of thousands more by the Russians, for example, requires some explanation and has to be taken into account when trying to understand the appalling acts committed by Chechens at Breslan in North Ossetia. Similarly terrorising Palestinian refugee settlements and arbitrarily executing “known Palestinian

terrorists” by Israel fuels the pool of suicide bombers against Israel. There is never any acknowledgement here of the ways in which these acts are perpetuating the cycle of violence. Similarly, until Abu Ghraib was exposed there was no admission by the US of human rights violations of prisoners of war or the murder of prisoners in custody. We still are not sure exactly what is happening and has happened in Guantanamo Bay. The fact that the US army is now pressing charges against those soldiers accused of human rights violations in Abu Ghraib, and has issued murder charges against those soldiers who suffocated General Mowhoush during interrogation represents some progress towards acknowledging unacceptable military behaviour under the rules of war.

In fact, however, as long as both sides are hanging on to the prospect of a military victory and the assertion of “victor’s justice” there is little disposition to acknowledge responsibility or complicity in top down or bottom up acts of terror. On the contrary, once actors have embarked on a violent strategy to pursue political ends there is a reluctance to admit any liability for minor or gross violations of human rights. Those who are victorious will impose their will and assign blame and responsibility to those who are vanquished.

On the second criteria of the forgiveness model namely, **a willingness to change identity**, there is an almost constitutional reluctance on the part of Al Qaida or the Coalition, or Russia or Israel to modify or change their identities in order to seek new understanding of the other parties. We are not talking about major changes of identity, we are talking about a capacity for empathy and understanding and a willingness to stand in the shoes of the “negative other” to see what the world looks like from their perspective.

One of the things that I have discovered from many years of trying to engage in collaborative problem solving in very difficult parts of the world is that a willingness to acknowledge some degree of responsibility for a vicious action—or for conditions that generate vicious actions—is a pre-requisite for the development of conciliatory gestures and the creation of conditions conducive to problem solving and conflict transformation.

While many individual Americans might be willing to overcome their grief and fear in order to see the United States as something other than a victim, and capable of demonstrating friendlier non-enemy intentions to ostensible antagonists, there is little disposition on the part of the Administration to do so. On the other side, the leadership of Al Qaida or Abu Sayef or Jemaah Islamiya are equally reluctant to do the same. Both protagonists, (at the leadership level) therefore, end up reaffirming their own victimisation and the enemy stereotypes of the other side. This tends to result in a strange symbiosis between the terrorist and the counter-terrorist. Both need the other to survive through time. It ought to be possible, therefore, to contemplate unilateral, bilateral and multilateral changes to this relationship. The fact that this is not happening suggests that political interests are being served by maintaining the enemy image of the other.

The third phase of accepting “**partial justice**” in order to advance peace processes has not been engaged by any of the current antagonists in the war on terror. The idea of partial justice is probably anathema to most jurists but it makes immense sense to me as a peace-builder. There can be no “absolute” justice for those who have seen their loved ones killed in senseless acts of terror or counter terror. For example, 3,600 innocent civilians were killed on 9/11, 6,000-7,000 civilians have been killed in Afghanistan since the invasion, 12 to 15,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed in Iraq since the invasion, and there have been thousands of others killed in terrorist actions as well. How do we begin getting a sense of justice or closure here? Justice for whom? Who will compensate Palestinians for loss of life or innocent Israelis who lose their lives? Who will compensate the families of those killed in Iraq or Afghanistan? Who will compensate the

families of the 1,400 US troops killed in Iraq? And perhaps most importantly, which perpetrators will be brought to account for such actions and where? Can we envisage a situation, for example, where the United States might be willing to revisit its decision not to join the International Criminal Court as a step towards developing an international rule of law? Through all of this is the additional problem of working out ways of ensuring that there be no impunity conferred on anyone who has engaged in minor or gross violations of human rights. This too is an essential pre-requisite for effective problem solving and long-term peace building.

Finally, is there any inclination to develop a **new or changed relationship** between the contenders in the war on terror? Or are we fated to perpetuating a never-ending war based on simplistic and racist stereotypes? I see no evidence that the Bush Administration or the Coalition of the willing is prepared to reconsider how they think and feel about the diverse terrorist groups that are coalescing against the United States and United States interests at this moment. There is no willingness to reframe perceptions, and to rehumanise the dehumanised and demonised other. There is no willingness to acknowledge that terrorists may have needs and interests that could be satisfied in ways other than on the shifting urban battlefields of the Middle East.

On the other side those who are engaged in terrorist battle with the United States show a similar disinclination to see diversity within America, to acknowledge that it is an immensely pluralistic and divided society. The United States (both State and people) are lumped together as a single evil empire that needs to be humbled before discussions can take place. Both of these perspectives are self defeating, both generate deep divisions within and between nations and people, and neither helps the other side figure out ways to promote gestures, conversations, and negotiations that will start isolating the extremists from the moderates and laying the ground for negotiations that might put an end to senseless acts of violence.

It is disturbing to me that this election is being fought over which candidate will be a better, stronger, more decisive Commander in Chief rather than President. The emphasis is on his military rather than his diplomatic or political powers. This is extremely dangerous. When countries elect Commanders in Chief and embark on permanent open ended wars against amorphous and largely invisible enemies; when such nations are willing to sacrifice liberty and the rule of law for security; when there is a willingness to subvert the United Nations and practice a la carte multilateralism, and a tendency to place oneself and one's nation above the law for reasons of national security, the rest of the world has reason for concern. There should be no annihilation without representation but equally there is a need for us to explore and try alternative models before these look even more utopian than they appear at this particular juncture in the narrative. Most of all we need to move beyond revenge. This is the major task facing peace researchers and educators at this most dangerous moment in history. What evidence and research do we have that will persuade individual citizens and politicians of the critical importance of putting an end to hegemonic aspiration, imperial ambition and trying to achieve peace through strength? How do we persuade individuals of the central importance of forgiveness models in politics that most unforgiving of human arenas? Most importantly how do we teach the importance of moving beyond revenge?

As Nobel Prize Winning Poet Seamus Heaney put it in his translation of Sophocles' Philoctetes, *The Cure at Troy*

Human beings suffer,
They torture one another,
They get hurt and get hard.
No poem or play or song

Can fully right a wrong
Inflicted and endured

The innocent in gaols
Beat on their bars together.
A hunger striker's father
Stands in the graveyard dumb.
The police widow in veils
Faints at the funeral home

History says, don't hope
On this side of the grave
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed for tidal wave
Of Justice can rise up
And hope and history rhyme

So hope for a great sea change
On the far side of revenge
Believe that a further shore
Is reachable from here
Believe in miracles
And cures and healing wells

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