Unit I
Working With Integrity

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ETHICAL INQUIRY FOR PEACEBUILDING PRACTITIONERS

As peacebuilders, many of us are filled with questions. Consider the following scenarios:

- A Palestinian Israeli facilitator leads coexistence sessions with Israeli, Palestinian and other Arab young people in a summer camp in the United States. Reflecting on his work, he asks: "Am I asking the occupied people to understand their occupiers? Yes, they have to understand them. They must understand their situation, and why they are so afraid, and what are their needs. But does this mean I am supporting the status quo? This is my dilemma."

- A Bosnian Muslim woman worked for an international aid agency setting up playrooms for Muslim, Croatian and Serbian children traumatized during the war. Thinking back to that project, she says, "It was during wartime, and my dilemma was personal. Maybe some crazy person in my town would hear that I had worked in Serbska with some Croats, and who knows what my future would be? I was asking, why am I risking my life? Why would I do that to myself?"

- A Sinhalese Sri Lankan peacebuilder highlights the following dilemma: "When my Tamil friend and colleague Murali talks, I get a sense of how the people in the Northeast feel. They will not grumble if the LTTE kills mayors, because they see these mayors as agents of the army and the army is occupying them and they are fighting a war. So thanks to Murali, I have a better sense of how people in the Northeast feel. But I have a problem if I tell this story to people in my office or in my family. They can't accept this, and they get upset. They say that I'm supporting the LTTE, which to them is a very bad thing. But then I have to say, 'Well those are the people we are trying to make peace with.' I start losing my sense of what is acceptable, of what is right and what is wrong. That is the type of dilemma I face."

Coexistence and reconciliation work often leads to the sorts of questions and uncertainties that are revealed in these brief stories from the Middle East, Bosnia and Sri Lanka. These kinds of questions — ethical questions — arise because our work often requires us to make decisions in which two or more of our values seem to conflict. For instance, although in general we might place a high value on honesty, we may discover ourselves, for apparently good reasons, feeling torn about whether to be fully honest with our coworkers, friends and families. Similarly, whereas we might in general refrain from engaging in relationships with people who have behaved in grossly hurtful ways, we may discover ourselves, for apparently good reasons, listening to and even empathizing with people who have committed horrible crimes. We may find ourselves uncertain about whether to accept funding to support our work: some of the conditions asserted by the funder might be objectionable, but the funding would allow us to undertake projects we believe to be both worthwhile and urgent.

Working with Integrity: A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions is designed to assist practitioners in reflecting on the ethical dimension of their work. It addresses the complexities of working to improve relations in historically divided communities: the tensions, uncertainties, qualms and dilemmas that seem almost inevitably to arise in efforts toward coexistence and reconciliation. The intention here most certainly is not to lay down a set of principles or rules and to ask practitioners to assess their practice according to some predetermined standards. Nor is the wish to turn conflict resolution experts, relief workers, or
coexistence practitioners into academic moral philosophers.

Rather, this guidebook is intended to provide the impetus for people to engage with the ethical dimensions of their work in ways that strengthen practice. We hope these materials will be used in workshops, seminars and institutes to support practitioners to name the ethical tensions they experience – because, left unspoken, these tensions can lead to burnout, skepticism and withdrawal. By thoughtfully addressing the ethical tensions that arise in our work, we can minimize the risk of acting in ways that unintentionally cause harm to ourselves and others.

In these pages, we address several ethical dilemmas that have been identified by peacebuilding practitioners. In the process, we introduce a method of inquiry. It is an approach to untangling conceptual knots and conflicts in values so peacebuilders can make choices with greater clarity. The approach is made up of specific steps, including:

- Articulating ethical issues
- Identifying ethical possibilities and risks associated with particular actions
- Exploring concepts
- Examining assumptions
- Generating live ethical alternatives

How do we arrive at “live ethical alternatives?” We attempt to integrate the positive values at the heart of contrasting points of view. We might discover completely different options that we imagined at the beginning of the inquiry. We might also discover that we have identified better questions, or ways of framing problems that helps us generate choices that we could not see before.

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This guidebook is also designed to support peacebuilding practitioners in grappling with the personal transformations — changes in awareness and understanding — that are at the core of shifts from enmity to peaceful relations. Holding on to one’s moral compass when changing core beliefs can be challenging. The exercises in this guidebook are designed to help peacebuilders acknowledge such transformations in ways that strengthen personal and professional integrity.

The ethical dilemmas revealed in the stories practitioners tell about their work and their lives also can help students of, and newcomers to, fields such as coexistence, conflict resolution and humanitarian relief. The narratives, told with considerable openness and vulnerability, offer insights into what is involved in pursuing such vocations. Beginning practitioners can anticipate the kinds of ethical issues they might encounter, before they are immersed in real life pressures to respond – frequently with little time for reflection or consultation.
Questions about the Language of Morality and Ethics

In the most general terms, theory and practice in the peacebuilding field aim to improve relationships between persons and groups of people. As practitioners of coexistence and reconciliation we engage members of divided communities in recognizing each other’s common humanity and learning to consider the perspectives of others — even when those others might have been enemies.

Peacebuilding theory typically builds on insights taken from the disciplines of social psychology, politics, economics, religious studies, sociology and anthropology. Working with Integrity: A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions is based on the assumption that the disciplines of moral philosophy and literary studies also have contributions to make.

Like peacebuilding, moral philosophy is a field that embraces many different approaches. But at its core are questions about “values that give voice to the needs and legitimate expectations of others as well as ourselves.” When peacebuilding practitioners work toward coexistence and reconciliation, in large measure we are supporting adversaries to consider precisely this: the needs and legitimate expectations, not only of themselves and members of their group, but of their perceived enemies as well.

Before we go further, however, we must pause to acknowledge that many people have negative responses to the very words ‘morality’ and ‘ethics.’ “Morality is such a value-laden term,” wrote one conflict resolution practitioner. “People’s ‘moral convictions’ have been used repeatedly to impose values and to injure people and groups through judgments.” Will an approach to inquiry based on a discourse of ‘morality’ reinforce a tendency toward judgmentalism? Will it be experienced as one more Western imposition on societies around the world?

Critiques of the discourse of morality contain several helpful precautions. It is true that entire colonial systems have been supported through notions of moral superiority and the imposition of norms designed to protect the status quo. Some kinds of judgments, for instance those often associated with the term ‘moralizing,’ are completely counterproductive to the work of peacebuilding, coexistence and reconciliation. Whenever a general attitude of judgmentalness interferes with our capacity to understand, peacemaking efforts can be thwarted.

The philosopher Mary Midgley has addressed people’s perceptions of ‘morality’ and ‘moral judgments’ directly. She writes that the term ‘moral judgment’ is often used in a “lopsided, highly selective way” to refer to:

- Judgments about others, rather than oneself
- Disapproval and blaming assessments rather than favourable judgments
- Uncharitable judgments rather than assessments that allow for mitigating circumstances
- Past rather than future actions
- Judgments made by detached outsiders (perhaps superiors or subordinates) rather than by sympathizers.

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Exploring the Language of Morality

- What are your first reactions to the word ‘morality’?
- What are your first reactions to the word ‘ethics’?
- Are you aware of ways in which the framework of ‘morality’ has been used to hurt people or groups?
- Are you aware of ways in which the framework of ‘morality’ has been used to bring forth the best in people?
For these reasons, the notion of ‘morality’ can evoke fears of control, imposition, arbitrariness and harshness.

However, ethical inquiry and even judgments about morality can be quite different. We can use the tools of moral philosophy to inquire into:

- Ourselves as well as others
- Actions and values we respect
- Judgments that are charitable and allow for mitigating circumstances
- The possibilities and risks of future actions
- Judgments of our advocates, advisors and sympathizers

The premise of this guidebook is that ethical inquiry can be undertaken in ways that are completely consistent with the principles of peacebuilding. In relation to the problem of Western moralizing, and the imposition of Western values, we agree with the Islamic philosopher, Akbar Ahmed, that it is not moral philosophy, but rather its absence that creates the greater danger. He writes:

*The problem with [Western] civilization is the hole where the heart should be, the vacuum inside; there is no moral philosophy or set of principles that drives it. What gives it its dynamic energy is individualism, the desire to dominate, the sheer drive to acquire material items, to hoard…*

What Ahmed finds hurtful about Western morality, then, is the unthinking imposition of values accompanied by an attitude of superiority, not the practice of self-reflection that we are suggesting.

**Naming Ethical Questions, Tensions and Dilemmas**

In your efforts to further coexistence, reconciliation and peace — in relation to communities in conflict, or with your own family, co-workers and friends — have there been moments when you were not sure what was the right thing to do?

Do you find yourself asking ethical questions about tensions and dilemmas such as those described in the vignettes at the beginning of this unit?

We ask readers to notice their resistances to the language of ‘ethical inquiry’ and ‘morality,’ but to try to remain open to the potential usefulness of the approach we illustrate in these pages. If, in the end, tools prove unhelpful, so be it. A decision at that point to distance oneself from the discourse of ‘moral philosophy’ will be informed.

Hopefully, however, you will agree that our approach to ethical inquiry and the work of peacebuilding are mutually reinforcing. In the next section, we explore the areas of overlap among peacebuilding, ethical inquiry and the study of narrative.
Linking Peacebuilding with Ethics and with Literary Studies

In the Western philosophical tradition, the valuing of others’ “needs and legitimate expectations” sometimes has been expressed through the concept of ‘world citizen.’ In one view, world citizens are people who choose to commit their primary loyalty to human beings throughout the world, over and above their commitments to their own particular nation or group. A less strict conception says that, however we prioritize our various loyalties, we nevertheless must recognize the worth of human life wherever it occurs and see ourselves as bound by common human abilities and problems to people who lie at a great distance from us.” To achieve this sense of connection to all other human beings, people need to be educated to critically examine themselves and the traditions of their own group.

Most practitioners and students of peacebuilding will recognize that many of our projects and programs are designed precisely to meet these goals: to strengthen people’s capacities to engage in critical self reflection and to identify with human beings everywhere, including those who have been seen as ‘enemies’.

In addition, according to the contemporary moral philosopher Martha Nussbaum, world citizens must not only learn about the conditions of other human beings and engage in critical self-reflection; they must also develop the capacity for what she calls the “narrative imagination.” World citizens must think not only on the basis of factual knowledge. They must “think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person’s story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have.” World citizens must develop the capacity to understand the world from the point of view of the other, to decipher the meaning of someone’s story from the perspective of the one who is telling it. In other words, to be competent citizens of the world, we must cultivate our capacity to imagine.

These educational goals — supporting people to cultivate capacities for critical self-reflection and for imagining the lives of those different from themselves — are familiar challenges for practitioners who work towards coexistence and reconciliation. Any educator must help students overcome obstacles to understanding, such as their particular frames of reference and usual tendencies toward self-interest. Peacebuilders face greater challenges, because we work with members of divided communities who must develop enlarged capacities for self-reflection and imagination of the other in spite of being traumatized by violence or uprooted from their homes, while mourning losses, experiencing shame, or while filled with rage.

The notion of “narrative imagination” helps to explain why Working with Integrity: A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions includes both peacebuilders’ narratives and literary texts. Peacebuilders are no strangers to the language of story. It is through the telling of their stories that many are able to heal from trauma and regain a sense of authorship of their own lives. It is through listening to stories that we glimpse into the worldviews of adversaries and former enemies, and imagine their circumstances and their feelings. Literary works — short stories, novels, and documentaries, for example — express stories in forms crafted to enhance our capacity to imagine, and to elicit a quality of focused attention from listeners or readers. Through engaging with literature, we can imagine the other; we also can consider as if from a distance issues and dilemmas that are actually quite close to home.
What are Ethical Questions? What is Moral Philosophy?

When we ask ourselves questions about how we ought to live in relation to other people, we have entered into the arena of ethical inquiry. Ethical questions are questions about values — values such as justice, peace, truth, compassion and respect for ourselves and others. These values apply to relations between and among people and groups; they are central to all work in the fields of coexistence and reconciliation.

Moral philosophy, or ethics, is the academic discipline that explores how best to think about ethical questions. Moral philosophers debate how to make good ethical decisions and what kinds of answers to ethical questions are feasible. Are certain qualities of character so important and so universal that everyone should strive to exemplify them? What standards should we use to evaluate ethical decisions? Should we strive to reduce the suffering of the most people? Or, is it more important to consistently act on cherished principles — such as honesty — regardless of the consequences?

To understand what exactly is meant by the word ‘ethical’ it is helpful to contrast the domain of ethics with the related arenas of law, religion and psychology.

Ethical and legal questions are both concerned about what is right and wrong. But consulting the law to determine the legitimacy of a proposed action and consulting one’s own sense of what is right are two very different processes. Legal codes have been created and institutionalized by societies. They are formal systems, including standards and rules of enforcement. They do aim to capture a particular society’s values — in particular those values that govern actions between and among people. In pluralistic societies, the legal system can be seen as providing a common base line of obligations and constraints, within which various groups can pursue their distinct ideas of what comprises a good life.

Ethical inquiry recognizes that laws and legal systems are insufficient to help us make many decisions about what is right and wrong. Furthermore, legal systems can themselves be biased. We can point to many examples. In the history of the United States, for instance, slavery was allowed by law and women’s suffrage was prohibited. Also, laws might establish a minimal threshold, indicating what citizens are prohibited from doing or what they are obligated to do; but our ethical sensibilities also indicate what we ought to do, beyond that which is required. Laws are enforced by the legal institutions of societies; ethical understandings are embodied in cultural norms and group rituals but must be re-examined by each person as she or he determines how to live and how to meet the other.

For many people, morality is rooted in religion. Religious institutions, texts and rituals also address questions of what is right and wrong, as well as which behaviors are deemed good and which are deemed bad. Many people turn to religious leaders and traditions for guidance on ethical questions. Some religions ask their adherents to accept rules and values as a matter of faith or submission to the opinion of the leader; some allow for individual interpretation.

But religion by itself is also insufficient to guide decisions about right and wrong and about what values ought to guide our interactions with others. In pluralistic societies, and certainly in the global “village” there are many religions and they sometimes conflict with each
other. There are also conflicts within religions, especially in regard to how religious texts and traditions should adapt to changing circumstances.

Law and religion are important — some will argue even necessary — for social life. Legal systems and many religions, however, ask us to accept standards of correct behavior from some authority outside of ourselves. What makes ethical inquiry different is that it relies on the critical thinking of each person, each moral agent.

For many, turning to one’s self to determine how to behave in a certain situation can mean listening to one’s own feelings. And our feelings, our emotions, are important components of ethical convictions. But developing ethical understandings sturdy enough to guide our actions usually requires more than an exploration of feelings. Why? First, we often feel conflicted. A particular decision might involve different sets of values and we are not sure which should take precedence in the case at hand. Second, our feelings may be informed by prejudices we learned from our families or communities, but might not be warranted by circumstances once we examine them. Finally, feelings can be influenced by our own past experiences. We might feel frightened of developing a particular friendship because of a trauma we suffered years ago, having nothing to do with the person before us now or the present situation.

Psychological inquiry can help us to sort out our feelings and recover from past trauma. And these are important steps towards being able to make sound judgments about what course of action to take or how to assess the correctness of a certain policy or position.

Ethical inquiry asks us to do this and more. We must engage our rational faculties to inquire into our feelings. And we must respect both our own needs and concerns and also take into account the needs and concerns of others. These “others” might be as near as our dearest family members and friends, and as far away as the other side of a battle line or border, or the other side of the globe.
Our Approach to Ethical Inquiry

Historically and in contemporary times, as the moral philosopher Anthony Weston points out, debate about ethical questions has not always been undertaken in ethical ways. Adherents of different points of view about reproductive rights or public health policy in the United States, for instance, can often be heard shouting each other down, seeming to care more for the rightness of their own position than for the value of respect or the good of their communities.

Similarly, in ethical terms, scholarly engagement with moral philosophy has left much to be desired. Many scholars have become adherents of particular ethical theories, and have spent years justifying these theories and working to obliterate the arguments of those with opposing points of view. These arguments often applied theories to hypothetical puzzles, where people are called on to make yes-or-no, all-or-nothing responses to complex questions. True, these puzzles were designed to help people confront which of their values ought to take precedence over the other — in theory. They were rarely designed to elicit creative solutions, to address the complexity of the real contexts in which ethical decisions are made, or to question the underlying political or economic realities that gave rise to the problem in the first place.

Working with Integrity: A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions takes a different approach. Our goal is not to help practitioners discover the correct answer to hypothetical ethical problems. Instead, we seek to equip practitioners with resources to engage with ethical issues in ways that improve their practice: to define problems in productive ways, to integrate elements of seemingly contradictory points of view, and to imagine new responses.

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We hope to engage students and practitioners in sustained ethical inquiry about questions that emerge when seeking to improve relationships among people of distinct (and, in this instance, often adversary) communities. And because we are concerned with supporting practitioners to improve their own practice, we hope not only to provide conceptual and intellectual tools, but to engage in processes that enhance skills and capacities. Certain capacities are almost required for ethical action: the capacity to listen, to discern when trust is warranted, to express feelings in ways that can be heard and understood, to imagine new social arrangements, to empathize with the feelings of the other. We ought to address ethical questions in ways that reinforce these values and capacities.

Nevertheless, ethical inquiry is not the same as skill development. For instance, one of the units that follows addresses questions about listening and empathy. As much as we recognize the centrality of listening and empathy as central components to most peacebuilding practice, the unit is not designed to help practitioners enhance their listening skills or to increase their capacity to empathize. Instead, it creates an opportunity to grapple with those instances when we feel that it might be wrong to listen empathically. Practitioners’ stories reveal instances when listening might be experienced as a violation of one’s own personhood, or when too much empathizing can result in a disconnection from one’s own ethical center. They tell of times when listening too intensely to the suffering of others leads to burnout, or when insisting someone from an oppressed group listen to her oppressor might, in fact, have resulted in sustaining an unjust status quo.

How do we decide when it is right to listen? How do we balance the benefits and costs —
both to ourselves and others? What do others have the right to expect of us? What do we have the responsibility to expect of ourselves? These are the kinds of questions that moral philosophy can help us to consider. And these particular questions are among those considered in the units that follow.

In the next section, we will address two obstacles to sustained ethical inquiry. Prepare for reading it by filling out the worksheet on the following page.
Reflecting on Our Tendencies in Relation to Ethical Differences

1. Are you someone who tends towards certainty in ethical questions, assuming that your own religious convictions, political stances or moral opinions are almost certainly correct? Are there some ethical issues about which you feel completely certain?

2. Are you someone who is open to all opinions and perspectives — so open that you have difficulty discerning your own sense of right and wrong and your own understanding of what is ethically appropriate in any particular situation?

3. Do you think any ethical opinion is as good as any other? Why or why not?
4. Do you think activities within a particular community or cultural group should be assessed only in terms of that group’s ethical standards?

5. Do you believe there are universal norms — such as universal human rights — that can be advocated in any cultural context?
Is Any Ethical Opinion as Good as Any Other?

Before leaving this very brief introduction to ethical inquiry, we should address two problematic stances that often interfere with the process of inquiry into ethical questions. Philosophers refer to the first stance as ‘dogmatism’ and the second as ‘ethical relativism.’

It would be helpful, before we begin to explore these two barriers to sustained ethical inquiry, for you to reflect on your own tendencies in this regard. Are you someone who tends towards certainty in ethical questions, assuming that your own religious convictions or political stance are almost certain to be correct? Or, are you someone who is so open to all opinions and perspectives that you have a difficult time discerning your own sense of right and wrong and your own understanding of what is ethically appropriate in any particular situation?

**Dogmatists** are people who assume they know the answers to ethical questions before they even begin inquiring. They often are unable to truly see any other side and often cannot explain the logic behind even their own positions. When asked to explain their perspective, they are likely simply to continue to reassert it.

There are some features of dogmatism that we might admire. In many instances it can be good to be committed to certain values, to seek to live up to them and to stand by them in the face of opposition. We become dogmatic, however, when our commitments become rigid and when we are closed to sympathetic consideration of alternative views.

A primary question in relation to dogmatism is how our cherished beliefs have been derived. Are they the result of careful reasoning, based on sound factual evidence? Or are our cherished beliefs derived through indoctrination, careless thinking and justification of self-interest? When we hold views as a result of ideological indoctrination, it is difficult to think flexibly or imagine other positions. We often are able to think more openly and self-critically about beliefs that we hold as a result of careful thought. The process of coming to such beliefs leads us to appreciate complexity and the extent to which different opinions might be plausible, even when we ourselves have arrived at a different conclusion.

Many people who hold opinions dogmatically are unable or unwilling to engage in serious and sincere ethical inquiry because they assume they already know the answer. They would answer the question “Is any ethical opinion as good as any other?” in the negative. They are quite certain that some ethical opinions are best, almost always their own.

Interestingly, we can often be most rigid about assumptions of which we are not even aware. We might believe so strongly that violence is always wrong, or that the global economy is necessarily positive (or necessarily negative), or that integrated schools are necessarily good (or necessarily bad) that we simply assume that others agree with us. We assume that there is no need to think through various points of view or different kinds of evidence.

This guidebook will be useful for people who are not dogmatic about their beliefs, or who are willing to stretch beyond their dogmatism to seriously consider what is right about views that might completely contradict their initial sense of their convictions. This approach asks us to take a stance of humility, to be alert to areas of rigidity, and to remain tentative about our
convictions — at least until we have sympathetically and seriously considered a range of contrasting views.

At the opposite end of the “ethical certainty” spectrum from dogmatists are people who adhere to the stance that philosophers refer to as ‘relativism.’ Ironically, relativists do agree with dogmatists about one thing: they generally doubt the value of serious inquiry into ethical issues. However, their doubt emerges from a different source than the doubt expressed by dogmatists. They do not reject inquiry because they already know what is right. They reject inquiry because they doubt that it is possible to know what is ethically right.

Many people doubt whether there is such a thing as “moral truth” or a “correct answer” to ethical questions. It is obvious that there are many different opinions about ethical matters. Especially when dealing with people from different cultures, we cannot help but notice what appear to be enormous differences in worldviews. It does not seem right that one person or one culture should tell others how to live their lives, or what they ought to do. It can appear, at first, that the best we can do is to be tolerant of different views. By respecting different ethical opinions, it seems, we can act out of a sense of respect for others and avoid being, or appearing to be, morally arrogant or self-righteous.

Because of the nature of their work, this is a compelling stance for many peacebuilders. When we are facilitating coexistence or furthering reconciliation, we must strive to understand all parties to a conflict and the narratives that legitimate their competing political claims. We know that our effectiveness can be greatly reduced if either adversary perceives us as judgmental. It is part of the discipline of our profession to understand the internal logic of different political stances, even when we question the factual basis upon which certain political claims are made or the degree of self-interest that informs a group’s conception of justice. We often are in the position of helping adversaries become more tolerant of each other’s opinions — including their ethical opinions, such as ideas about what comprises a just solution or an acceptable political compromise.

However, there are serious problems with relativism. If we commit ourselves to equal tolerance of all ethical opinions, we have no basis for critiquing racism or sexism or Nazism or any other kind of intolerance or bigotry. We have no ground on which to stand — even to advocate for the respect and tolerance which motivated us to refrain from ethical judgments in the first place. We also have no basis for critiquing the behaviors of any society, including our own.

It is true that different cultures have different norms. One of the strengths of relativism is that it reminds us of these differences, and it reminds us that certainty about ethical matters can be attained only by seeking the widest possible range of views and considering them seriously. Philosophers and anthropologists who have studied cultural differences, however, generally point out that underneath very different cultural practices — different rituals surrounding birth, death and other life cycle practices — we can often discern underlying agreement about moral values.

In cases where there are bona fide differences about the ethical values of certain cultural practices, it does not necessarily follow that each opinion or each set of values is equally valid. For instance, within the norms of the early 1800’s in the southern United States, slavery was an
accepted social institution, supported by political and religious leaders. The fact that it was so widely accepted in a particular culture at a particular time does little to restrain us from condemning the institution of slavery as ethically reprehensible. Luckily — and this is the case in virtually all societies — there were people living at the time, some Southerners themselves, who took a stance against slavery. A relativist philosophy leaves no room for us to support dissidents or activists who challenge the ethically questionable or even reprehensible activities of their own governments.

Especially for peacebuilders, the spectre of making ethical assessments about the actions of other people or the practices of other cultures can be very troubling. We are aware of what the philosopher James Rachels calls the “shabby history” of colonialism and imperialism, and the lasting harm that has been caused — and still is caused — by moralizing and judgmental attitudes, especially on the part of representatives of the powerful and wealthy nations of the world.

However, assessing the harms caused by cultural practices (in other words, making judgments about ethically questionable practices) is not the same as choosing to intervene, or coercing people to change. Having a clear moral view is quite different than a decision to act or even to voice our opinion. Furthermore, in cases where we do find a particular cultural practice objectionable, we are not saying that the culture as a whole is bad. We can object to the use of the death penalty in the contemporary United States or the practice of binding women’s feet in past centuries in China and still recognize many admirable features of each society. In general we can expect that most societies are a mixture of good and bad practices.

Just because there are many different opinions about ethical questions does not mean that all of the opinions are equally valid or equally worthy of our support. This guidebook will be of use to people who are not strict relativists, or people who are willing to consider that some moral opinions are better than others. It is based on the assumption that ethical inquiry is worthwhile because it is possible, with hard work, to come up with reliable answers to ethical questions and with moral understandings that can be shared across differences in culture and divisions of other kinds.

We share with relativists the positive value of an open mind and the importance of accounting for the particularities of cultural and other differences. But we also believe that serious and sustained inquiry into ethical questions can lead to better decisions. This guidebook asks us to account for the diversity of ethical opinions, but not by offhandedly considering them to be equally valid. It challenges us to bring many voices into ethical deliberation, and to inquire into the merits of different points of view. Are different opinions grounded in equally accurate pictures of the relevant facts? Are the assumptions that frame ethical questions valid? Can the positive values that inform very different points of view be integrated into “live ethical alternatives:” courses of action that minimize ethical risks and amplify ethical possibilities?

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which would be agreed upon at the hypothetical or ideal end of inquiry...a belief upon which inquiry could not improve.” Such a belief “would fit with experience and argument.” It would be the belief that fits best with all available evidence and the best reasoning of a broad community of inquiry.

The approach to ethical inquiry exemplified in this guidebook is consistent with Misak’s approach. It challenges us to move beyond dogmatism, to sympathetically consider what is right and useful about a wide range of ethical opinions, even those with which we are in substantial disagreement. As Misak puts it:

…the inquirer must be committed to taking the beliefs and viewpoints of others seriously. If what we are after are the beliefs which would best stand up to all experience and argument, then we had better not ignore a part of that experience and argument. The plurality of competing perspectives and beliefs must not merely be allowed, but encouraged. And of course, giving difference a chance to manifest itself will require that the conditions for such view to be articulated and to mature will have to be put into place. Difference must flourish if we are to fully explore what it is to lead a good and full human life...

As Judith Baker notes, the effort required [to take seriously the views of someone whose cultural and economic background is very different from my own] is increased when what I am trying to comprehend is the accusation of my own injustice. When a minority claims that those who enjoy the status of the majority have an unfair advantage, it is unsurprising if the majority fails to see any immediate truth in the claim. They might have to work very hard to see any immediate problem at all. Surely this phenomenon was responsible for the fact that most liberal judges and advocates in the apartheid era had difficulty in seeing that they acted with injustice when they applied vicious laws.

Working with Integrity also challenges us to move beyond relativism, by asserting that some moral opinions are, in fact, better than others because they take into account a wider range of perspectives, careful consideration of the evidence, an examination of assumptions and thoughtful exploration of alternatives. Misak’s articulation is again particularly helpful for peacebuilding practitioners.

I have indicated that pragmatism is friendly to difference and to the multitude of competing values. But I have also been sympathetic to the idea that we all share a tremendous amount, that there is only one community of inquirers, and that we must think of inquiry as embracing all peoples and cultures. It takes a lot of work to keep these two thoughts simultaneously afloat. It takes a lot of work to think of the ‘us’ in the slogan ‘truth is what is best for us to believe’ as embracing everyone, while acknowledging that there is inevitably, and healthily, lots of conflict and difference in the world...

Those positions which stress difference at the expense of similarity, those positions which would have us living in different worlds, are wrongheaded. The pragmatist, that is, does set herself against the kind of view which thinks that irreconcilable differences are more important or more significant than similarities...
of course remains true that I cannot get under your skin and feel what you feel from the inside, as it were. So, in some cases I cannot fully comprehend your experiences. But I comprehend enough, something which is shown by the fact that I can speak to you about them, interpret what you say or write about them, and learn something about what it is that you feel....

If we want our philosophy to have a salutary effect, we should commit ourselves, if we can, to the thought that we all belong to one community and bring to it our differences.

Supporting practitioners to address ethical dilemmas, questions and tensions in ways that strengthen our practice is the primary intention of this guidebook. For some readers, the chapters that follow might push you in the direction of more open-mindedness and towards greater serious consideration of positions that are different from your own. For other readers, the same pages might encourage more clarity and more certainty about ethical beliefs and opinions.

Having read this discussion about dogmatism and relativism, it would be good to return to the worksheet you completed earlier in the chapter. Have your thoughts and feelings changed? As you move into the guidebook, especially as you are in conversation with other practitioners, notice whether your assessment of yourself in terms of relativism and dogmatism changes, or if you locate yourself differently in relation to different issues. Self-awareness in this regard can become an important component to integrity, the concept we will explore in some depth in the next chapter.
Anthony Weston explores the definition of morality and ethics in *A Twenty-First Century Ethical Toolbox* published by Oxford University Press, NY and Oxford, 2001. The quote on page 5 of the guidebook can be found on page 50.


Contemporary moral philosopher, Martha Nussbaum, is the author of *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, Harvard University Press, 1997. Her comments on the definition of “world citizen” and the notion of “narrative imagination” can be found on pages 9 and 11 respectively.

Discussion of dogmatism and relativism relies heavily on essays by Anthony Weston in *A Twenty-First Century Ethical Toolbox* and also discussions with Barbara Houston.


Cheryl Misak explains her belief in “moral truth” and how it can be achieved through ethical inquiry. Her comments are on pages 134-35 of her book *Truth, Politics and Morality*, published in 2000 by Routledge.
A note to readers:
This resource listing will be updated regularly on the website of The International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics. We welcome suggestions from discussion leaders and users of the guidebook.

Philosophical Texts
In relation to the pragmatist mode of ethical inquiry, discussion leaders and teachers are strongly encouraged to review texts by Anthony Weston, especially *A 21st Century Ethical Toolbox*.


Other Works on Ethical Inquiry and the Relationship between Literature and Ethics


Peacebuilding, Coexistence and Conflict Resolution Texts

• European Centre for Conflict Prevention. People Building Peace. Available online at 

• International Alert. Resource Pack for Conflict Transformation. Available online at 

• Lederach, John Paul. Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. 


Websites

• The Coexistence Initiative seeks to catalyze a global awareness of, and commitment to 
  creating a world safe for difference: http://www.coexistence.net.

• The Conflict Resolution Information Source (CRInfo) is a cooperative effort to strengthen 
  the conflict field’s information infrastructure: http://www.crinfo.org.

• INCORE was founded in 1993 in a joint initiative between the University of Ulster and the 
  United Nations University. Its website includes information on ethnic conflict by region and 
  country as well as the text of peace agreements: http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk.

• The United States Institute of Peace maintains a library designed to support the research 
  needs of peacebuilding practitioners: http://www.usip.org/library.html.
Some groups using this guidebook may have negative reactions to the discourse of ‘ethics’ and ‘morality.’ The questions in the box entitled ‘What Help is Morality?’ can be used as the basis for writing assignments and/or discussion. Surfacing and addressing people’s concerns and resistances to these concepts will be a necessary first step for some who are approaching ethical inquiry.

Working first through journal writing and then in pairs, participants can begin to identify ethical issues that have arisen in their own peacebuilding practice. It should, however, be a matter of the participants’ choice which issues they wish to share with the group, and when. The identification of ethical issues could serve two purposes. It will help people make distinctions between ethical issues and other kinds of questions and uncertainties; and it will help students prepare to apply the method of inquiry they will practice through the guidebook to their own ethical tensions and dilemmas.

It would be worthwhile to support participants in workshops or students in classes not only to understanding ‘relativism’ and ‘dogmatism’ but also to become aware of their own proclivities in relation to these patterns of response. One approach would be to raise for discussion a particular issue and then ask students to reflect on the degree of openness that characterized their participation. Anthony Weston’s treatment of the issues of dogmatism and relativism in *A 21st Century Ethical Toolbox* suggests several different trajectories for discussion.

Students or workshop participants could brainstorm the ethical possibilities and risks of moral judgments, and look for solutions that maximize possibilities and minimize risks.
THE MEANING OF INTEGRITY

- Conceptions of Integrity
- Integrity and Interdependence
THE MEANING OF INTEGRITY

This guidebook seeks to enhance peacebuilding practitioners’ capacities to maintain our integrity while making many of the difficult decisions our work requires. Since integrity is such an important value, we propose to pause here before moving to the units exploring particular themes and issues, to explore in some depth the meanings of ‘integrity.’ Hopefully this chapter also will be helpful as an illustration of how moral philosophers grapple with difficult concepts — and how sometimes deepening our understanding of ideas can, in itself, help us make better moral decisions or feel more at peace with the decisions we have made.

At first glance, it might not be obvious why a guidebook for peacebuilders asking ethical questions would single out integrity to highlight in its title. Why not Working with Courage? or Working with Hope? or Working with Trust? Certainly ‘courage,’ ‘hope,’ and ‘trust’ — and many other qualities — are both central to peacebuilding and filled with ethical significance.

This guidebook focuses on integrity because the concept emerged as a theme in the stories told by peacebuilding practitioners. Their choices often exemplify integrity and their reflections reveal their aspirations of acting with integrity. Without question, their narratives include outstanding examples of courage, hope, trust and many other virtues as well. Their ethical dilemmas and questions, however, emerged when they felt uncertain about how to maintain a sense of their own integrity in the face of competing values and demands.

It might appear at first that ‘integrity’ — which evokes images of clear boundaries and personal responsibility — is in some ways at odds with ‘interdependence,’ with its emphasis on the interconnectedness of all beings and the systemic nature of violence. Concerns for ‘integrity’ focus our attention on our own person; ‘interdependence’ directs our attention to the collectivity. As peacebuilders, we emphasize interdependence because the transformation of violent conflicts requires adversaries to acknowledge shared responsibility for the past and to envision and construct the future together.

In the chapter that follows, then, we will examine the implications for peacebuilding practitioners of different possible meanings of integrity. We will search for conceptions of ‘integrity’ that are consistent with notions of ethical interdependence and personal transformation that are at the core of reconciliation. We will also consider how some proponents of interdependence address the responsibilities and autonomy of individual persons.

Before proceeding with this chapter, think through your own understanding of the word integrity. Are there certain people in your life who stand out as models of integrity? Would you describe yourself as a person of integrity? How would you define integrity? And how do you see its relation to interdependence?
Reflecting on the Meaning of ‘Integrity’

1. Think of a person you would describe as a “person of integrity.” What is it about the person that makes her or him stand out for you as having integrity?

2. In what ways would you describe yourself as a person of integrity?

3. Can you think of times when you felt your own sense of integrity was challenged or compromised?
4. What does 'integrity' mean to you?

5. In your view, what is the relationship between 'integrity' and 'interdependence'?

6. Is integrity a quality toward which you aspire?
Conceptions of Integrity

Some people equate having integrity with being honest all of the time. Those of us who work in the peacebuilding field might respond: “If only it were so simple!” Our work requires us to make many decisions about when to speak and when to refrain from speaking. We question when to challenge an interpretation we believe is inaccurate or incomplete and when to allow it to stand. We wonder whether to tell our families about the risks we face in our work, or to withhold that information to keep them from worrying. Other values — discretion, compassion, and responsiveness, for instance — sometimes stand in tension with the simple imperative to be honest all of the time.

We also are aware that speaking honestly is not always such a simple thing. Much of our work involves helping others not only to speak honestly, but to express themselves in ways that can be heard by those from the opposite side of the conflict. And those of us working in war zones may find ourselves in situations where our lives and the lives of hundreds of others might be contingent on our being deceptive.

Furthermore, we are aware that when it comes to integrity, honesty is not all there is to it. We have worked with people who are scrupulously forthright about their feelings and thoughts, but so rigid in their thinking that they cannot seriously consider another point of view. We have worked with people who are honest all of the time, but never speak with anyone who does not already share their most important views. In our work, even if we were completely honest all of the time, it would not necessarily be sufficient to assure that we were acting with integrity.

Those who equate ‘integrity’ with ‘honesty all of the time’ suggest that there is no value — even life itself — that must be weighed when deciding, in any particular case, whether to be honest. For them, integrity is reduced to this single value. For most peacebuilders — and for most thoughtful people — integrity is more complicated than that.

Many people, for instance, think of ‘integrity’ as bound up with a notion of consistency. The philosopher Lynne McFall argues that integrity depends upon a person’s having some “unconditional commitments” that are core to our identities and our sense of ourselves. There are some things we would never do, some part of ourselves "beyond which we will not retreat...And if we do that thing, betray that weakness, we are not the persons we thought: there is nothing left that we may even in spite refer to as I.”

The idea that integrity in some way must be bound up in consistency also can be problematic for people working towards coexistence and reconciliation. In many cases, our work aims towards transformation. When a conflict is transformed, the conflict-habituated system — including the feelings, beliefs, attitudes and values that persons share intersubjectively with their own communities — must also be transformed. And, as we are aware, these transformations in many cases are extremely painful precisely because the feelings, beliefs, attitudes and values in question have been central to people’s sense of themselves, and groups’ understandings of their collective identities. On Lynn McFall’s argument, however, few people could both engage in the kind of transformation towards which our work aspires and maintain their sense of integrity.

“Those who equate ‘integrity’ with ‘honesty all of the time’ suggest that there is no value — even life itself — that must be weighed when deciding, in any particular case, whether to be honest.”
In addition to scrupulous honesty and consistent commitments, there is yet another meaning proposed for the concept of 'integrity' that creates a challenge for peacebuilders. Many people think of integrity as "a whole from which no part can be taken". In this view, to have integrity, a person must act in ways that are consistent with his values. He must determine his priorities according to his own practical reasoning — taking into account his feelings, his values, his beliefs, and his desires, as well as the results of his critical reflections on all of these and any inconsistencies that might exist among them. This view of integrity has much to offer. It clarifies the importance of the person himself being the decision-maker, and not simply following a whim, unthinkingly being influenced by propaganda, or changing views simply to please whatever crowd he is part of at the moment. The sense of wholeness or integration and personal conviction implicit in this view of integrity are sometimes captured by the the notion of 'wholeheartedness' and 'being true to oneself.'

But as peacebuilders, we certainly are aware of times when we honestly are "of two minds". This is certainly true for people from a particular community in conflict, who also become part of an international community of peacebuilders. Some of us have lived in exile or have parents from two different, warring ethnic groups. We may actually feel that we travel in different "worlds" of meaning, or that we have more than one 'self.' (In this case, according to the philosopher Maria Lugones, we might think of ourselves as "not a unitary but a multiplicious being.".) According to the 'integrated person' view of integrity, we would have to say that anyone whose identity involves multiple core commitments would, by definition, lack integrity.

This seems wrong, especially because many people we think of as having integrity seem to be able to move among many different worlds. In fact, what evokes our respect is precisely their ability to negotiate gracefully among different systems of values and different norms of proper behavior.

Is there a sense of integrity that might capture what is positive about all of these qualities? It would need to include consistency about certain core values but the willingness to undergo deeply transformative experiences. It would also require the ability to travel gracefully among different worlds of meaning, 'belonging' to more than one, while simultaneously maintaining an enduring sense of wholeness and personhood.

**Redefining Integrity**

The philosopher Victoria Davion redefines integrity in a way that may be useful for peacebuilders. Her definition centers around an understanding of integrity as the capacity to monitor one's own process of change — ensuring that no important parts get inadvertently left behind, and no commitments to a particular "world" require us to negate some other aspect of our identity or some other core commitment. Elements of our disparate identities might conflict — but, according to Davion, to have integrity a person must be committed to maintaining a connection among them, allowing each part of himself to critique the other. In Davion's view, the commitment to monitor ourselves forms the basis for integrity.
There is another perspective on integrity that has the potential to be helpful to us as peacebuilders, especially given our emphasis on interdependence. The philosopher Cheshire Calhoun argues that integrity is not only a personal virtue (i.e. a quality that helps define the boundary between one’s self and what is outside of one’s self) but also a social virtue (i.e. a quality that is important because it affects our relations with others). She conceptualizes integrity as ‘standing for something.’ By this, she means that integrity involves more than simply choosing for oneself what is the most moral action to take, or some threshold below which one will never act, regardless of consequences. Integrity requires us to take others into account when we develop our beliefs and also when we revise or stand firm about them.

Calhoun would say that we should take a stand only about an opinion when we have arrived at it after sustained and serious thought. To take a stand unthinkingly — without this kind of critical inquiry — is antithetical to integrity. Persons of integrity commit themselves to using their “best judgment” and to arriving at conclusions that aim to be “endorsable by all.” By this she means that people have a responsibility to seek solutions to problems that account for the perspectives and the needs of others.

According to Calhoun, we have a responsibility to take seriously our own opinions, to make judgments knowing that they matter, not only for the sake of our own integrity, but because communities of which we are a part need us to have the courage of our convictions. If we do not, everyone will be deprived of our best thinking.

However, Calhoun asks us to recognize that no matter how broadly we study and no matter how many people we listen to, ultimately we can only give our best judgment. Each of us can answer the most basic moral questions — such as “What is worth doing?” — only from within her own perspective, or what Calhoun refers to as one’s “deliberative point of view.” Despite an individual’s efforts to sympathetically consider a broad range of perspectives, her best judgment may still not be endorsable by all.

Given that, how can we come up with better answers to moral questions, answers that might be compelling for everyone? This involves understanding ourselves as members of communities of “co-deliberators,” people who, like us, are also seeking to ascertain the best course of action, the most moral decision, or the best balance between care for self and others. By taking each person’s point of view seriously and bringing differing perspectives to bear on each other, communities of inquirers can make better judgments than any person could on his own.

In this way, Calhoun’s view of integrity acknowledges the imperatives of our ethical interdependence with those who are different from us.

“But if integrity is the virtue of having a proper regard for one’s own judgment as a deliberator among deliberators, it would seem that integrity is not just a matter of sticking to one’s guns. Arrogance, pomposity, bullying, haranguing, defensiveness, incivility, close-mindedness, deafness to criticism…all seem incompatible with integrity. All reflect a basic unwillingness or inability to acknowledge the singularity of one’s own best judgment and to accept the burden of standing for it in the face of
conflict. Moreover, acknowledging others as deliberators who must themselves abide by their best judgment seems part of, not exterior to, acting with integrity...Integrity calls us simultaneously to stand behind our convictions and to take seriously others’ doubts about them.

In Calhoun’s view, it is important for people to be willing to take a stand, to uphold an idea or position even when it is unpopular. We should think through differing opinions carefully, and then hold on to our views until or unless we are convinced that another is better. In that case, it is important for us to be willing to let it go, to change our minds. Calhoun’s view of integrity as a social virtue is entirely consistent with the theory and practice of peacebuilding.
Integrity and Interdependence

As peacebuilders, we often invoke the concept of ‘interdependence’ as a reminder of the extent to which our actions and beliefs have implications for others. When the tendency is to blame or judge others, or to acknowledge the suffering only of members of our own communities, the concept of ‘interdependence’ can help us remember how we and our own community share a portion of responsibility for the dynamics about which we complain.

How do scholars and peacebuilding practitioners who emphasize interdependence refer to personal responsibility and the potential for courageous ethical acts on the part of individuals? We can look to their writing for conceptions and images of integrity that are particularly relevant to us as peacebuilders.

The Buddhist philosopher Thich Nhat Hanh teaches a great deal about interdependence. In fact, he proposes the concept of ‘interbeing’ to highlight even more acutely the extent to which seemingly distinct entities are bound up not only with each other’s capacities to understand and act ethically, but with each other’s very existence. He writes:

If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we can say that the cloud and the paper inter-are...

If we look into the paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. If the sunshine is not there, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow. Even we cannot grow without sunshine. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are. And if we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree and brought it to the mill to be transformed into paper. And we see the wheat. We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. And the logger’s father and mother are in it too. When we look in this way, we see that without all of these things, this sheet of paper cannot exist.

Looking even more deeply, we can see we are in it, too. This is not difficult to see, because when we look at a sheet of paper, the sheet of paper is part of our perception. Your mind is in here and mine is also. So we can say that everything is in here with this sheet of paper. You cannot point out one thing that is not here — time, space, the earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat. Everything co-exists with this sheet of paper.

The fact is that this sheet of paper is made up only of “non-paper elements.” And if we return these non-paper elements to their sources, then there can be no paper at all. Without “non-paper elements,” like mind, logger, sunshine and so on, there will be no paper. As thin as this sheet of paper is, it contains everything in the universe in it.

Thich Nhat Hahn extends his conception of the interconnectedness of all things to social and ethical phenomena as well. Just as a beautiful rose will soon wilt and be thrown onto a
garbage heap, and the most putrid of garbage can become the compost for next year’s beautiful roses, so are poverty and wealth implicated in and dependent upon each other.

In the city of Manila there are many young prostitutes, some of them only fourteen or fifteen years old. They are very unhappy young ladies. They did not want to be prostitutes. Their families are poor and these young girls went to the city to look for some kind of job, like a street vendor, to make money to send back to their families... It is true that in the city you can make money more easily than in the countryside, so we can imagine how a young girl may have been tempted to go there to help her family. But after only a few weeks there, she was persuaded by a clever person to work for her and to earn perhaps one hundred times more money. Because she was so young and did not know much about life, she accepted, and became a prostitute. Since that time she has carried the feeling of being impure, defiled, and this causes her great suffering. When she looks at other girls, dressed beautifully, belonging to good families, a wretched feeling wells up in her, and this feeling of defilement has become her hell....

[But in such situations, no one] among us has clean hands. No one of us can claim it is not our responsibility. The girl in Manila is that way because of the way we are. Looking into the life of that young prostitute, we see the non-prostitute people. And looking at the non-prostitute people, and at the way we live our lives, we see the prostitute. This helps to create that, and that helps to create this... The wealth of one society is made of the poverty of the other. Wealth is made of non-wealth elements, and poverty is made by non-poverty elements. It is exactly the same as with the sheet of paper.

Thich Nhat Hanh’s philosophy, as strongly as it emphasizes interdependence among all beings, still recognizes the importance of individual action and decision-making. He associates personal effectiveness with inner peace, with the ability to “smile for oneself,” and the capacity to focus one’s energy, to perceive with calmness and clarity. “If even one person aboard” a refugee boat caught in rough seas, writes Thich Nhat Hanh

can remain calm, lucid, knowing what to do and what not to do, he or she can help the boat survive. His or her expression—face, voice—communicate clarity and calmness, and people have trust in that person....We need people who can sit still and be able to smile, who can walk peacefully....Mahayan Buddhism says that you are that person, that each of you is that person.

We might say that such a person — the person who focuses her energy and perceives with clarity, whose sense of proportion and appropriate action remains intact even in threatening situations — is a person of integrity.
Lynne McFall’s conception of integrity is presented in an article entitled “Integrity” in *Ethics* 98 (October 1987): pages 5 - 20.

Maria Lugones herself is a lesbian woman who is also part of the Latina community in the United States. She values both parts of her identity, and chooses to take a stand against the systems of oppression that constrain each of the communities to which she belongs. To do so, she sometimes discovers herself endorsing value systems that conflict. She writes about the notion of integrity for such “multiplicitous beings” in an article entitled “Playfulness, World- Travelling and Loving Perception” that can be found on pages 390 - 402 in the anthology *Making Face, Making Soul = Hacienda Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, edited by Gloria Anzaldúa.

Victoria Davion’s conception of integrity can be found in “Integrity and Radical Change,” in *Feminist Ethics: Problems, Projects, Prospects*, edited by Claudia Card, on pages 180 - 192. The book was published by The University of Kansas Press in 1991.


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Philosophical Texts


Peacebuilding, Coexistence and Conflict Resolution Texts


Websites

• The online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy includes an excellent essay on integrity including sections on: integrity as self-integration, the identity view of integrity, integrity as standing for something, integrity as moral purpose, and integrity and moral theory. It also includes a bibliography of philosophical works on integrity: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/integrity.
If time permits, participants could develop their own conceptions of integrity prior to reading those presented in the chapters. Their ideas can be developed using some or all of the questions on the worksheet as the basis for writing or small group discussions.

A version of this activity can be repeated after reading and discussing the conceptions of integrity presented in the chapter. To further explore the nature of interdependence and its relation to integrity, photocopy and circulate the additional readings in the section that concludes this chapter.

The additional readings in the section that follows can be used as the basis for a group discussion. In relation to Akbar Ahmed’s description of the interdependence of the West and the world of Islam, the following questions could be raised:

- What is the relationship between our images and understandings of other cultures and our actions in relation towards them?
- Can the actions of one group be determined by the actions of another?
- Can the actions of one group be influenced by the actions of another?
- How might political and cultural leaders who aspire toward integrity (and toward helping their groups maintain their integrity) act in relation to the dynamics Ahmed presents?

In relation to Martin Buber’s assertion of the ascetic nature of knowledge, the following questions could be asked:

- How does our socialization within a community affect our ability to understand the world distinct from the categories assumed within our own community’s discourse?
- Is Buber’s prescription to engage one’s spiritual powers to be free of the prejudices of one’s community realistic? Is it sufficient?
- What is the relationship between Buber’s view of the relationship between the thinker and her community and Calhoun’s view of integrity?
Akbar Ahmed on the Interdependence of Islam and the West

The interrelatedness of adversaries’ perceptions of each other and their respective abilities to act ethically is a central theme of the Islamic philosopher and media critic Akbar S. Ahmed. He describes the images that Westerners and Muslims have of each other, and how these perceptions affect not only understanding but also the ability of people on all sides to act ethically. In relation to the Gulf War, for instance, Ahmed notes the effects of

...the one-dimensional picture of Saddam, and by extension, of all Arabs, created during the Gulf crisis. It therefore dehumanized Arab civilization, reducing it to a nonsense. Arabs were shown either as playboys squandering money in European casinos, or bully-boys terrorizing smaller neighbours. For the American GI on the Arabian peninsula there was little difference between the Arabs he was defending and those he was to attack. Both were ‘desert niggers’; and he had contributed a racist neologism. When the GI on television said ‘I’m here to kick ass’, it was difficult to predict which posterior—friend or foe—was destined to receive the imprint of his undoubtedly large boot (p. 229).

Islam is essentially the religion of equilibrium and tolerance; suggesting and encouraging breadth of vision, global positions and the fulfillment of human destiny in the universe. Yet the non-Muslim media, by their consistently hammer-headed onslaught, have succeeded in portraying a negative image of it. They may even succeed in changing Muslim character. Muslims, because of their gut response to the attack—both vehement and vitriolic—are failing to maintain the essential features of Islam (p. 48).

On the threshold of the twenty-first century the confrontation between Islam and the West poses terrible internal dilemmas for both. The test for Muslims is how to preserve the essence of the Quranic message, of adl and ahsan [balance and compassion], ilm and sabr [knowledge and patience], without it being reduced to an ancient and empty chant in our times; how to participate in the global civilization without their identity being obliterated... The challenge for those in the West is how to expand the Western idealistic notions of justice, equality, freedom and liberty beyond their borders to include all humanity and without appearing like nineteenth century imperialists; to reach out to those not of their civilization in friendship and sincerity. In both cases a mutual understanding and working relationship are essential (pp. 264-265).
Martin Buber on Interdependence and Freedom of Vision

Martin Buber’s is believes that a person’s interdependence with his or her own community is central to human creativity. His philosophy is based on the idea that we can become full human beings only in authentic relation with another. In the following paragraphs, however, his focus shifts to a paradox inherent in the intersubjectivity of persons and groups.

All knowledge [including knowledge about social justice] is an ascetic act. At the moment of knowledge the knower must bring something paradoxical to pass; certainly he must enter into the knowledge with his whole being, he must also bring unabridged into his knowing the experiences his social ties have presented him with. But he must free himself from the influence of these ties through the concentration of spiritual power. No one becomes a sociological thinker if his dream and his passion have never mingled with the dream and passion of a human community; but in the moment of thinking itself, as far as it stands in his power, he must exist only as person, the person open to the subject of thought. If this relation is maintained, he need not unduly trouble himself with the question of how far his knowledge was determined against his will by his membership in a group. In the relationship of a man to the truth that he has discovered, freedom and obligation, vision and blindness, are always merged. Our concern is only this — to will with all the power of our spirit to achieve free vision (p. 220).