



TESS Newsletter

Accordance to Article 7  
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Episode 140

“ Turning Possibilities into Realities ”

## Building a Global Movement for Change [UNSG]: The Promise (part 72)



### "Working Hard at Working Smart" (part XCII)

## 2016: Understanding Reconciliation: The Value of Trust



**If we put our trust in the common sense of common men and 'with malice toward none and charity for all' go forward on the great adventure of making political, economic and social democracy a practical reality, we shall not fail.**

Henry A. Wallace – 33<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States.

## The future we want: The Promise: The Force Beyond

### From Resolution to Reconciliation in Postconflict Societies

By Daniel Bar-Tal

Over the past few decades, discussions of peace-building process have focused on the issue of reconciliation. Years of study of conflict-resolution have shown that peaceful resolution of a conflict does not guarantee lasting peaceful relations. **To cement peaceful relations between the rival sides to an intractable conflict, reconciliation is necessary.** The above conception suggests that reconciliation is in essence achieved through a psychological process that entails a major societal transformation: New norms, values, opinions, symbols, narratives, ceremonies and cultural products have to emerge.

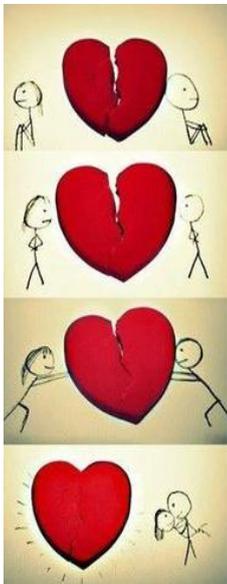
Such a change requires a large accumulation of new experiences that can induce changes to the socio-psychological repertoire, transmitting a new message of peace and a new image of the former enemy. However, these experiences do not come about by themselves. People have to create them, act upon them and disseminate their meaning. That is, people have to perform acts, such as peaceful gestures, meetings, joint projects, truth and reconciliation committees, exchanges, economic and political reforms, changes to the educational content taught to children and so on. These acts supply the information that enables group members to look at their world differently.

This in turn requires a supportive climate that indicates to all society members that a new reality is emerging, free of threats, dangers and fears. This is a major undertaking for the society. Just as in times of conflict the society was mobilized for waging the violent struggle with resolve and sacrifice, the reconciliation process, too, requires determination and efforts to persuade those opposed to it of the genuine importance of reconciliation and its benefits.

Individuals and groups in societies involved in intractable conflicts often rally more easily to the banner of fear, dehumanization, hostility and hate than to the banner of trust, cooperation and respect of the other. **But it is the latter that provide hope for a better life.** To enable these societies to advance along the path of reconciliation and form stable and lasting peace, peace-building efforts must be designed to promote not only the necessary institutional changes, but also this fundamental human process of change.

### 7 Steps to Healing Broken Trust

By Linda & Charlie Bloom



Few people would argue with the idea that honesty is the best policy. Policies however are not always adhered to, even those that we believe in and support. Regardless of how much we may desire to live a life of integrity in which we “walk the talk” and live in accordance with our inner principles, it’s likely that there will be times that we miss the mark. Nobody’s perfect. Every relationship is going to have occasional slippage.

Great relationships however, require a high level of integrity in order to thrive. When a violation of trust, large or small, occurs it’s important to examine the conditions that contributed to the situation and to engage in a healing process that will restore trust and goodwill to the relationship.

A betrayal is a broken agreement, implicit or explicit, that is considered vital to the integrity of a relationship. The capacity of a relationship to recover from a betrayal has a lot to do with the responses, particularly on the part of the betrayer to the situation. The more open and non-defensive they are, the more likely it is that there will be resolution. When both partners are committed to this as an outcome, the likelihood increases exponentially.

When there has been a cover-up to a transgression, the lies and denials can do much more damage to the integrity of the relationship than the violation itself. Even if the offense is never revealed, there can still be great harm done to the foundation of the relationship. Trust is inevitably sacrificed even when secrets go undetected. Most, but not all betrayals and acts of deceit can be healed. While there is no generic template to apply to these situations, there are some guidelines that can facilitate the recovery process.

- [1] **Acknowledge your actions to your partner before, not after they find out.** The sooner the better. The longer you have been living a lie, the deeper the damage, the more difficult the possibility of a full recovery, and the longer the healing process takes. Acknowledging the transgression before your partner affirms it from another source creates a higher level of trust than waiting until you've been found out.
- [2] **Get honest. Commit yourself to zero tolerance for dishonesty in your relationship.** Even after you've successfully demonstrated your commitment, don't be surprised if your partner needs a lot of evidence that you are trustworthy before they'll be ready to believe anything you say. This will take time and will require patience on your part.
- [3] **Address the questions that your partner asks you.** Don't be defensive in response to your partner's need for information. They need to make sure that you aren't withholding anything else and they probably have a lot of questions that only you can answer. Be guided by the question "Is this information necessary for the healing of our relationship?" Keep in mind that your intention in this process is to communicate in a way that will restore good will. It's not necessary to give details that will be unnecessarily inflammatory. Try to see the questions as an opportunity for you to demonstrate the kind of truth telling that your partner needs to see in order to begin to trust you again. Even if the questions seem to be repetitive or unnecessary, they need answers in order to come to terms with the situation.
- [4] **Listen to their feelings, all of them.** Don't analyze, evaluate, judge, or reason with your partner in regard to any of their feelings. Listening without disputing is not equivalent to agreeing with someone's point of view. It's possible to listen respectfully even if you don't

see eye to eye about everything. Feelings aren't necessarily rational, but they are real. You will have your turn to express your perspective, but not until they've expressed what they want you to hear.

- [5] **Be patient.** Reassure your partner that that they can take as much time as they need to rebuild trust. The process will probably take longer than you think it should and will require self-restraint and compassion. In the end however, it is likely to bring about a deepening of the connection between the two of you. Resist the temptation to urge them to "get over it". Give your partner reassuring words like: "I know that I am serious about this commitment and I understand that you need more time to see the evidence and trust me. I can give you all the time you need".
- [6] **Take responsibility for your actions.** Acknowledge the truth of what you've done and avoid any explanations, rationalizations, excuses, or justifications for your behavior. There will be a time to view things from a larger context when your partner may be more curious about what conditions in the relationship were contributing to the situation, but that will come later.
- [7] **Stay focused on your intention.** The work of recovery from a breach of integrity in a committed partnership takes time and effort and can be humbling. The stakes are high, and the benefits from doing the work are enormous. A successful healing can transform a damaged partnership into a sacred union. Many couples have told us that in the end, the crisis that came from the betrayal ultimately led to a profound deepening of the love and trust that they both currently share.

**Keeping your word in the first place will spare you the anguish of healing a betrayal. But in those cases in which the damage is already done, most of the time, recovery is a real possibility. And the benefits greatly outweigh the costs of reconciliation. Take it from the thousands of couples who have found out for themselves.**

The Ecotourism Society of Seychelles [TESS]  
 P. O. Box 436,  
 Room 108, Orion Mall, Victoria.  
 Tel: (248) 2522778 / 4323347  
 Email: info@seytess.com,  
 marcmarengo@hotmail.com  
 Web: www.seytess.com

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