

11.

Strategic Design of Peacebuilding

Just days after the September 11, 2001 tragedy, my husband, daughter, and I traveled to Fiji to help facilitate a national peace conference. Overwhelmed with the events in my own country, I struggled to formulate a hopeful, welcoming speech to the participants. In the end, I read a quote from a Latin-American peacebuilder about planting date trees. Roughly summarized, the quote urges people to plant the seeds now for the trees that will bear fruit in generations to come.

Planting the seeds of peace requires strategy. The key tasks of peacebuilding include: making decisions about what we need to do to make that dream possible; imagining who can plant the seeds and nurture this dream; and proposing when, where, and how the planting should happen. My colleague and mentor John Paul Lederach uses a set of strategic frameworks to make decisions about the what, who, when, where, and how of peacebuilding.¹⁷ His work forms the organizing framework for this chapter. Under each subtitle that follows, a variety

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of tools are offered for helping peacebuilders make strategic decisions. Each of these tools has strengths and weaknesses, so they are best used in conjunction with other tools.

The Strategic "What"

How do peacebuilders decide what to do? A variety of analytical tools are useful for strategically designing a coordinated series of peacebuilding programs based on available resources, needs, and key issues that have the capacity to draw people's energy and attention. Each of these tools is briefly reviewed here.

A Local Capacity for Peacebuilding

A focus on local capacities or resources for peace is an important first step. Only local people can create the road maps to their future. It is important to identify local people, programs, systems, symbols, attitudes, and traditions that help connect people and sustain an architecture of relationships to support peace.¹⁸ The focus on local capacities for peacebuilding aims to build on and enhance what is already working and minimize possible harm and failure of peacebuilding activities initiated from the outside. It sees local culture as a resource for peacebuilding. It seeks to learn from the past and takes seriously the challenge of making all peacebuilding actors responsive to local cultures.

A second approach for identifying what can build peace is known as *appreciative inquiry* or *assets-based assessment*. This method appreciates and assesses what is already happening by asking key questions that can help people think about their situation in a new way. Rather than focusing on problems, positive approaches

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to peacebuilding seek to discover the successes and strengths that can be built upon and supported through peacebuilding interventions.¹⁹ Similarly, the Listening Project methodology uses non-threatening interview and dialogue processes to allow people to express views and solutions to issues in their community.

Needs Assessments

Needs assessments help communities discuss their needs while laying out a variety of options for meeting those needs. Needs assessments can help communities identify where they need to build their own capacity and how they can meet their own needs. The violence map on page 24 can help communities name the various types of violence they are experiencing. The peacebuilding map on page 26 can serve as a needs assessment tool for communities to assess what interventions or peacebuilding programs are already happening in their communities and what could be developed as part of a peacebuilding strategy.

Connectors and Dividers

Each community has a set of systems, institutions, attitudes, values, experiences, symbols, and occasions that connects and divides people. Connectors, like common music or language, act as bridges between people in conflict. Dividers, like war propaganda or ethnic prejudice, contribute to conflict. Peacebuilding strategies must support and increase connectors and inhibit or stop dividers.²⁰

Framing

Peacebuilding requires strategic choices about how to frame issues in ways that will mobilize people to act.

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Frames are like different lenses. They provide language, metaphors, and theories for people to understand a large complex issue. Gandhi was an expert framer, tackling the goal of decolonization through a series of smaller issues, such as the right for Indians to make their own salt or wear their own traditional clothes. For many people, talking about peace and reconciliation signals compromise and selling out to the other side. Talking about peacebuilding in terms of a strategy for long-term security or terror prevention is sometimes an easier sell. Finding the best frame or doorway to talk about an issue makes a tremendous impact on how people respond. Sometimes framing is done best in an impartial way, appealing to all parts of the political spectrum.

The idea of framing issues is related to John Paul Lederach's concept of a "presenting situation," a particular crisis or aspect of a conflict that catches our attention.²¹ Presenting situations, like a specific rape in a community, make people aware of a problem. It is a starting point to talk about problems that may have much deeper roots and histories, such as media portrayal of women and sexist attitudes.

Persuasion and Coercion

Peacebuilding processes use both coercive and persuasive methods to bring about change. Deciding whether to use persuasion, coercion, or both in a peacebuilding strategy requires careful analysis of the situation.

Persuasion invites people to change by convincing them that it is in their interest to do so. This happens through self-reflection, building relationships, and exchanging experiences and ideas. When people voluntarily choose to change their minds and behaviors as a

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result of learning through negotiation or dialogue, they are more likely to feel good about the change, and the change in their behavior is more likely to be lasting.

Yet persuasion alone does not always work. Martin Luther King Jr. said it like this: "Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed." Coercion forces people to change by making them "hurt" through social, psychological, political, economic or physical isolation, pressure, or force. While violence itself is coercive, there are also nonviolent means of forcing change. Coercive peacebuilding strategies include human rights actors who mobilize shame by economic sanctions or boycotts, and civilian peacekeepers who try to force groups to stop fighting.

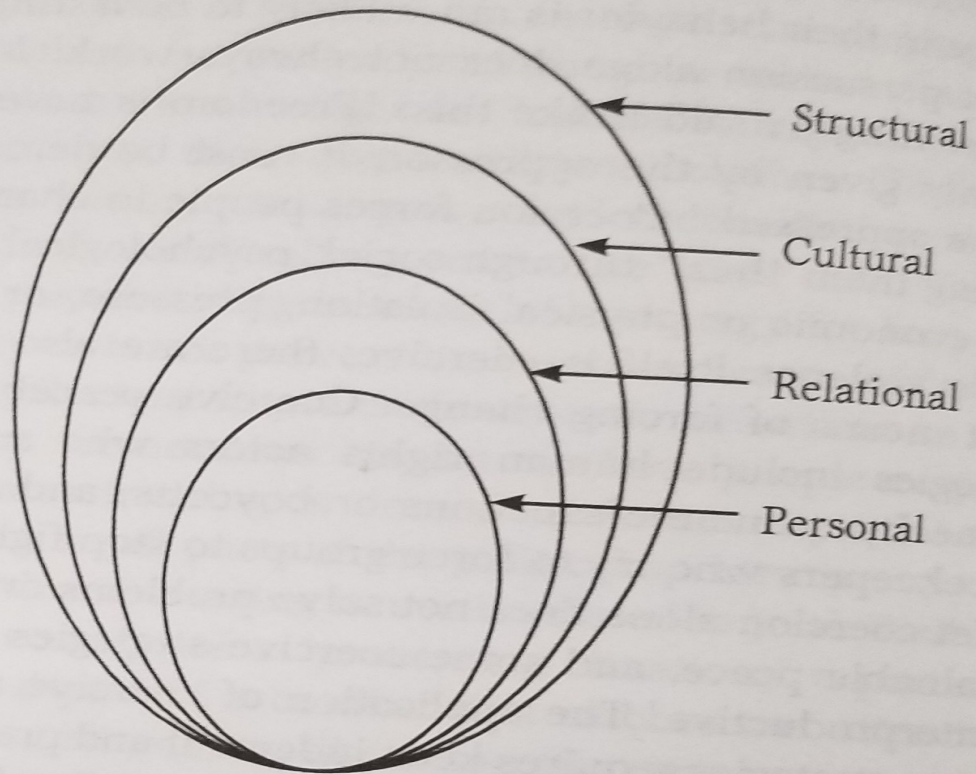
Yet coercion alone does not solve problems or bring a sustainable peace, and some coercive strategies may be counterproductive. The application of coercive and persuasive strategies requires keen judgment and precise timing. This topic is revisited in the "Strategic When" section.

Levels of Transformation

Lederach argues that peacebuilding requires fostering transformation at personal, relational, cultural, and structural levels.²²

- **Personal change** includes new attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge by individuals within the context.
- **Relational change** includes new or improved relationships between groups within the context.
- **Cultural change** includes strengthened values that support peace.
- **Structural change** includes new institutions, policies, and/or leaders.

Levels of Transformation



Each peacebuilding program or activity may not address all of these levels. However, a coordinated peacebuilding strategy will address all levels through various programs. For example, in Rwanda some groups focus their work on individual trauma healing and on tolerance programs aimed at helping people reflect on their own attitudes. Other groups carry out dialogue programs to build relationships between groups at the community level. International peacebuilding organizations such as Search for Common Ground are focusing on cultural change by creating radio soap operas that emphasize peaceful values and skills. Finally, the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity are working at structural change to create a new set of leaders who are able to work together

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across the lines of ethnicity and conflict. Some research shows that programs aimed at individual change contribute to sustainable peacebuilding only when they are explicitly linked to structural change goals.²³

The Strategic "Who"

Peacebuilding is everyone's responsibility. Deciding who to draw into peacebuilding processes requires more strategic decision-making.

Multi-Track Diplomacy

Governments are responsible to provide safety and security to their citizens. But governments are not solely responsible or capable of building peace. During the Cold War, a number of nongovernmental efforts to build relationships between the Soviet Union and Western states gave credibility to the peacebuilding roles of individual citizens and broader civil society actors. These nongovernmental efforts came to be known as Track II and they complemented Track I or state diplomacy.

The concept of multi-track diplomacy acknowledges the diversity of actors in Track II, including the media, conflict resolution professionals, businesses, religious organizations and leaders, activists, private citizens, researchers, educators, women, youth, and traditional leadership structures.²⁴

Traditional leadership, such as elders, chiefs, and kings, exists in many communities around the world and has a wealth of traditional ceremonies, rituals, and precedents for building peace in their communities. In many South Pacific islands, for example, it would be impossible to consider excluding elders, chiefs, and local kings from peacebuilding processes between the

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various ethnic groups. Local people respect these local authorities as much as, if not more than, that of state governments. In Western societies, local religious or community leaders may play a similar role. Recognizing the various actors in peacebuilding calls for coordination and collaboration between tracks.

Key People and Critical Masses

The strategic "who" of peacebuilding requires determining which actors can instigate significant change. Lederach uses two metaphors to describe how key people can mobilize large numbers of people for peace.²⁵

Key people are like yeast in a bread recipe. The quantity of yeast in comparison to flour is small, yet yeast makes the rest of the bread grow. It has the capacity to bring about great change.

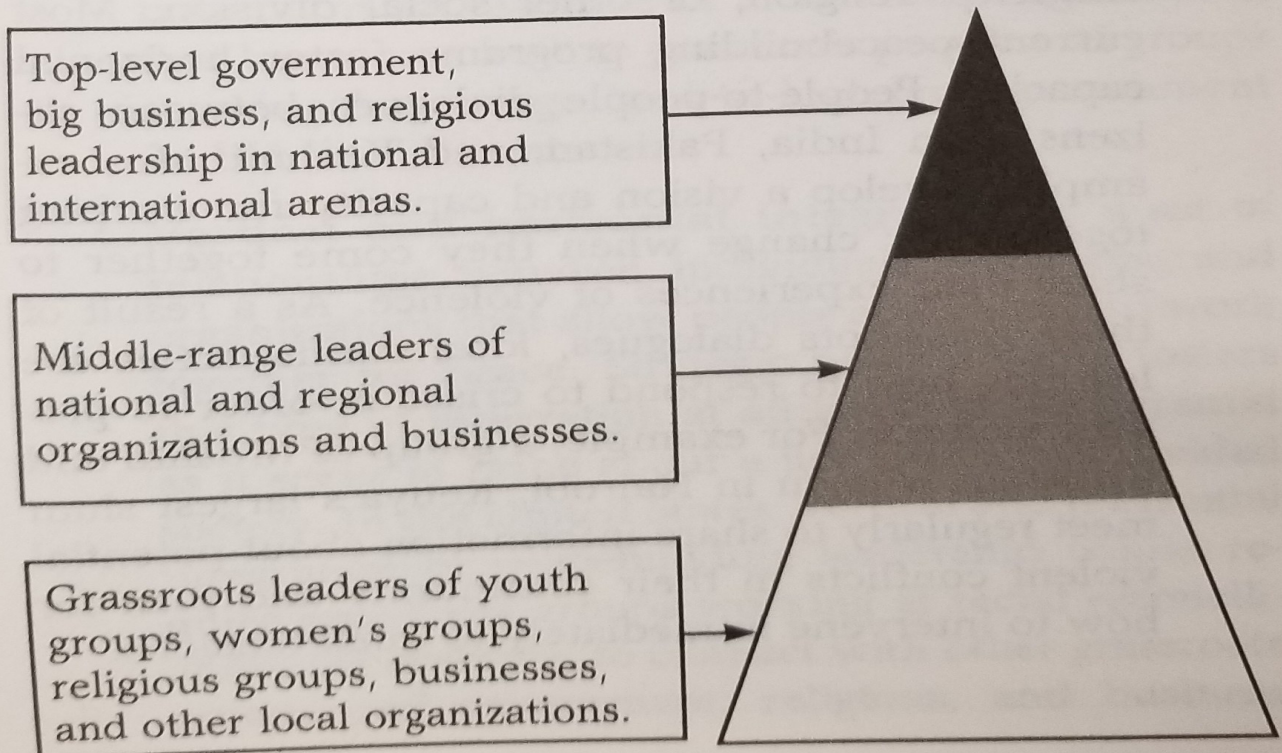
Key people may also be like a siphon. Siphons work by moving small amounts of a liquid through a tube using suction. Once a small amount of liquid is pulled, the rest of the liquid follows, moving from one container to another.

Determining the strategic "who" requires an analysis of which people or groups can act as the initial liquid through the tube or the yeast in making bread. These leaders are sometimes called the opinion makers, because they shape the opinions of their followers.

Key leaders are important for peacebuilding in two ways. First, they may have the authority and opportunity to make important decisions that can reduce violence and address basic needs. Second, they may be able to use their influence to create a critical mass where so many people embrace their ideas and solutions so that change is inevitable. The media, education, and other processes can also help create a critical mass of people committed to peacebuilding.

Vertical and Horizontal Capacity

Peacebuilding actors operate at different levels of society. Lederach uses a pyramid to illustrate.²⁶ At each level of the pyramid, there are people capable of inspiring and leading social change efforts. At the top level, the United Nations, national governments, and religious leadership such as the World Council of Churches participate in official dialogue, negotiation, and mediation to address conflicts such as a political crisis. At the middle level of the pyramid, national and regional organizations and businesses lead policy and program initiatives, such as providing the regional coordination for relief aid for a humanitarian crisis. At the grassroots or community level, a variety of local groups carry out relief and development programs, civilian peacekeeping, dialogues, trauma healing, training and education programs, and other projects.



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For example, in the 2004 humanitarian crisis in Sudan, many actors at various levels were involved. Peacebuilding efforts at the top level included personal appeals by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan for the Sudanese government to address and acknowledge the widespread famine. At the middle level, groups such as Oxfam and the Red Cross mobilized international and regional resources and coordinated efforts for relief aid. At the local level, grassroots nongovernmental organizations and churches worked together to deliver the relief aid and to set up feeding camps.

Lederach proposes four key principles for working with these three levels:²⁷

1. A **horizontal capacity** for peacebuilding is a set of relationships within each level of the pyramid that allows leaders to coordinate with each other in peacebuilding programs across lines of conflict, ethnicity, religion, or other social division. Most current peacebuilding programs foster horizontal capacity. People-to-people dialogues between citizens from India, Pakistan, and Kashmir, for example, develop a vision and capacity for working together for change when they come together to share their experiences of violence. As a result of these grassroots dialogues, local communities are learning how to respond to crises in order to prevent violence. For example, a group of Muslim and Christian women in Nairobi, Kenya's largest slum meet regularly to share information about potential violent conflicts in their community and plan for how to intervene immediately to quell tensions.

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2. A **vertical capacity** for peacebuilding is a set of relationships between top, middle, and grassroots leaders that recognizes their different and interdependent contributions to peacebuilding. Increasingly, people at all levels are recognizing the need to have relationships with people working at other levels. For example, the United Nations is increasingly showing interest in working with regional organizations and their grassroots partners in setting up early warning networks to alert the international community to impending violence.
3. Those in the **middle level**, such as some business or religious leaders, are more likely to have access and relationships with those at both the top and grassroots levels. Working with the middle level, then, requires strategic planning to foster vertical cooperation. The West African Network for Peacebuilding is an example of a mid-level organization that has access both to grassroots people and groups working for change, and to high-level government and U.N. diplomats.
4. **Vertical and horizontal integration** is a set of relationships between individuals, networks, and organizations that allow people at all levels to work together for peace. Strategic peacebuilding fosters this type of integration at all levels of the pyramid as it seeks to bring about a just peace in a divided society. In the United States, vertical and horizontal integration of peacebuilding leadership would require grassroots groups working at racial reconciliation, for example, to connect with other grassroots groups *and* government, religious, and business

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organizations at the middle and top levels to design a systemic approach to this historic conflict.

Moderates and Extremists

Peacebuilding requires including both moderates and extremists. Both leaders who instigate violence and those who already support peace need to be involved in peacebuilding processes. Far too many programs involve only those who are predisposed to peace. Pro-violence leaders are often left out as they are seen as "spoilers" capable of hijacking, sidetracking, or even rejecting peace processes. Yet if they are not included, peacebuilding programs have little chance of success.

Insiders and Outsiders

In most violent conflicts around the world, both insiders and outsiders are working for peace. They participate in peacebuilding in different ways. Insiders are people who live within the conflicted community and call it home. Insiders generally make a longer-term commitment to the work and have more at stake if peacebuilding succeeds or fails. They have a deeper understanding of local culture, context, the conflicts, and local resources for peace. They are more likely to hold credibility and trust with local people and to have extensive networks of relationships.

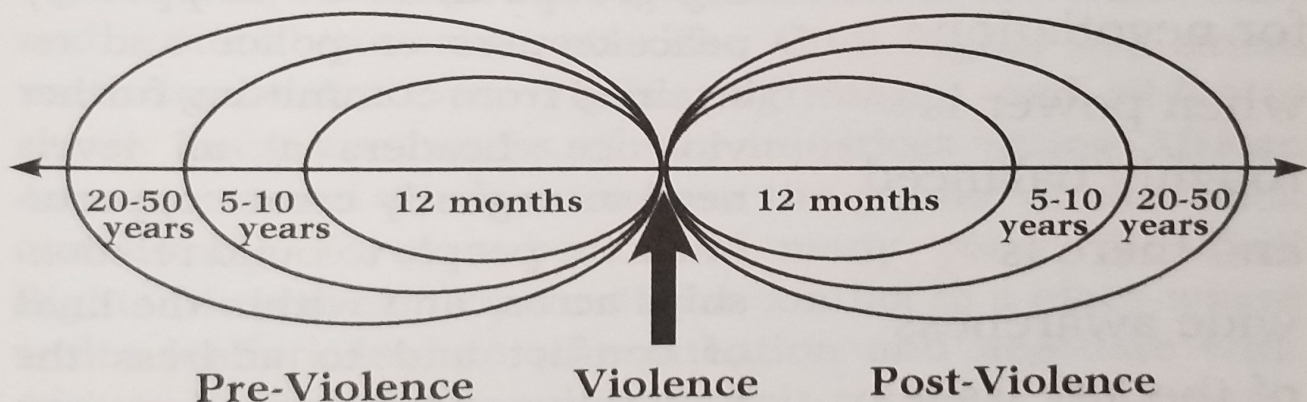
Outsiders are people and organizations who travel to the conflict region specifically to participate in peacebuilding. Outsiders are likely to have a larger set of economic and political resources. These resources allow them to raise international awareness about the conflict and about how local participants are working at peacebuilding. Outsiders can help influence national and international powers to address the conflicts and find funders

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to give financial resources. In addition, outsiders can increase the safety and political leeway for insiders to do their work by physically accompanying them to prevent retaliatory violence. They can also create space and support for conflict transformation, restorative justice, and trauma healing programs.²⁸

The Strategic "When"

Conflict is dynamic; it changes over time and moves in waves and cycles. Peacebuilding seeks to prevent and address violent conflict. Peacebuilding needs to occur before, during, and after violence. The diagram below shows how strategic peacebuilding requires a variety of actions in each of these three time frames.



Pre-Violence

Before violence breaks out, structural forms of violence often exist. One or more groups may perceive an unfair distribution of resources or a violation of human rights. Preventative peacebuilding programs intervene before mass violence erupts. Early warning and response projects aim to monitor conflicts in their early stage and send an alarm to the international community, governments, and nongovernmental organizations before violence begins. Through

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advocacy and other forms of strategic action, nonviolent activists can wage conflict by drawing national and international attention to important issues and to the need for structural change. International, national, and community leaders can work together to express and address the issues democratically, convincing people that negotiation rather than violence is the best means for resolving the conflict.

Violence

During times of direct violence, additional peacebuilding programs need to address victims and offenders. International and local aid agencies need to create shelters

Conflicts are "ripe" for negotiation when power is roughly balanced and there is wide awareness of the key issues.

for displaced people and other victims of the violence. Offending groups must be stopped by peacekeepers or police and restrained from committing further violence. Leaders at all levels need to urgently create opportunities for people to build relationships across and within the lines of conflict and to address the underlying needs of all groups in conflict. They must work toward finding mutually satisfactory solutions to immediate problems. If violence continues for many months or years, long-term capacity-building programs are needed to train people in human rights, conflict transformation, restorative justice, and other areas.

Post-Violence

After war, societies need to disarm and reintegrate armed people, address traumas, and rebuild infrastruc-

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ture. Capacity-building programs can help societies develop ongoing peace and human rights education, create opportunities for social and economic development, and channel research funds into creating democratic structures that are culturally based.

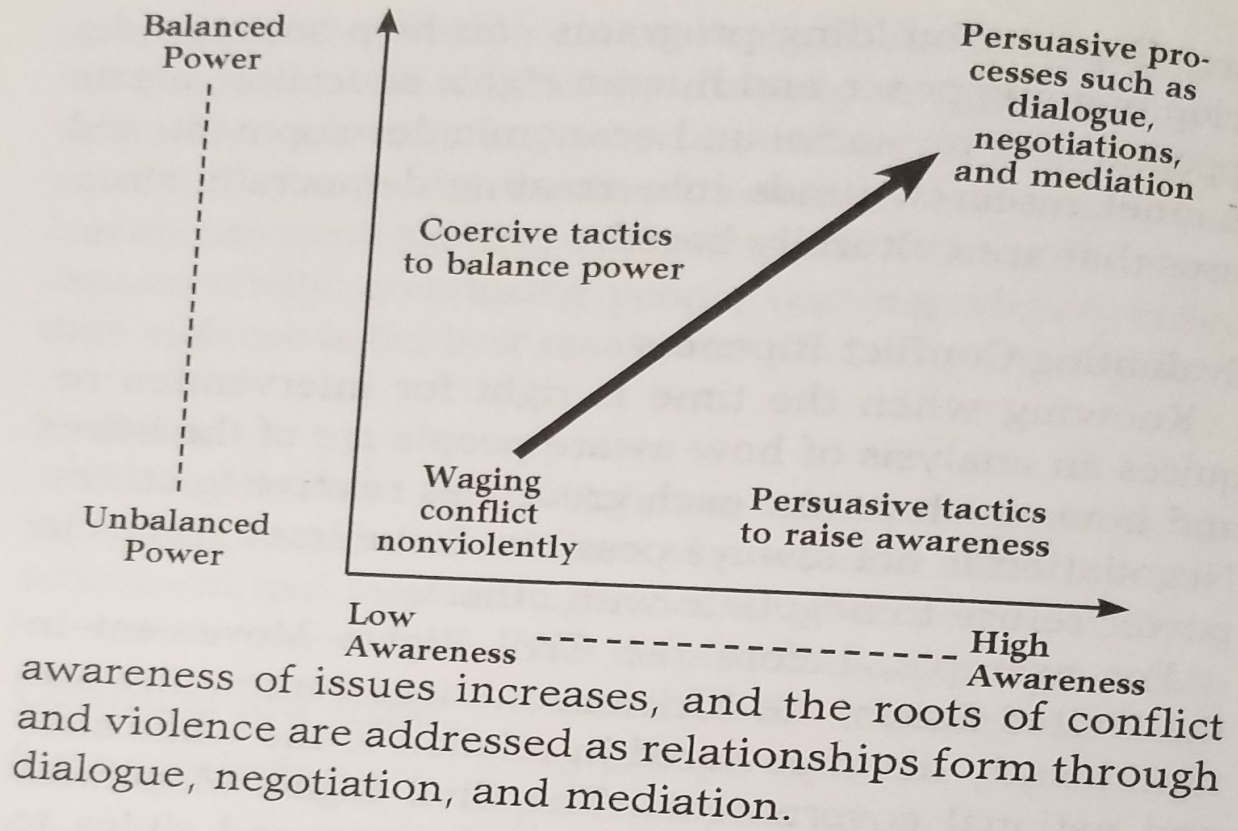
Evaluating Conflict Ripeness

Knowing when the time is right for intervention requires an analysis of how aware people are of the issues and how much power each group has relative to others. Negotiation is not always possible. Sometimes groups in power refuse to negotiate with others.

For example, before the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the African-American community was significantly disempowered in relation to the white state and national governments. The Civil Rights Movement used demonstrations, vigils, pilgrimages, and sit-ins to create mass awareness of the injustices facing African Americans and to demonstrate the power of the black community. Over a period of many years, the Civil Rights Movement "ripened" the conflict to a place where white leaders had to pay attention and negotiate with African Americans to address their concerns. As a result of many negotiations and court cases, segregation laws were changed, civil rights laws were enacted, and many white Americans began to understand and challenge the attitudes and structures of racism.

The diagram on page 78 portrays how to determine whether a conflict is ripe for interventions.²⁹ In the lower left corner of the graph, power is unbalanced and awareness is low. Activist strategies use a mix of coercion and persuasion to wage conflict nonviolently. If these strategies work, power becomes more balanced, people's

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Symbolic Dates

Some dates have symbolic meaning. The launch of a new peacebuilding program, the signing of peace accords, or the arrival of peacekeepers can harness the symbolism of dates. Human rights groups use the symbolism of March 21, 1960, the date of the horrific Sharpsville Massacre in South Africa, to advance their International Day for the Elimination of Racism.

The Strategic "Where"

Strategic peacebuilding also requires an analysis of symbolic and socially-important places and spaces that can support relationship-building. If a peacebuilding program is to focus on youth, then schools, soccer fields, and playgrounds will be important places for intervention. Women will need to mobilize in places where

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they meet other women. In many developing cultures, women run the marketplace and have staged significant protests by mobilizing other women in this space.

Norwegian mediators took Israelis and Palestinian negotiators to rural chalets where they shared meals family-style and took hikes through the woods together. Creating a symbolic setting that encourages negotiators to find their common humanity is an important element in diplomacy at all levels.

The Strategic "How"

How will strategic peacebuilding take place? What are the core principles? What is needed to coordinate peacebuilding actors and activities? The following principles suggest the primary steps or tasks in designing a peacebuilding strategy.

Principles of Strategic Peacebuilding Practice

1. **Reflect on values.** Peacebuilding requires ongoing personal and organizational reflection, clarification of guiding values, and an evaluation of how peacebuilding programs fulfill those values.
2. **Analyze conflict and violence.** Peacebuilding requires ongoing analysis of the resources needed for peace, and of the causes and dynamics of conflict and violence.
3. **Address basic needs and rights.** Peacebuilding helps people to meet their own basic needs and rights while acknowledging the needs and rights of others.

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4. **Plan long term.** Peacebuilding moves beyond a short-term, crisis orientation toward designing social change over years and decades.
5. **Transform whole systems.** Peacebuilding includes changes at the personal, relational, cultural, and structural levels.
6. **Coordinate approaches and actors.** Peacebuilding requires coordinated approaches that reflect responsibility, ownership, accountability, and participation by many different actors.
7. **Identify and create power.** Power exists in all relationships. Peacebuilding requires all people to be aware of their power and to use that power nonviolently to meet their human needs while respecting others.
8. **Empower others.** Peacebuilding strengthens and builds upon local efforts and empowers others to act. Peacebuilding is based on participatory democracy and self-determination.
9. **See culture as a resource.** Cultural values, traditions, and rituals can be resources for peacebuilding.
10. **Innovate and use creativity.** Peacebuilding uses multiple ways to communicate and learn rather than relying only on words or dialogue to develop creative solutions to complex problems.