

The price of war, the cost of peace: breaking the cycle

Northern Ireland did forge a path to peace; now Israel, Palestine ought to follow it.

Last week I wrote briefly about the victim/aggressor cycle and how two different groups engaged in conflict move between the two systems in an unending, figure-eight fashion. I used the conflict raging in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories as an example of the cycle and of how

middle of the victim/aggressor cycle rises hope; peace must begin with those individuals or groups most heavily involved.

The peace spiral that rises up has as its ultimate goal true healing and "justpeace." This is a new word being used in the field of conflict transformation to describe a final stage in the process, where justice has been delivered to all concerned and peace finally reigns. However, along that spiral, at every level, there are slides back down into the victim/aggressor cycle, because a breakdown in the peace process is always possible. This is one of the drawbacks to this model.

If the initial effort is made by both parties to break out of violence and move towards peace, then both parties must be committed to the idea, in order to avoid falling back down into the cycle. Other models, such as total occupation, subjugation, or annihilation, do not have this to worry about because there is no cooperation – only domination, which leads to death.

In the Palestinian and Israeli conflict, the world observed the path to peace being approached, if tentatively, in 1993. The Oslo Peace Accords were a significant first step in approaching justpeace. However, continued violence by both hard-line Palestinian groups and the Israeli Defense Forces destroyed the opportunity given and slid both sides back down into the cycle of violence.

The idea to cease violence and approach the path to peace must come from within either of the groups involved in the conflict, then must be approached by both sides equally.

When all major players – governments and large paramilitaries – come into accord with one another and agree to walk the path of peace, a hopeful future is in sight. Yet, that first step must be made and the commitment to peace must be present. Then and only then can bloody conflict cease.

Both groups must have a commitment to peace in order for it to work as a method for reigning in hardline organizations, like the Zionists or the al-Aqsa Martyr Brigade. Let us now look at a conflict where the path to peace model was not only used, but succeeded and is now approaching completion.

It has been four years since the last instance of sanctioned violence in the brutal conflict between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Since 1972, the Provisional IRA has carried out political violence attacks causing and retaliated to attacks of the same nature by Great Britain. For 26 years, bombs have exploded in British and Northern Irish cities claiming the lives of thousands.

Although on a smaller scale than the Palestinian and Israeli conflict – no occupation exists – this conflict has followed the same pattern of victim/aggressor, but has since ceased to use violence and is moving forward on the path to peace.

The British government, the Northern Irish government, and Sinn Féin, the

non-paramilitary element of the IRA, began to seriously consider peace in the early '90s. In 1993 the Provisional IRA officially called off all military action in response to the Downing Street Declaration, but broke their agreement in early 1996 with the Canary Wharf bomb. In 1998 the Belfast Agreement was signed on Good Friday, and both parties seriously committed themselves to peace.

However, only four months later a dissident, hard-line republican group known as the Real IRA exploded a bomb in the streets of Omagh, Northern Ireland. When the British government, the Northern Irish government and Sinn Féin all condemned the attack, the Real IRA promised to immediately suspend all violence.

Despite the violence, the key players in this conflict stood for peace at a crucial moment, when a breakdown was not only expected, but imminent.

The next phase in the peace process, the decommissioning of arms, was initiated after the Omagh bombing. In May 2000, the Provisional IRA began sealing away much of its weaponry in arms dumps "beyond use." However, when it became known they were not decommissioning all their arms, David Trimble, North Ireland's First Minister and a key player in the peace process, shocked everyone by resigning. He claimed it was clear peace was not a goal if there was not a commitment to decommission. When the Provisional IRA responded positively with more decommission, he stepped back into office.

The Sept. 11 attacks brought about

a sense of urgency in North Ireland, and decommission of arms was stepped up due to international pressure. Both governments, as well as Sinn Féin and the Provisional IRA, are committed to peace now. However, the problem of dissident groups remains. There were several small outbreaks of violence this past summer, all of which received serious condemnation by all key players.

This conflict is truly using the path to peace model and it is working. Opportunities to backtrack and begin violence anew have abounded, but all parties have responded, "No, we have had enough." With time, even the dissident groups will be brought into check, because all major players rebuke them, and justpeace will flourish.

It is clear that the path to peace model does take time, and there is always the threat of sliding back into the cycle of violence. However, when all major players – governments and large paramilitaries – come into accord with one another and agree to walk the path of peace, a hopeful future is in sight. Yet, that first step must be made and the commitment to peace must be present. Then and only then can bloody conflict cease. Then and only then does justpeace have a chance.

Next week, I will attempt to answer that all-important question: So what? Or rather, what does it mean for the United States?

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OLD GOLD AND BLACK COLUMNIST

difficult it can be to move out of it. This week I want to talk about the other part of the victim/aggressor cycle, the path to peace, and identify its strengths and weaknesses followed by an example of where it has been implemented and is succeeding.

If the victim/aggressor cycle can be visualized as two circles backed up against one another, like a figure eight, one begins to understand how the two different systems work together to perpetuate conflict.

Now, with that in mind, visualize a spiral leading out of the point where the two circles meet and rising above both of them. That is the conceptualized path to peace. From the

Practicing tolerance ought to abet a mere claim to it

The defense of our ideas is crucial, but our pride mustn't stand in the way of our achieving open minds.

Yes, I am a freshman. I, like every other freshman, am trying to learn my place on the university's campus. I am trying to form my opinions and ideas based on what I know, what I learn and reaching a better understanding of what is often misunderstood. Oftentimes, that means I just sit and think. I think

I like to believe that I'm an open-minded person. I am always willing to listen to other people's ideas. That's why I even read through the e-mails, rather than tossing them in the trash after the first line. And I can't deny that I've learned things from them, both about my topic, and the defense mechanisms people throw up when they get hit in a soft spot.

Now, I must propose this question: what is the determinant for open-mindedness? Do all your opinions have to be against the norm of society? Or can just a few of them fall in with others in the mainstream? Do you have to be of a certain age to be qualified an open-minded person? Or should you have experienced certain aspects of life?

Should you even have to reach certain levels of life experience to be able to comprehend the boundaries of liberalism? Do open-minded people reach an experience level so extreme and pivotal that they can judge a person based on a few facts learned from a newspaper column?

Tell me, what does it take to be open-minded? Because from what I have seen thus far from those who responded to my column, people fit more of a closed-minded role.

Of course, the average guy like Mr. E doesn't want to hear that he's closed-minded. However, let's think about it. When people e-mail you personally after searching for your address on WIN and dish out their opinions and insults without even sending the newspaper a response, does that show that you are tolerant and unbiased?

When people label you closed-minded because you oppose the opinions of the majority, doesn't that convey an attitude of prejudice?

Expressing your beliefs through an e-mail is one thing, but taking a harsh tone and labeling somebody because they disagree with you is another ball game. But if this is considered today's idea of being "open-minded," by all means let me know. If it is I don't want to be a part of it, and you may certainly call me closed-minded.

I like to believe that I'm an open-minded person. I am always willing to listen to other people's ideas. That's why I even read through the e-mails, rather than deleting them after the first line. And I can't deny that I've learned things from them, both about my topic and the defense mechanisms people throw up when they get hit in a soft spot.

Unfortunately, I also believe that everyone is close-minded to some extent, including myself. People are close-minded to the idea of what it really means to be open or close-minded.

I understand that people won't always agree, but I wonder if our own instinctive nature will ever allow us to really listen. Can human nature ever enable us to sit down and truly comprehend what the other side has to say? Can human nature ever permit us to thoroughly understand where another person is coming from? Although we often say we do this, do we really? That would mean admitting that we could possibly be wrong. Mankind is too stubborn for that.

Yet, I still hang on to hope that one day they, we, nor I will be.

Miranda Mills is a freshman.

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a lot ...

My mind has been decidedly plagued recently, after writing on a rather controversial topic, in a column deemed by some a "cliché" and a "lame attempt at humor." Maybe so. It got me to think about what I wrote. I must say, however, it also got me to think about what other people thought about what I wrote. One person, who I will refer to as Mr. E, e-mailed me and told me that I was not open-minded and that he would "hold contempt towards me if I remained that way."

Mr. E labeled me young and unlearned in the modern world, and said once I was properly exposed, he was positive I would change my views. I pondered over this for some time before replying. I asked myself, was I "properly exposed" to basic knowledge and, as he coined it, information about the "modern world"? Did I think the way I thought because I am young?

I reached the conclusion that I was open-minded and I have experienced a lot about life that most people haven't. I have friends of all sorts, colors, backgrounds and personalities. I watch a variety of diverse TV shows. I have experienced situations most people don't dream about. I surf the Internet, read books and ask questions – all in search of the "different" point of view. I listen to all sides of a story, and I make sure I have knowledge about both before taking my stand on an issue.

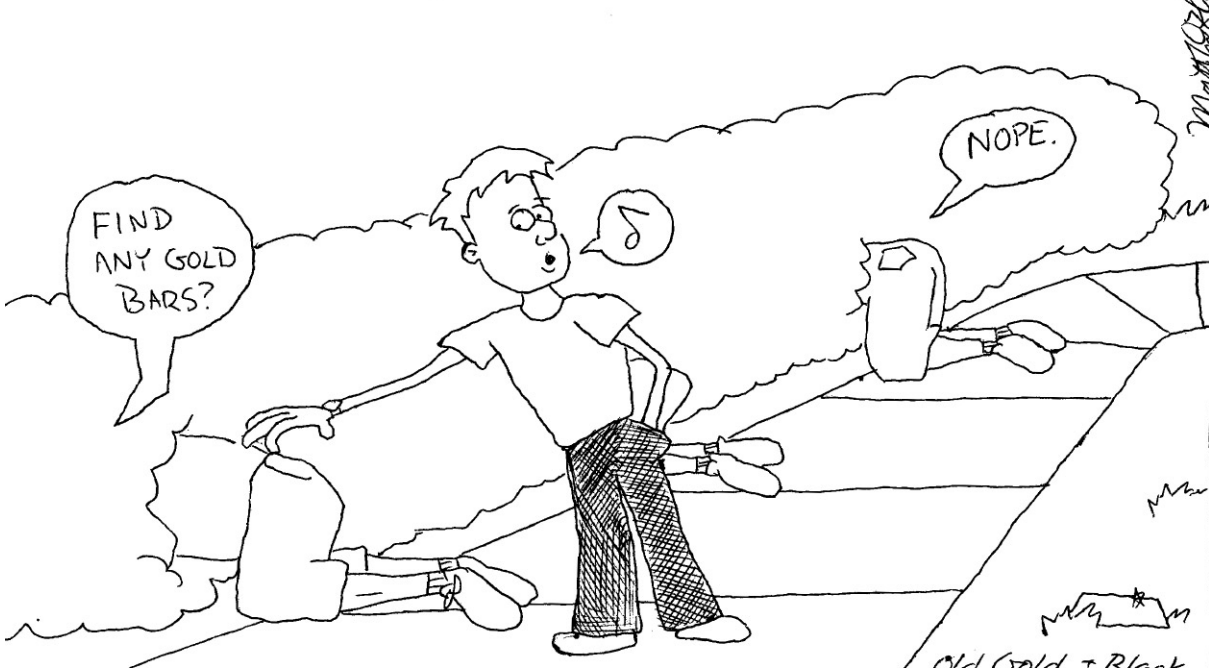
Much to Mr. E's displeasure, I'm sure, I replied that he was, in reality, the closed-minded one of us two. Before labeling me a hostile and defensive freshman, who can't take constructive criticism I ask that you all think about this for a moment.

If you look up synonyms for "open-minded" you will find words like unbiased, unprejudiced and tolerant. However, the e-mails I have received over the past week or so have been anything but these words.

Mr. E, for example, took my one column, my opinion and my age and determined it enough to conclude I was inexperienced, uneducated, young and therefore closed-minded. Mr. E did not know of my exposure to controversial issues or anything regarding my background. He only knew that I was a freshman at this university who disagreed with his opinion.

Was he at fault for his lack of knowledge? Of course not. However, he is liable for the formation of his opinions. Therefore, I do believe him to be in the wrong when, because his opinion happened to be the more liberal point of view and I disagreed with it, he labeled me closed-minded.

How to Win the Gold Rush...



Quad became money pit

Donor's generous contribution could have had better use.

This summer, the administration of the university made a big decision to spend a major contribution and repave part of the Quad. No, in case you're wondering, President Hearn hasn't joined the well-known campus group that promotes free thinking every spring by



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urging us to "Pave the Quad". However, it is undeniable that the north end of the Quad has undergone a facelift.

Now, the university has officially joined the ranks of schools with brick sidewalks, standing proudly beside such schools as, well, N.C. State.

The fact of the matter is that the sidewalks around the Quad needed to be repaved. They were cracked and dirty, making them nearly unusable unless you walk or rode something with rubber tires. They also subtracted from the beauty quotient on campus, as a brick-bedecked Quad will most certainly not do. Apparently, the old sidewalk had just seen its day come.

In all seriousness, the decision, made last spring, to change the surface of the sidewalks on the Quad was

I believe that the biggest question that has to be asked about the sidewalk is in regards to the other things that could have been done in its place. Perhaps a scholarship fund could have been started, or continued.

apparently one that the donor to the project had always dreamed would be made. In the face of this kind of pressure, the administration really had no choice but to see that it be done.

However, I question the utility of the brick over cement, and the results of it now that it's been in place for a few months. The brick will undoubtedly wear out and have to be replaced. If you go to N.C. State for any reason and walk on their campus, you'll rarely find a sidewalk that isn't being torn up for more brick treatment. It can also fail to seal as tightly as cement and can be more uneven than our 50-year-old sidewalks had been.

They do provide an attractive surface, but at what cost? At the beginning of the year, when the ground was at its thirstiest and the brick was as yet untested, I walked down to the bookstore to get some textbooks for my upcoming classes, to which I was so looking forward. Imagine my surprise when, upon cresting the rise beside the chapel and preparing to walk down toward Taylor, I found myself wading through anywhere between one and three inches of rainwater. The sidewalk, which had been put in while the city was in the

midst of the biggest drought in decades, apparently drains water much more poorly than the sidewalk around Reynolda Hall.

I have found this to be true several times more, as I walk around in rainy weather getting my feet unnecessarily wet.

Now, I'm not proposing that we build a mini-Talladega in Winston Salem, but was a little banking too much to ask, to at least make sure that most of the water stays on the grass and the sidewalk doesn't get flooded?

All these complaints about how the sidewalk looks and functions are, however, beside the point. I believe that the biggest question that has to be asked about the sidewalk is in regards to the other things that could have been done in its place. Perhaps a scholarship fund could have been started, or continued. Perhaps a gesture could have been made toward starting the endowment to waive tuition for all undergraduate students.

The donation was made specifically to improve the facilities, but considering the need to replace the cement around the Quad with something, could it not have been replaced in kind, and the remainder of the money used for something else?

Simply speaking, I wonder if the decision to redo the Quad in brick could have been reconsidered. Of course, I welcome comments from anyone on the issue, but if these questions had been asked ahead of time, perhaps something different could have been done.

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