

October is



**CONFLICT RESOLUTION
MONTH IN COLORADO**
Listen. Talk. Work it Out.

About Us

Each year, Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado selects a book that enhances problem-solving skills and/or inspires dialogue. Over 450 copies of the book are distributed across Colorado - to the governor and lieutenant governor; legislators; supreme, district, and appellate court judges; alternative dispute resolution professionals; and various public libraries, including Free Little Libraries.

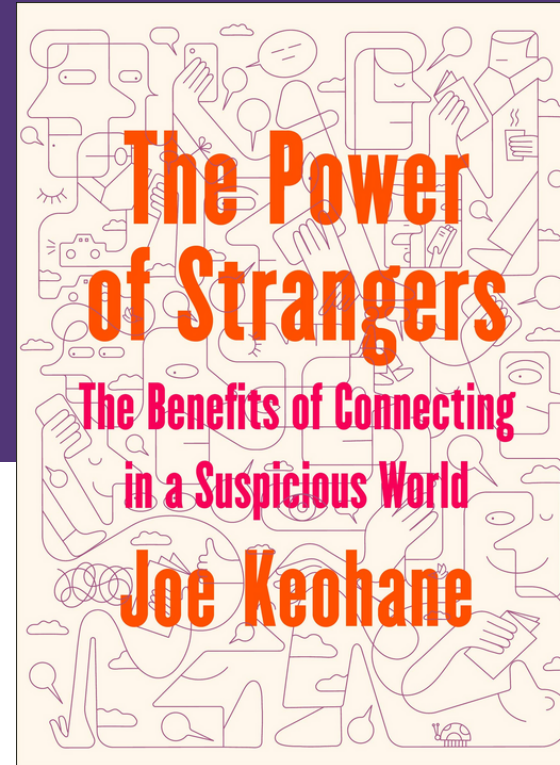
This Reader's Guide was created to further conversation and inspire connection with others.

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2022
Book
Selection

Explore what happens when we take steps to get to know those around us. Learn how to move beyond fear and distrust to create mutually beneficial connections through small and everyday interactions. Real-life examples and research help us to find value in getting to know those we don't know.

"An acclaimed, entertaining, surprising, and inspiring look at why we don't talk to strangers, how we can, and what happens when we do."

Guiding Questions

FEAR OF STRANGERS:

Many have been taught that strangers are to be feared. From messages received from our parents as children about "stranger danger" to historical examples of persecution of people for being different — fear has driven how we do or don't interact with those we perceive as others.

Questions: Can you think about a time when you chose not to interact with someone whom you felt was "different"? What fear(s), if any, played into your decision not to engage? What might encourage you to engage differently in the future? OR What fears do you have about talking to strangers? Where do you think they come from?

ASSUMPTIONS:

The author highlights pluralistic ignorance, or everyone having the wrong idea about everyone else, as a huge contributor to folks not engaging with one another. Many people believe that nobody else wants to engage/talk or they assume that rejection will occur. We underestimate, dehumanize, and treat strangers as obstacles rather than see them as contributors to the path we are on.

Questions: Who in society are your strangers? (The people you have little contact with, may be at odds with, or simply do not understand.) What assumptions do you have/hold about them?

EVOLUTION OF RELATIONS:

Engaging with others used to be required to be successful. Humans were more likely to survive and thrive with a stronger network of support and relations, as collaboration and indirect reciprocity led to better outcomes for all involved. The impact of being exclusionary or inclusionary has shifted as society, technology, and relations have changed over time.

Questions: In what ways, if any, have you seen a shift in your own interactions or those of your family, region, country, etc.? How have these positively or negatively affected you?

IMPACT OF TALKING TO STRANGERS:

Research has shown that interacting with strangers makes us better people, more compassionate, happier, connected, optimistic, and understanding. It improves not just our own life, but the lives of those we interact with too. Findings suggest that those who talk with strangers enjoy it, feel more trusted and optimistic, are less lonely, and have reduced prejudices.

Questions: How has talking to strangers influenced your life or way of thinking?

TIPS FOR CONNECTING:

Throughout the book, the author provides stories, tips, and examples to ease into conversation with strangers. Whether using small talk to discover and establish little connections, noting incidental similarities to create a stronger feeling of kinship, or using mere belonging as an invitation/icebreaker — these techniques can ease anxiety and open the door to both connection and conversation.

Questions: What connecting tips or examples from the book resonated with you? What other tips or strategies have you found helpful in your own interactions? What learned habits, if any, might be keeping you from talking to strangers?

A BETTER FUTURE:

Keohane writes, "You cannot hope to be a good citizen, you cannot hope to be a moral person, if you do not recognize that the world is a very different place for the person sitting next to you." He suggests that when we engage in conversation with someone who is a stranger, we connect with their humanity, and that this can shift our view from ourself or our own bubble to a better understanding of the other person's experience of reality, and help to build social trust among groups and in society.

Questions: When you want to talk to a stranger what inspires you to connect? In what ways have the interactions you've had expanded your self-view or worldview?

2021 Reader's Guide

Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings: Poems by Joy Harjo

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Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado annually recommends a community read to encourage conversations around understanding and resolving conflict. In this year's selection, U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo draws upon her life experience as a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the violence against Indigenous Peoples in *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings: Poems*. Readers may recognize universal conflict-inducing experiences like love and loss. Readers may also be learning for the first time the magnitude of historical conflict still seeking resolution. Resist the urge to look away, taking words of encouragement from the poet herself, "Let's not shame our eyes for seeing. Instead thank them for their bravery." (p. 39)

Land Acknowledgement Statement

A quote by Phillip Deer, Muscogee Leader (1929-1985) acknowledging "the Indian People" begins the collection of poetry. Acknowledgements demonstrate respect and knowledge of history. Think about the land where you live, work, and play. Native nations in Colorado include the Apache, Comanche, Shoshone, and Ute. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe have their current headquarters in Colorado. If you have lived elsewhere in the United States, what tribal nations would you include in drafting your land acknowledgement statement?

Kitchen Table University

We learn lessons about conflict early on from those nearest us, our families. The poet uses imagery of the kitchen table university. "Everything you need to know is here." (p. 64) Think about a lesson you learned from your family's kitchen table. Did the lesson learned help or hinder how you resolve conflict?

Rhythm of Life

Music is the blood, the singing of trees, and words of praise. The poet shares, "We keep the heartbeat of the earth in our stomp dance feet." (p. 81) In some cases, music is a lover, like a hornplayer begetting life with song and Death dances the two-step. (p. 44) The natural rhythm of life's light and shadows are woven throughout the collection until an unnatural aberration: "The birds were however silent. They could not comprehend the violence of humans." (p. 110) Has there been a time in your life the music stopped? If your life had a soundtrack, what songs would be included?

Children and Our Future

In "Once the World was Perfect" the poet shares that we all played a part in destroying the world but a blanket becomes the "spark of kindness" that created a light for children generations to come. (p. 14) The blanket takes on more symbolism in "Beautiful Baby, Beautiful Child" and in "For a Girl Becoming." (p. 29, 127) The child traveling from "the rainbow house" is not only wrapped in a blanket but in blessings and community wisdom. (p. 127) What blessing or advice would you wrap (blanket) a child in your community?

Restorative Justice

In the titled poem "Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings" the poet states, "You must speak the language of justice." (p. 77) Is justice possible if the principles of conflict resolution are not applied equally? The poet returns to Indigenous teachings and beliefs to restore community instead of extolling the Western concept of restorative justice. Crocuses breaking through the earth, honoring the seasons and connection with Mother Earth restores and heals. What does restorative justice mean to you?

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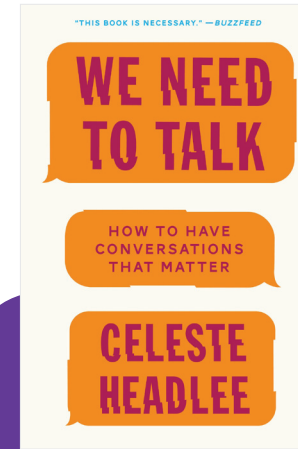
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2020 Book Selection



CONFLICT RESOLUTION MONTH IN COLORADO
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Why read We Need To Talk?

The state of conversation today can seem grim. Technology and shortening attention spans have made real connections rarer and more difficult. We all avoid hot-button issues and conversations with those we disagree with, fearing a shouting match or a total impasse. It seems like the nation is breaking into separate camps that hardly speak the same language, with no hope of coming together or finding common ground.

But it doesn't have to be this way — we can improve our ability to have meaningful conversations and connect with those we don't see eye-to-eye with. With careful focus and practice, we can improve our ability to speak with one another through empathy, active listening, and emotional recognition. Headlee says that "the best conversations happen between two people who are considering each other." If you can learn to really, sincerely consider another person as you talk with them, then you'll find that you learn more, appreciate more, and understand more. And with luck, they'll feel the same about you.



The Talk it Out 2020 campaign is offering solutions to create constructive communities and policies.

Guiding Questions

Despite our attempts to have “logical” and “fact-based” conversations, the reality is that emotions are inherent in all human communication. Headlee views emotion not as a flaw, but as a fact of life in conversation. Learning to recognize how emotion shapes our communication and accounting for the effects it can have is vital to effective conversations.

Question: Can you think of a conversation you were having that was completely derailed because one person would not recognize, acknowledge, or respect the emotions of another? What could be done differently next time?

These days it can seem that engaging in difficult conversations is nearly impossible, but Headlee presents five strategies to better navigate exchanges with someone you don’t agree with: be curious, check your bias, show respect, stay the course, and end well. Approach the conversation from a place of genuine curiosity and respect while recognizing your own biases that might color your impression of the person or topic. Focus on listening not to agree or disagree, but to empathize and understand. Don’t bail on the conversation if it gets rough and be sure to end on a positive note: thank them for their time, honesty, and good conversation.

Question: Which of these steps is the most difficult for you? Which ones do you think you excel at?

To Headlee, empathy is both a difficult skill to master and vital to having effective conversations. Your brain is hardwired to make comparisons to your own life and draw conversation back to your own experiences: watch your “conversational narcissism” and focus on really listening to the other person.

Question: Headlee tells the story of trying and failing to comfort her grieving friend by interjecting her own experience of grief. Reflect on a time when “conversational narcissism” caused you to derail or devalue a conversation — what can you learn from this example?

Humans subconsciously reject information that goes against their prior beliefs and biases, which means if your goal is to change someone’s opinion in a conversation, you’re not likely to succeed. Think hard about what you can get out of the conversation, even if it turns sour. Be open to new ideas, and focus on opening someone’s mind up to new ideas rather than beating them in a debate.

Question: Has a conversation with someone ever opened your mind to new perspectives or ideas? How did the person bring about that openness, or was it a mutual feeling?

Utilizing the skills of productive conversation like utilizing empathy, speaking with purpose, and practicing good listening requires a lot of energy, focus, and training. We shouldn’t expect to be good at it right away and should be able to recognize when we simply don’t have the energy or focus to do it correctly.

Question: What is one thing you can do in your day-to-day life to improve your empathy or listening skills?

-Headlee makes a big point about how technologies like social media and email make communication easier but also less effective and less “real.” She believes that the “messy” parts of a conversation that technology edits out — such as pauses, facial expressions, tangents, and awkward moments — are actually a vital part of making ourselves understood and connecting with others.

Question: Give one example of how technology has improved the communication or conversation in your day-to-day life and give one example of how it might be hurting the conversations in your life. For example, technology lets me communicate with family and friends who live far away, but I feel like I don’t see people in person as much as I would like.

Why Won't You Apologize? Healing Big Betrayals and Everyday Hurts

by Harriet Lerner, PH.D.

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Each year, Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado recommends a book for the community at large with the goals of spreading information and encouraging conversation on ways to manage conflicts at all levels of society. During these heavily charged times, when acknowledging hurt feelings and mending connections seems imperative, both at a national political and personal level, we wanted to focus on apologizing; or as Lerner puts it, "tak(ing) turns at being the offender and the offended." Lerner wholeheartedly believes that our ability to listen without defensiveness is at the core of a sincere apology.

The guiding questions: Are there relationships in our personal life or at a national level that could benefit from an apology or forgiveness? What is your experience? Can past pain be forgiven?

Why Is A Good Apology Essential?

A good heartfelt apology is essential. One that says, "Yes, I get it; I screwed up. Your feelings make sense, and I'm taking this seriously." Lerner warns that our failure to apologize can make any good relationship erode because we feel it when people do not hold themselves accountable for their actions or faults.

The three words, "I am sorry", can make us feel respected, validated, acknowledged, and cared for. Is a good apology important to you? Has a good apology worked on you?

Should You Always Forgive?

Forgiveness is complicated and it may take more than, "I'm sorry", to make amends. There is no adequate verbal apology for slavery, rape, incest, and other heavy topics. Nonetheless, we do need heartfelt apology language, restitution in some cases, and most importantly to continue to try. If the apologizer is serious about reconciliation, the apology is only the beginning of the journey.

As perfect as an apology can be, does it guarantee lasting forgiveness and should that be expected?

Are There Bad Apologies?

Absolutely. It's important to acknowledge bad apologies, both when giving and receiving one. "I'm sorry" is not enough if it's ambiguous, shaming, blame-reversing, justified, or a way to end an unpleasant conversation. Also, an apology can feel meaningless or not genuine when the person continues the behaviors that they claim to be sorry for.

Lerner doesn't want excuses. No, "I am sorry that you feel that way," "I am sorry that you reacted that way," "I am sorry that you are so sensitive," and "I am sorry that happened because I was tired, forgot, and so on." Have you experienced these types of "non-apologies"? Did it deepen the original hurt?

What has been your experience around forgiveness? Have you given or received a bad apology?

Do You Always Have To Apologize?

Apologizing is about giving one when it is due. Sometimes people can be over-apologizers, "I'm sorry I reached over for my things/I got in your way/I walked by you." On the other extreme, there are those who are non-apologizers; they simply will not give an apology.

Has there been a situation where you have felt pressured or forced to apologize? Did any attitudes from your upbringing or popular culture influence your decisions when giving and receiving apologies?

2019 Reader's Guide

The Rabbit Listened

by Cori Doerrfeld

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Each year, Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado recommends a book for the community at large with the goal of spreading information and encouraging conversation on ways to manage conflicts of all types and in a variety of situations. This year's title is a picture book appealing to all ages. In this year's selection our protagonist, Taylor, experiences a disappointing event. We are invited to process through the experience with Taylor as a variety of animal companions attempt to help make the situation better.

Guiding Idea

Conflict is a natural part of our daily lives and can include disappointment, grief, and loss. Through conflict we have the opportunity to grow personally as well as through our relationships. Think about how you handle disappointments and what you experience when disappointments happen. Do you first experience an emotion such as anger? Do you withdraw quietly? Do you shut down? In this book, Taylor experiences loss and a parade of well-meaning characters try to soothe Taylor with mixed results. What strategies do you use that help solve problems and make things better for all involved?

How can you spot empathy or kindness?

- Taylor has several interactions with a variety of animals. Each animal has a certain approach to Taylor's loss. Discuss how these specific approaches worked. What might individual animals do differently to better support Taylor?
- Imagine role playing. What could Taylor say to the chicken? How did the bear make you feel? What could Taylor say to the bear? Is there an animal which pushed your buttons? What animal is the most empathetic?

What is your Conflict Style?

- How do these animals reflect different conflict styles?
- Can you identify one animal from the book that demonstrates each of the following: collaborating, competing, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising?
- Which character describes your initial approach to another person in need of emotional support? How does that work for you?

Asking for What you Need

- The book jacket has the statement, "Sometimes hugs say more than words." What does this make you think of?
- If you don't like hugs, what is a good way to respond to the other person?

Practice Active Listening

- If the rabbit only listened, why do you think Taylor was able to come up with a new amazing idea? How can listening be important?
- Practice listening deeply by following these steps: Invite a friend to share something with you. Listen without responding verbally for at least two full minutes. When they are finished talking, try reframing, summarizing, and clarifying questions for understanding. Pay close attention to how the speaker responds to your listening. Ask the person speaking how it felt to be heard in this way. Ask yourself how you responded to your friend differently when listening deeply versus trying to immediately respond or problem solve.

Gender Inclusivity

- Did you notice Taylor and the animals are not assigned a gender? How did this impact your understanding of the story, if any? How might using gender neutral language create inclusivity in your workplace, community, etc.?

***DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS:
HOW TO DISCUSS WHAT MATTERS MOST***

BY DOUGLAS STONE, BRUCE PATTON, SHEILA HEEN
OF THE HARVARD NEGOTIATION PROJECT



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Each year, Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado recommends a book for the community at large with the goals of spreading information and encouraging conversation on ways to manage conflicts at all levels of society. This year's selection deals with difficult conversations, an aspect of conflict resolution that frequently occurs because these complex interactions take place not only in the workplace, schools, and congregations, but in our private lives from the supermarket to our homes. We are challenged everyday with navigating difficult conversations which influence how our relationships are strengthened or weakened, how we interact with the world, and how we understand our own communication abilities.

Difficult Conversations "explores what it is that makes conversations difficult, why we avoid them, and why we often handle them badly." (p. 8). Often, we think of difficult conversations as asking your boss for a raise, telling your significant other you're unhappy in the relationship, or telling your child that they are changing schools. Difficult conversations encompass many other interactions. These might include asking your coworker to refill the paper tray after it's empty, telling your child they can't play outside after dark, or explaining to your partner why you want to spend the night in.

THE GUIDING IDEA

We all face the challenge of difficult conversations in our lives. This book helps us get better results from these experiences by shifting from a "message delivery stance" to a "learning stance." (p. xxxii). We can improve our ability to listen from the inside out, speak for ourselves with clarity and power, and identify clearer expectations of these "learning conversations" (p. xxx).

THE THREE CONVERSATIONS

Every difficult conversation is dynamic. There's no one conversation that will be like any other. To navigate through these complex dialogues, it's important to know that there are three consistent types of conversation within every difficult conversation.

THE "WHAT HAPPENED" CONVERSATION?

We all see the world differently based on our experiences and information. This influences our behavior, and affects how we perceive others in conversation. Do your difficult conversations frequently lead to arguments? How do you interpret another's intentions in complex dialogues? What information do you use or choose to ignore when thinking about what happened? How does your own bias influence the conversation?

THE FEELINGS CONVERSATION

Managing feelings can be extremely challenging. As a result, we frequently try to ignore them. This can disrupt conversations, and obstruct the quality of our messages. Do you find it difficult to convey your feelings to others? Do you find it uncomfortable to share your feelings for fear of being judged? When do you think it's appropriate to express or suppress your feelings?

THE IDENTITY CONVERSATION

"There are probably as many identities as there are people. But three identity issues seem particularly common, and often underlie what concerns us most during difficult conversations: Am I competent? Am I a good person? Am I worthy of love?" (p. 124).

READER'S GUIDE

FORGIVING OTHERS, FORGIVING OURSELVES

BY

MYRA WARREN ISENHART, PHD AND MICHAEL SPANGLE, PHD



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Each year, Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado selects a book as recommended reading for the community at large, with the goals of spreading information and encouraging conversation on ways to resolve conflicts at all levels of society. This year's selection deals with forgiveness, an aspect of conflict resolution that is frequently ignored because it takes place not in the public eye, but privately, through processes that vary in method and timeframe by individuals, communities, and cultures. After a conflict without mutual resolution occurs, we can choose to carry our anger at another person around with us, or we can engage in the process of forgiveness.

What is (and isn't) forgiveness? Does forgiveness mean condoning actions that have brought harm, or grudgingly accepting harmful actions in an effort to "forgive and forget"? No, these perspectives represent just two ways the sometimes complex process of forgiveness may be misunderstood. "Forgiveness involves three dimensions: forgiving others, being forgiven by others, and forgiving yourself. While these may seem like three different actions, we see no distinction with regard to the definition of forgiveness," write Isenhardt and Spangle in *Forgiving Others, Forgiving Ourselves*.

THE GUIDING QUESTION

How does a better understanding of forgiveness play a role in allowing individuals, families, workplaces, and communities to move beyond conflict to a place of stronger relationships and better understandings of one another?

INDIVIDUALS

Forgiveness, of others or of yourself, represents one of the few truly effective ways to release long-carried painful emotions that may otherwise drag you down and steal joy from your life - when you bury feelings, you bury them alive. What does forgiving others look like to you? What does forgiving yourself look like, and is forgiving yourself more or less difficult than forgiving others? What barriers to forgiveness have you experienced? What are ways that you can incorporate forgiveness into your daily life?

FAMILIES

Family relationships are simultaneously some of the most important and some of the most complicated relationships of all. Offenses hurt more when they come from family, and those wounds can take longer to heal. Growing up in a family that models forgiveness is the most important predictor of adult forgiveness. What are your family's practices on forgiveness? Is forgiveness modeled in your family, and if not, how can you begin this practice?

WORKPLACES

Workplace conflicts take a large toll on productivity; in fact, experts report that more than 40% of management time is spent on addressing unresolved conflicts. While no one expects all coworkers to be best friends, there is a reasonable expectation that all workers possess the skills to move beyond conflicts and maintain productive working relationships. Forgiveness plays a large part in this ability, allowing organizational members to move on. How is forgiveness practiced in your workplace? To what extent is forgiveness valued? Does your workplace have an established conflict resolution procedure, and is it utilized?

COMMUNITIES

The value placed on forgiveness varies by community and culture. The authors write "... just as social norms can encourage us to seek revenge, community values that support conciliatory behaviors promote forgiveness" (41). What are your community's beliefs on revenge and forgiveness? How does your community encourage forgiveness, or if not, what could you as a community member do to change this?

PREPARED BY MITZI HICKS, MPA, GRANTS & CONTRACTS ADMINISTRATOR

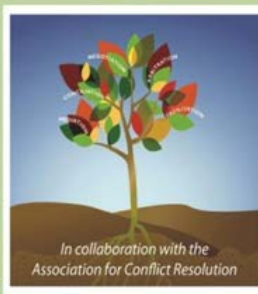
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READERS GUIDE

STICKING POINTS: HOW TO GET 4 GENERATIONS WORKING TOGETHER IN THE 12 PLACES THEY COME APART

BY HAYDN SHAW



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Each year Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado selects a book as recommended reading for the community at large, with the goal to spread information and encourage conversation on ways to resolve conflicts at all levels of society. Although this book focuses on issues that arise in the workplace, it quickly becomes apparent that the sticking points Shaw identifies also appear in a variety of settings including home, school, neighborhood, congregation, or civic group. *Sticking Points* is a timely work as there are currently four generations in the workforce – retiring Traditionalists to the as-yet-unnamed post-Millennial generation. Families already consist of up to five living generations. Shaw uses “ghost stories” of each generation, pivotal events that shaped each generation’s perspectives, to build a foundation of shared understanding between generations. Shaw presents a five-step process to transform sticking points into places of renewed unity. *Sticking Points* provides better understanding of generational differences, and teaches ways to improve communication and build stronger relationships.

THE GUIDING QUESTION

How do we develop shared understanding, respect, and appreciation of each generation’s views, and how do we use that shared understanding to improve our relationships at work, home, and in the community?

INDIVIDUALS

Shaw’s examination of the events that shaped each generation’s perspectives encourages the reader to question their assumptions about generational stereotypes and apply this new-found understanding to relationships with members of different generations in any setting. What are your assumptions about Traditionalists, Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials? What do you think others assume about you and your generation? Do you fit the typical description? What helps you feel understood by those of other generations?

FAMILIES

The five-step process Shaw describes in Chapter 3 will prove useful for untangling family conflicts rooted in generational differences, particularly in the multi-generational households that are becoming more prevalent in the United States. What are the “ghost stories” that form your perspectives? What are the values of family members? Are they based on experiences from certain times in history? What are “old” or “new” expectations in your family?

WORKPLACES

Shaw writes “If we are going to get through this next decade, we have to understand that we are natives to only one generation and immigrants to the other three.” (p. 18) Workplaces devote significant resources to enhancing cultural diversity, yet many workplaces cling to outdated norms, policies, and processes because “that’s the way it’s done here.” Do you experience outdated policies or norms at your workplace? Are there inappropriate behaviors that diminish the productive atmosphere for employees and customers of varying ages? How can you use the five-step process to develop corporate norms that engage the differing generation-based values?

COMMUNITIES

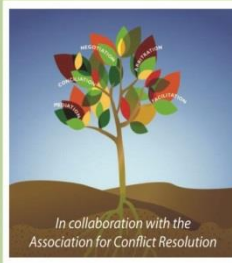
The nature of community changes with each successive generation. Communities – neighborhood, civic group, faith-based groups – that wish to remain viable for the long term must find ways to connect with members of all generations. What makes community members feel isolated and unimportant? Are understanding and inclusion concerns of the group? Do individuals take responsibility for their own choices? What are ways to find out about opinions and needs of individuals so your community can keep members of all ages engaged and ensure they feel valued?

PREPARED BY MITZI HICKS, MPA, GRANTS & CONTRACTS ADMINISTRATOR
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READERS GUIDE 2014

World Peace and Other 4th Grade Achievements

BY JOHN HUNTER



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Each year, Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado selects a book as recommended reading for the community at large, with a goal to spread information and encourage conversation on ways to resolve conflicts at all levels of society. Although *World Peace and Other 4th Grade Achievements* describes the process that John Hunter, a 4th grade teacher in Virginia, developed to teach his students about world issues, the book conveys many lessons that individuals, families, groups, communities, and schools may apply to their own challenges. During each World Peace Game session, students face and overcome fifty global problems, many of which mirror problems we face today such as land disputes and climate change. The World Peace Game is not a traditional zero-sum game; it is only won if, at the end of the game, each and every group is better off than they were at the start. This is but one lesson contained in this book: in order to create a lasting solution to a conflict, all parties must benefit in a meaningful fashion that may (and will) vary across groups, families, cultures, or nations.

THE GUIDING QUESTION:

How do we step out of well-established (or well-entrenched) conflict resolution and problem-solving patterns to develop effective, creative, and mutually beneficial solutions that leave all parties better off?

INDIVIDUALS

We are all members of multiple communities, and our actions have effects that reach far beyond us. Interconnectedness is a recurring theme in this book. As you read, consider the many communities of which you are a part (i.e. school, workplace, neighborhood, faith, service club), and how interconnected we are within and among our various communities. Do you see ways you can strengthen your connections to your own groups? Are there opportunities for you to create new connections among groups?

FAMILIES

Although success has many different definitions, all parents want their children to succeed. In Chapter 3, Hunter discusses the importance of experiencing failure and the lessons it teaches that are so vital to future success. As you read this chapter, consider the possibility that one must sometimes allow a child to fail in order to build the strength and resilience needed for future successes. How can failure become a learning opportunity, and how can parents create safe spaces for failure?

WORKPLACES

As you read Chapter 6, consider how choices and the consequences of those choices are weighed in the workplace. The student entrepreneurs in this chapter have powerful realizations about their business strategy, and we see how they shift their strategy accordingly for the long-term benefit of all. In your workplace, do you see opportunities for mutually beneficial strategic shifts? Are there steps you can take to create these opportunities?

COMMUNITIES

Consider how power is perceived and exercised while reading Chapter 5. This chapter speaks to the power of collaboration and the value of intentionally including the strengths, abilities, and perspectives of every team member in the development of strategies and solutions. As a community member or leader, what can you do to ensure that a wide variety of voices or perspectives are included in decision-making processes?

SCHOOLS

Think about the value of confusion as it is expressed in Chapter 2, as well as the importance of allowing “empty space” for the development of creative solutions. As a teacher or as a parent, do you see ways this may be incorporated into the teaching of lessons, either in the classroom or at home? How can we facilitate these valuable learning moments?

Prepared by Mitzi Hicks, MPA Grants & Contracts Administrator

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Readers Guide 2013

DIGNITY: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict by Donna Hicks, Ph.D.



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Each year **Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado** chooses a book as recommended reading for the community at large. We look for a book that is readable, offers practical skills, and is approachable by all. *Dignity* fills all these requirements easily. Author Donna Hicks suggests that experiences of dignity and violations to dignity are even more fundamental than interactions of respect and disrespect. She uses personal experience and new science to bolster her conclusions. Her thinking resonates with the reader at a foundational level no matter who you are in the world. She offers us dignity, a word and concept that we all know, and then adds depth and dimension to dignity and its practice. Donna Hicks leads workshops in **The Dignity Model**.

The Guiding Question:

When I am in conflict, how do I uphold my dignity and the dignity of the other at the same time?

General Understanding

Discuss the difference between dignity and respect as noted in the introduction on page 5. What do you think? The author uses evidence from evolutionary psychology to suggest that we are hardwired for self-protection by using fight-or-flight responses. At the same time, we are hardwired to be in relationships with each other and to befriend each other. These are powerful tensions and opposing urges. When have you been aware of these tensions? How did you and others respond? What was the outcome? Was dignity maintained or violated?

Individuals

Try this exercise from the author's **Dignity Model Workshop**: participants are asked to think about a time when their dignity was violated - when they walked away from difficult interactions with someone and they felt bad. Then participants are asked to look at the Ten Essential Elements of Dignity in Section 1 and name the elements that were violated in the bad interaction. Does this help you to understand that you are not "bad" but something bad happened to you?

Families

How do you see blame and shame happening in families? What has been your reaction to blame, shame and guilt? Often we carry these emotions and judgments from childhood; what does *Dignity* offer by way of managing one's reaction as adults?

Work

Demeaning gossip. What is your experience with gossip in the workplace? What are the impacts of a work culture that engages in gossip? Respond to Hicks' analysis of gossip in Section 20.

Communities

"Dignity threats call up a reaction from our ancient emotion center as if your lives are on the line even when they are not we have experienced an assault and need to be ready for action -- reactive, self-protective, defensive and maybe even violent" (p.12). What are the forces at play when we have differences of opinions and beliefs? What are the implications for civil dialogue and disagreement at the community and legislative level? Hicks offers examples of civil wars and international wars that she has mediated. What can we apply from these examples to our political situations?