foundation upon which to build mutually beneficial intercultural communities" (Hall, 2002: 332).

The **golden consequence** is grounded in the outcomes of people's actions; ethical decisions are based on what will bring the most good for the most people. In this context, an action generally considered unethical, such as lying, may be deemed the right behavior if it leads to the greater good. This approach allows people to go any way using their ethical reasoning; besides, "humans don't really know what the consequences of certain actions will be" (Hall, 2002: 335).

The **golden mean** can be traced back to the ideas of Aristotle and Confucius, who saw the right behavior as a blending of opposites. For example, neither cowardice nor foolhardiness is right, but courage, as the golden mean between the two, is. Thus, an ethical choice is a happy medium between two extremes.

The **golden rule** states that we should act toward people from other cultures as we would have them act toward us. The golden rule is upheld not only in the West but also in the East, where it is expressed in the Confucian saying "Do not do to others what you do not like others to do to you."

Each of these five specific approaches to ethics tries to resolve the tension between universalism and relativism. It is easy to see that the golden law approach gravitates toward the universal pole of ethics: It claims universality for moral standards. The golden purse and golden consequence approaches, on the contrary, gravitate toward the relativist pole of ethics: They claim that moral standards depend on, or are relative to, power or outcomes of actions. The golden mean and the golden rule are more successful at balancing tensions between universalism and relativism because they are based on the idea that, in making ethical judgments, "we need to focus on the other culture's perspective as well as our own" (Hall, 2002: 336). In other words, these approaches try to reconcile one culture's ethical code (smaller view of ethics) with all other cultures' ethical codes (large view of ethics). These approaches are more successful because they pay attention to both Self (one culture's ethics) and its environment (the Other, or other cultures' ethical codes).

Introducing the Sustainability Principle

The discussion above provides a basis for the tenth (and last) principle underlying intercultural communication—the Sustainability Principle. As with the previous principles, we will isolate three parts that make up this principle. Each part deals with intercultural communication as a process whereby people must make ethical choices. First, we will discuss the general nature of sustainability and how it can be applied to intercultural communication. Then we will present the main strategies of sustainability in intercultural communication. Finally, we will suggest a formula for intercultural sustainability. We will discuss each part separately and then formulate the Sustainability Principle as a whole.

Nature of Sustainability: Thinking about Forever

According to Barnlund,

> The moral issues that attend intercultural encounters are not simply more complicated, they are of an entirely new dimension. Despite the pervasiveness of cross-cultural contact, these complications remain overlooked and unexplored in any systematic way. (1980: 9)

The claim that moral issues in intercultural encounters remain overlooked is an exaggeration; a lot of research has been done in this area (Asuncion-Lande, 1980; Sitaram & Cogdell, 1976). However, the call for a more systematic study of ethics in intercultural communication is justified. A **metaethic**—a general foundation for successful (ethical) intercultural communication—is needed to transcend all differences.

Today, globalization makes the need for such a metaethic more urgent than ever. **Globalization** refers to the intensified compression of the world and our increasing consciousness of cultural processes that extend beyond the collective identity of any one culture (Robertson, 1992). The process of globalization has a huge potential for development of each and every culture. At the same time, globalization has a dark side in the form of many challenges facing all people. Among the challenges listed in the book entitled *Introducing Global Issues* (Snarr & Snarr, 2002) are weapons proliferation, migration, health, and protection of the atmosphere. These challenges transcend all differences (political, social, economic, etc.) and require an ethical framework that serves the concerns of all people on the planet. And the most fundamental concern is clear—survival, understood as remaining alive or in existence (Morris, 1982: 1296). There can be no doubt that "cultures—like any other organic system—strive to affirm life" (Rodriguez, 2002: 2).To put it bluntly, unless people are alive, they cannot meet the more specific challenges of dealing with weapons proliferation, migration, health, and protection of the atmosphere. Thus, "our newly interdependent global society, with its remarkable possibilities for linking people around the planet, gives us the material basis for a new ethic . . . that will serve the interests of all those who live on this planet" (Singer, 2002: B9; see also Singer, 2001). These ideas are emphasized in UNESCO's Charter: "We are beginning to move towards a new global ethic which transcends all other systems of allegiance and belief, which is rooted in a consciousness of the interrelatedness and sanctity of life" (1997: paragraph 116). This new global ethic, or metaethic, is found in the idea of sustainability.

Sustainability is a dynamic state requiring that decisions be made in such a way that something is kept in existence (maintained). Sustainability by definition involves thinking about forever. Sustainability is a fundamental concern of humankind, and there is a large amount of literature discussing its ideas (Dresner, 2002; Tonn, 1999). Sustainability has a number of dimensions. For example, ecological sustainability concerns conservation of nature, political sustainability con-

cerns preserving democracy, economic sustainability concerns appropriate industrial development, and social sustainability concerns maintaining peace and equity.

In this text we are concerned with intercultural sustainability because "culture . . . has a central place in the complex notion of sustainability" (UNESCO, 1997: paragraphs 111–112). Intercultural sustainability is a dynamic state wherein people must make decisions in such a way that their cultures are continually maintained (kept in existence). Earlier, it was shown that no culture can make such decisions alone; both universalism and relativism are, in fact, forms of ethnocentrism because they present an ethical code from only one point of view—that of Self. Intercultural sustainability requires that each culture pay attention to its environment, which includes all other cultures (the Other). When we pay attention to people from other cultures, we decide how to interact with them. In this connection, "ethics and morality are correlative with the purpose of avoiding damage to the rights and interests of people—preeminently *other* people" (Rescher, 1977: 80). Intercultural sustainability is not just a matter of morality but also of rationality: A decision is considered right if it helps people to sustain their culture. So asking the question "Why be ethical?" is the same as asking the question "Why be rational?" As Lewis puts it, "Cognitive correctness is itself a moral concern, in the broad sense of 'moral'" (1969: 163).

Thus, the global metaethic is found in the idea of intercultural sustainability. Let's see how people must make decisions in order for their cultures to be continually maintained. In other words, let's see what communicative strategies people must use so that their actions are considered ethical (rational).

Strategies of Intercultural Sustainability: Tolerance, Trust, and Resistance

Tolerance. All people living together in perfect harmony is the ideal of intercultural communication. In real life, interactions that are far from harmonious continue to take place between people from different cultures. It is not surprising, then, that "the demand for an understanding of tolerance and intolerance seems to be at an all-time high" (Baldwin, 1998: 24).

Tolerance is defined as "the capacity for or practice of allowing or respecting the nature, beliefs, or behaviors of others" (Morris, 1982: 1351). This capacity makes it possible for people from one culture (Self) to allow people from another culture (the Other) to cross the imaginary boundary line separating them and enter what Self considers its own territory, its own side of the intercultural continuum. As was shown in Chapter 8, if intercultural communication is based on the flexible-sum perception, people from one culture can move into the space occupied by another culture. This move may be viewed as potentially dangerous because new meanings are brought in, meanings that until now have not been part of Self. It is not easy to deal with new behaviors different from your own; you may not be accustomed to eating with chopsticks, as people do in many Asian counties,

or standing during a church service, as people do in Russia. But in intercultural interactions we must be capable of handling such challenges; we must tolerate such different behaviors. Tolerance is not the same as acceptance, which implies agreement; people from one culture may or may not agree with the way things are done in other cultures. However, people from different cultures cannot communicate effectively unless they recognize the need to allow these differences to exist. Tolerance is considered a primary virtue (Barnes, 2001) because no culture owns the truth alone. On the contrary, we must tolerate other people's behaviors because everyone knows something of the truth. As was stated earlier, the Truth is the Whole.

Thus, tolerance is the capacity of one culture to deal with the presence of another culture in its territory. Through interaction, every culture establishes a dynamic limit on this capacity: People from every culture decide to what extent they will allow a different system of meanings in their territory. It depends, of course, on how different another culture's meanings are and what the consequences of dealing with such meanings might be. For example, if the Other brings new eating utensils, such as chopsticks, then Self is likely to tolerate this new meaning and maybe even borrow it. However, if the Other brings new eating habits, such as eating dogs or frogs, then Self is less likely to tolerate this new meaning. In each intercultural encounter, a dynamic boundary line is drawn between Self and the Other; if both Self and the Other agree on where this line is, it is possible to speak of tolerance as a communicative strategy leading to intercultural sustainability.

It might seem as if tolerance were a passive process, a form of silent stance. However, tolerance does not mean that people from different cultures must adopt—or are not allowed to challenge—each other's positions. On the contrary, the value of tolerance is to encourage an open exchange of ideas. "Fighting for toleration is not a matter of attempting to align other groups with a preexisting order, but a form of dialogue in the course of which the picture of what toleration is and requires gradually becomes clear" (Walker, 1995: 112). The idea of tolerance is for people from every culture to find out their best position on every issue, including eating preferences and religious rituals; this can be done only through interaction with other cultures. In Chapters 4 and 5, we discussed how cultures come to better understand other worldviews, as well as their own worldview, by engaging in interactions and seeing how they measure up against each other. This task cannot be accomplished without intercultural tolerance, because only by allowing others to share their codes of behavior can people from every culture determine what meanings must make up their collective identity. The word *tolerance* is derived from the Latin *tolerare*—to bear. In a way, people from every culture decide what meanings they can bear, or deal with comfortably.

Thus, intercultural tolerance is impossible without flexibility. People must be open to an exchange of ideas and must be flexible enough to allow new ideas to be part of their own cultural space. It is clear, however, that true intercultural sustainability requires not only tolerance but also trust.

Trust. The word *trust* is derived from the Middle English *truste*, meaning confidence or firmness. **Trust** is firm reliance on someone's integrity; it is confidence that someone will act as expected or as previously agreed upon. As we saw in Chapter 9, without trust it is impossible to solve the prisoner's dilemma and work toward synergy. Trust is crucial for effective intercultural communication because people from one culture can tolerate people from another culture only if they are confident that the people from that culture will not cross the boundary line previously established. For example, suppose people from one culture allow those from another culture to discuss its dog-based cuisine in their territory, but do not allow the selling of products made of dog. If members of the dog-eating culture nonetheless start selling such products, then trust is broken and tolerance is upset. Trust in intercultural communication depends on an unspoken promise to share one's behaviors only to the extent agreed upon by all cultures involved. As long as this promise is kept, intercultural communication can be effective and intercultural sustainability can be maintained. Effective intercultural communication presupposes integrity on the part of all cultures involved in interactions; then it becomes possible for people from different cultures to rely on each other and sustain their collective identities.

Thus, intercultural trust is impossible without firmness. One culture must firmly believe that the other culture will show its integrity and keep its promise not to cross the boundary line previously established. Tolerance and trust form a default mechanism in intercultural communication. This mechanism is in effect as long as one culture establishes a dynamic limit on the other culture's inroads into its territory and trusts that culture not to cross this boundary line. If this line is crossed, as in the example above, the other culture's integrity is questioned and trust is broken. The promise to share one's meanings is now perceived as an intention to impose one's meanings; there is a difference between acting on an invitation and carrying out an invasion. As a result, intercultural sustainability is in danger, and the default mechanism of intercultural communication switches to a different mode—that of resistance.

Resistance. **Resistance** is any force that works against something; in our case, cultural resistance opposes actions from another culture perceived by people as dominant and therefore dangerous to their collective survival. A culture must resist (fight back) if its people can no longer tolerate another culture's behavior in their territory. Obviously, intercultural communication in this case is less effective because it is no longer a cooperative process; now, people from different cultures work not with, but against, each other. At the same time, resistance as a communicative strategy is crucial for intercultural sustainability: Its main goal is to help people from different cultures to resume harmonious interactions and maintain their collective identities. Ultimately, successful resistance is aimed at bringing intercultural communication back to the dynamic state of intercultural sustainability.

So, tolerance, trust, and resistance are all interconnected, as shown in Figure 1.

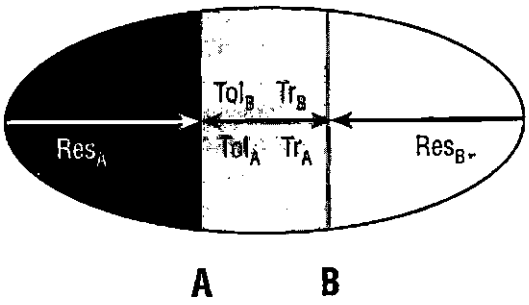

FIGURE 1

The figure also shows that in the process of intercultural interactions a shared zone is created and continuously maintained, based on these strategies of tolerance, trust, and resistance. This zone is bounded on its two sides by lines A and B. Each culture targets—wants to reach—the other culture's boundary. For example, suppose people from the Korean culture (culture A) want to share the practice of eating dogs, part of their cuisine, with people from France (culture B), while people from the French culture want to share the practice of eating frogs with people from Korea. The Korean people are trying to reach line B (part of the French culture), while the French people are trying to reach line A (part of the Korean culture). Let's say that each side decides to present a lecture on the subject for the other side. If each culture allows the other one into its territory and the other culture keeps its promise—that is, simply delivers a lecture—both cultures' targets are reached, thanks to the strategies of tolerance and trust (Tol_A Tr_A and Tol_B Tr_B, respectively). This way, for example, the French can learn that, although such dishes as dog stew and canine cutlets are eaten in Korea because of their alleged health-giving qualities, not all Koreans eat dogs; their diet consists mainly of vegetables, not meat. And the dogs they eat are a special type raised at special farms; such dogs are killed by electrocution (just like the cows and pigs eaten in many Western cultures). Also, the pet industry is rapidly growing in Korea. Similarly, the Koreans can learn about the practice of eating frogs' legs in France.

But suppose each side chooses to add to its lecture a little demonstration, offering the audience a dish made of dog or frog. Or, even worse, what if each side chooses to replace the other's cuisine with its own? In these cases, the culture is seen as moving beyond the boundaries previously set, and the two lines A and B immediately change from target points into points of resistance. Each side, for instance, may react defensively to the other culture's move by requesting that the demonstration be stopped, asking the audience to leave the room, or putting up some other form of resistance. As you can see, the arrows of resistance (Res_A and Res_B) point in the direction opposite that of the arrows of tolerance and trust.

Earlier, it was noted that intercultural tolerance is impossible without flexibility, and intercultural trust is impossible without firmness. The relationship among tolerance, trust, and resistance is now clear: People from culture A can be flexible and display tolerance only if people from culture B are firm in their com-

mitment to act as agreed upon by both cultures. If culture B is perceived as defecting from that agreement—as not firm—then culture A stops being flexible and becomes firm. That is exactly how tolerance turns into resistance; to *resist* means to "remain firm against the action or effect of" (Morris, 1982: 1106). Resistance is a very important communicative strategy (Deyhle, 1995; Duncombe, 2002), and it is crucial that resistance be identified as such. For example, the practice of Islamic veiling is usually discussed in terms of freedom and presented by Westerners (especially feminists) as a case of gender oppression in Islamic cultures. Yet many Islamic women are said to participate in this practice voluntarily and claim it as an important part of their cultural identity and a mark of resistance to the Western morals perceived as wrong (Hirschmann, 1997). Obviously, interacting with Islamic women depends to a significant degree on how one views their practice of veiling—as a form of cultural oppression or resistance.

Notice that we are speaking of resistance as a communicative strategy, as opposed to violent or militant resistance. Peaceful resistance is best exemplified by Mahatma Gandhi and his technique of **satyagraha.** This term "has variously been translated as 'passive resistance,' 'nonviolent direct action,' and even 'militant nonviolence' " (Weber, 2001: 494). In dealing with intercultural tensions, Mahatma Gandhi always focused on issues, not personalities, and saw his opponents as partners, not enemies. He was committed to an open exchange of ideas in search of a fair resolution for all parties involved rather than having his opponents be humbled and destroyed. It is clear that he searched for intercultural sustainability, and if more people in more cultures shared and practiced his technique of satyagraha, the world would be a better place.

The situation in which the strategies of tolerance, trust, and resistance are in perfect balance is an ideal of intercultural communication; this does not mean, however, that we should give up trying to achieve it. On the contrary, if we can envision an ideal, we can present it as an optimal overall strategy. Then people from different cultures will strive for that ideal, continually improving their interactions and sustaining their collective identities.

The global metaethic can therefore be identified with intercultural sustainability. According to this metaethic, if people use the communicative strategies of tolerance, trust, and resistance to maintain their cultures, their actions will be considered ethical (rational). The ideal situation of intercultural communication is a balance, or equilibrium, of the strategies of tolerance, trust, and resistance. This view is expressed especially well by the Systems Theory of intercultural communication. According to this theory, "intercultural communication always takes place in embedded systems" (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 23). All cultures seek to achieve a state of balance or equilibrium—that is, a stable pattern of interactions.

Thus, the situation in which the strategies of tolerance, trust, and resistance are all balanced—that is, are in a state of equilibrium—represents the best case of intercultural sustainability. "There is a way to interpret 'best sustainability ethic' that can provide a general formula for an optimum sustainability strategy" (Durbin, 1997: 50). If we know the formula for the best sustainability ethic, we can calculate the point where intercultural interactions are the most efficient—the

Pareto optimality discussed in the previous chapter. As you may remember, Pareto optimality is an ideal for which people from different cultures must strive in their interactions. So, what is this ideal? What is the best ethic of intercultural sustainability? What is this magic formula?

Formula for Intercultural Sustainability

Earlier, we discussed five golden approaches to ethics—the golden law, the golden purse, the golden consequence, the golden mean, and the golden rule—and their implications for intercultural communication. These approaches can be supplemented with one more golden approach, which takes these ideas further and provides a mathematical formula for intercultural sustainability. This approach is the Golden Ratio approach.

You may have heard of the Golden Ratio as the Golden Number, the Golden Section, or the Divine Proportion. Indeed, the **Golden Ratio,** while it is defined mathematically as a number, in reality describes a proportionate or harmonious relationship between different parts of something. Euclid of Alexandria, who first defined the Golden Ratio around 300 B.C., used the example of a straight line cut into two parts, as shown in Figure 2.

While the whole line AB is longer than the segment AC and the segment AC is longer than the segment CB, the ratio of the length of AB to that of AC is the same as the ratio of the length of AC to that of CB. This ratio is represented by the never-ending and never-repeating number 1.6180339887. . . . This number, which can be rounded down to 1.6, is the value of the Golden Ratio.

You may be wondering what this number has to do with intercultural communication. To begin with, as we have already stated, the Golden Ratio is not so much a number as a relationship: It reflects a proportion between different parts of something. And these parts, no matter how large or small, can remain themselves (i.e., retain their identity) as long as the proportion between them equals approximately 1.6! Moreover, this value continues indefinitely, getting closer and closer to the ideal relationship between these two parts as digits are added. Thus, the Golden Ratio reflects the ideal (the "right") way for different parts to relate—for example, for different cultures to interact.

Let's look at a concrete example of how all this works. Instead of a straight line, we will take a semantic space (a continuum, as discussed in Chapter 6) representing the meaning of "what is right to eat." For the sake of simplicity, let's suppose this semantic space includes only two meanings (two parts): dogs (Korean

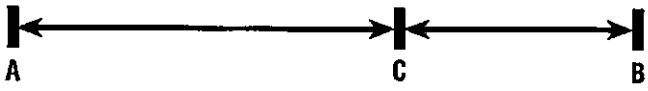

FIGURE 2 Euclid's Golden Ratio

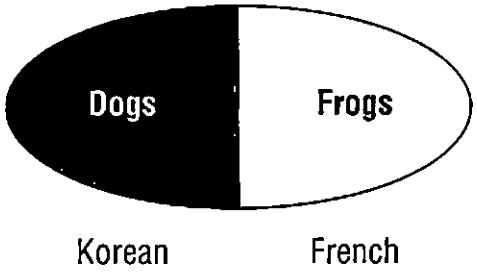

FIGURE 3

culture) and frogs (French culture). We will divide this semantic space equally between these two meanings, as shown in Figure 3.

People from both cultures are curious about each other's eating habits, so they must deal with each other. Let's describe three possible scenarios for their interaction, briefly mentioned earlier in the chapter, and three decisions made in this process.

As the first scenario, suppose the Korean people want to introduce dishes made of dog into your (French) culture as a replacement for frogs' legs; in essence, they want to replace your part of the semantic continuum for "eating" with their own. Then the whole continuum (all 100 percent) would be made up of only one meaning, representing one culture that was not yours. Would you give up half of the overall semantic space (your 50 percent) in an encounter with the Korean culture? Most certainly not! You would resist giving up your part of the continuum because otherwise your own culture would cease to exist, as shown in Figure 4.

As the second scenario, suppose the Koreans offer to arrange a food demonstration for you, preparing dishes made of dog and then distributing samples of them. This is obviously not as radical as completely replacing your cultural cuisine, but it is still quite intrusive. In your eyes, it would equal 25 percent of the overall continuum (see Figure 5). Would you be willing to allow such a demonstration? Very likely not. In other words, you would still resist, finding it risky to give half of your own cultural space to people from another culture whose conduct you find so different from yours.

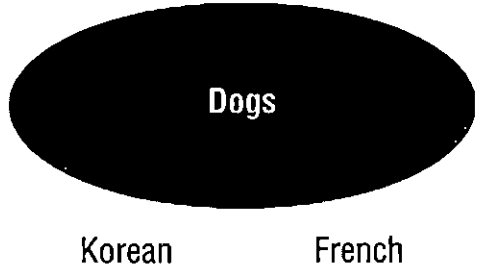

FIGURE 4

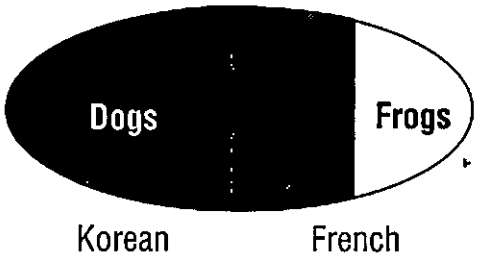

FIGURE 5

What percentage of the overall continuum would you be willing to let another culture use for its own purpose? You refused to sacrifice your total space (50 percent) in the first scenario and then half of that (25 percent) in the second scenario. Would you be willing to let another culture use half of that 25 percent (12.5 percent, rounded down to 12 percent)? Most likely, yes. Suppose the Koreans were to ask you if they could just present a lecture on their cultural cuisine to your people—not a very intrusive action. Would you be against that? Most likely not. You would allow the Koreans to move into your cultural space and present their lecture (see Figure 6).

Now, let's see what we have. First of all, we have the overall intercultural continuum, which equals 100 percent (space AB in Figure 7). Next, we have two different parts of this continuum, each representing one of the cultures: the Korean culture's space AC, which now equals 62 percent (50 percent is its own space, and 12 percent is French cultural space), and the French culture's space CB, which is made up of the remaining 38 percent. Like the line segments in Figure 2, the whole space AB is larger than the space AC and the space AC is larger than the space CB, but the ratio of AB to AC is the same as the ratio of AC to CB! And this ratio is represented by the number 1.6 ($100 : 62 \approx 1.6$ and $62 : 38 \approx 1.6$).

Suppose the Korean culture were to interact with the French culture in the same way—refusing to replace its cuisine with frogs and refusing a food demonstration, but allowing a lecture on French eating behavior. Now the French culture is being allowed to use 12 percent that is Korean semantic space. As a result, now the French culture's space DB equals 62 percent (50 percent is its own space, and

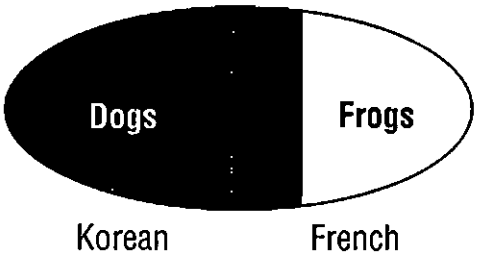

FIGURE 6

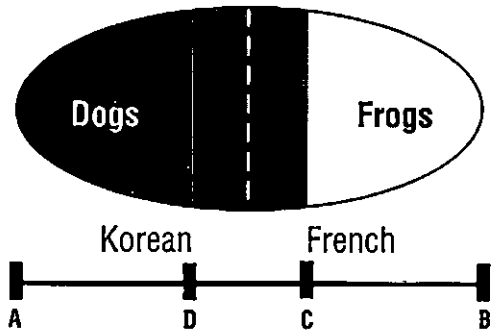

FIGURE 7

12 percent is Korean cultural space) and the Korean culture's space AD is made up of the remaining 38 percent. But, the ratio between the two cultures (DB to AD) is still the same and equals 1.6! (See Figure 7.)

Now, if we go back to Figure 1, we can see that the ideal situation for intercultural interactions, where tolerance, trust, and resistance are in perfect balance, exists when the boundary lines are positioned so that the ratio between the cultures' spaces equals the Golden Ratio (Figure 8).

Generally, people are willing to trust and tolerate a culture that occupies up to 62 percent of the total territory. If that line is crossed without mutual consent, the mechanism of resistance is activated. Naturally, we cannot always calculate our intercultural interactions with mathematical precision. Yet we can usually sense quite well when to tolerate and trust other cultural behaviors and when to draw a line and resist them.

Like the never-ending and never-repeating number 1.6180339887 . . . , intercultural communication never stops; it continues always, trying to reach, but never reaching, that perfect balance. The Golden Ratio defines an ideal dynamic point where each interacting culture is able to preserve its relationship with itself (sustain its collective identity) and consume the least amount of energy (symbolic resources) doing so. As long as oscillations continue to take place between two cultures, the result will be stable and sustainable intercultural communication. Real oscillations fall short of or go beyond the ideal point; such oscillations will be

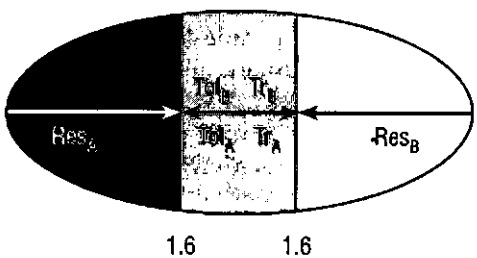

FIGURE 8

tolerated (if mutually agreed upon) or resisted (if not). Intercultural communication is always a process of trial and error, always an exploration.

If people from two cultures make a decision to treat each other based on the Golden Ratio approach, their interactions will be harmonious because neither culture will lose; on the contrary, both cultures will win because they are able to remain whole—that is, sustain their collective identities. The value of the ratio between the space occupied by the overall intercultural continuum and that occupied at least in part by each interacting culture is the same as the value of the ratio between the spaces occupied by the two interacting cultures—1.6—and it represents intercultural sustainability. In terms of the areas in Figure 7, AB : AC = 1.6, AB : DB = 1.6, AC : CB = 1.6, and DB : AD = 1.6. While continually changing, both interacting cultures and the overall cultural continuum remain themselves, intact and whole. Thus, intercultural sustainability presupposes not only that cultures maintain their collective identities, but also that the whole process of intercultural communication be maintained. That is why we do not speak simply of cultural sustainability but of *inter*cultural sustainability.

Intercultural sustainability is a principle that can be used to determine how people from all cultures ought to interact with each other, generating a general rule that helps people decide what behaviors are right and what behaviors are wrong. This principle is a matter not just of morality but also of rationality, as was stated earlier. Similarly, the Golden Ratio is a matter of morality and ratio-nality. If we are not moral and not rational—that is, if we reason badly and treat people from other cultures poorly—we make poor decisions. As a result, we do damage to them as well as to ourselves! Any immoral/irrational behavior is self-destructive, as it undermines intercultural sustainability. Intercultural sustainability tells us that we ought to build our relationships with other people based on the Golden Ratio. The "ought" here is not simply "an *ethical* 'ought,' but one of the cosmic fitness of things. It . . . represents an idealized vision of the optimal arrangement of the world. The world *ought* to be a place where things go properly" (Rescher, 1977: 82).

Thus, when people from different cultures accept intercultural sustainability as a principle underlying their interactions, their actions fit both the universalist and the relativist approaches to ethics. On the one hand, people's actions are culture-bound; each culture has its own ideas about what is right and wrong. As a result, people's actions are judged in terms of that culture's ethical system; for instance, eating frogs is considered the right behavior in the French culture. On the other hand, people's decision to base their actions on the Golden Ratio is applicable to all cultures; it is the correct way for people from all cultures to interact with each other. So, each culture, while maintaining its own codes of conduct, works for the universal good; at the same time, the universal code, represented by the Golden Ratio, makes it possible for each culture to practice its own behaviors. To put it simply, each culture works for Self (relativism) and for all others (universalism). What is good for Self is good for all—or, all for one, and one for all!

"In the professional mathematical literature, the common symbol for the Golden Ratio is the Greek letter tau . . . which means 'the cut' or 'the section' " (Livio, 2002: 5). This meaning of the Golden Ratio relates to the nature of inter-

cultural interactions extremely well: In each encounter, the relationship between two cultures must be "cut" in a certain way. In Chapter 6, we compared cultivating an interaction to cutting around a plant's roots so that it can bear better fruit. The Golden Ratio tells us where this cut must be made in order for intercultural communication to continue and cultural identities to be sustained. This cut corresponds to a line between interacting cultures, and the success of intercultural encounters depends on where this line is drawn.

We began our journey in Chapter 1 by asking the question "What is in a line?" Now we have come back to this issue and discovered the best way to draw a boundary line in intercultural interactions—so as to create a ratio with a value of 1.6. Reaching this point is the overall goal of intercultural communication. But, as was shown many times throughout this text, it can never be reached once and for all. This point is an ideal: It never stops moving and never repeats itself. It is simple yet complex—like life itself. All we can do—all we must do—is go after it, traveling to different places and meeting people from all kinds of different cultures, living this life and keeping it alive.

The Sustainability Principle Defined

Now we can give a more concise formulation of the Sustainability Principle, based on the above discussion of its three parts.

First, the idea of intercultural sustainability represents the global metaethic for today's multicultural world. Intercultural sustainability is seen as a dynamic state wherein people must make decisions in such a way that their collective identities are continually maintained (kept in existence). No culture can make such decisions alone; both universalism and relativism are forms of ethnocentrism because they present an ethical code from only one point of view—that of Self. Intercultural sustainability requires that each culture pay attention to its environment, which includes all other cultures with their codes of behavior. In this sense, intercultural sustainability is a matter not just of morality but also of rationality: A decision is considered right if it helps people to sustain their culture.

Second, according to the global metaethic of intercultural sustainability, people use the communicative strategies of tolerance, trust, and resistance to continually maintain their cultures. Then people's actions are considered ethical (rational). The ideal of intercultural communication is a balance of tolerance, trust, and resistance; this situation represents the best case of intercultural sustainability—the most stable outcome of intercultural interactions.

Third, the best sustainability ethic (the optimal sustainability strategy) is based on the Golden Ratio value, representing the ratio of the space occupied by intercultural communication in general to that occupied at least in part by each culture and the ratio between the spaces occupied by the two interacting cultures. Thus, intercultural sustainability presupposes not only that cultures maintain their collective identities, but also that the whole process of intercultural communication be maintained.

In a nutshell, the Sustainability Principle can be formulated as follows:

Intercultural communication is a process whereby people from different cultures display mutual tolerance, trust, and resistance, sustaining their collective identities and the overall process of their interactions.

This principle shows that no culture owns the truth—that is, knows the only right way of doing things. At the same time, each culture knows something of the truth because it knows its own way of doing things. As long as people from different cultures display mutual tolerance, trust, and resistance, their interactions will be maintained as one whole process of intercultural communication, and each culture will sustain its own relationship with itself, remaining whole. As was said earlier, the Truth is the Whole.

Summary

In this chapter, we set out to show why cooperating and integrating their resources is the right behavior for people from different cultures. Thus, we approached intercultural communication from an ethical point of view. We emphasized that ethics is important in intercultural communication because, in dealing with people from other cultures, we must make decisions about what behaviors are right and what behaviors are wrong.

Next, we discussed two broad approaches to ethics—the universalist and relativist approaches—and their ramifications for intercultural communication. Both universalism and relativism were shown to contain an ethnocentric bias, approaching ethics from the perspective of only one culture. No universal ethical code can be formulated based only on the moral standards of one culture without including views that exist in other cultures; universalism presupposes relativism. By the same token, without some universal ethical foundation, the multicultural world risks plunging into fragmentation and chaos; relativism presupposes universalism. Thus, intercultural communication was presented as oscillating between the poles of universalism and relativism, without settling on either. In other words, we showed how all ethical systems involve a tension between what is universal and what is relative.

We then discussed five specific approaches to intercultural ethics, each of which tries to reveal the nature of this tension: the golden law, the golden purse, the golden consequence, the golden mean, and the golden rule. We showed that the approaches most successful at balancing tensions between universalism and relativism are based on the idea that, in making ethical judgments, we need to focus on the Other's perspective as well as our own. In making decisions, it is crucial that attention be paid both to Self (one's culture's ethical code) and its environment (the Other, or other cultures' ethical codes). Thus, the idea of the relationship between a culture and its environment was emphasized.

Based on these ideas, we introduced the Sustainability Principle underlying intercultural communication. We pointed out that the need for a metaethic is more urgent today than ever because of the many global challenges facing all people. These challenges transcend all differences and require an ethical framework that serves the concerns of all people on the planet. And the most fundamental concern is clear: survival, understood as remaining alive or in existence. We claimed that the idea of sustainability can be viewed as a metaethic—a general foundation for successful (ethical) intercultural communication—for today's multicultural world.

We then analyzed three main strategies of intercultural sustainability—tolerance, trust, and resistance. Tolerance was presented as the capacity of one culture to deal with the presence of another culture in its territory. Through interaction, every culture establishes a dynamic limit on this capacity: People from every culture decide to what extent they will allow a different system of meanings in their territory. Trust was presented as firm reliance on someone's integrity; it is confidence that someone will act as expected or as previously agreed upon. Trust is crucial for effective intercultural communication because people from one culture can tolerate people from another culture only if they are confident that those people will not cross the boundary line previously established. If that line is crossed without mutual agreement, trust is broken, and the default mechanism of tolerance and trust turns into resistance. Resistance was presented as a communicative strategy, opposite to tolerance and trust, whose goal is to bring interactions back to the harmonious state of intercultural sustainability. Thus, tolerance, trust, and resistance were shown to be interconnected, acting as the main communicative strategies of intercultural sustainability.

Finally, we showed that the best sustainability ethic is represented by the Golden Ratio between the space occupied by intercultural communication in general and that occupied at least in part by each culture, as well as between the spaces occupied by the two cultures. This Golden Ratio can be seen as representing the formula for intercultural sustainability. Thus, we showed that intercultural sustainability presupposes not only that cultures maintain their collective identities, but also that the whole process of intercultural communication be maintained.

Based on these ideas, the Sustainability Principle was formulated.