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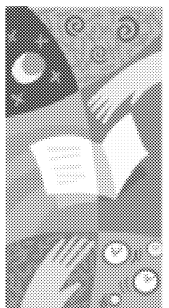
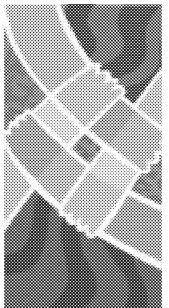
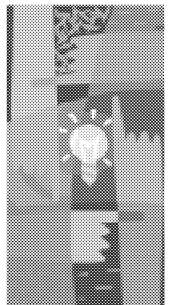
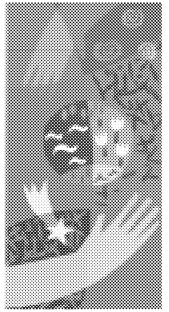
# WORKING WITH INTEGRITY

## A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions

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The International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life  
Brandeis University  
2001

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## **WORKING WITH INTEGRITY**

### **A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions**

has been funded by a grant from the United States Institute of Peace,  
1200 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036-3001

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This guidebook is available in two formats: looseleaf notebook (with photocopy-ready pages) and on the website of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life at [www.brandeis.edu/ethics/](http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/). The website will include updated versions of the resource pages. The guidebook, or portions of it, may not be sold for profit.

We anticipate producing revised and expanded versions of the guidebook in the future, and welcome suggestions from users for future editions.

The Brandeis Initiative in Intercommunal Coexistence  
A program of  
The International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life  
MS 086 — Ridgewood 20  
Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02454

781-736-8577 (phone)  
781-736-8561 (fax)  
[ethics@brandeis.edu](mailto:ethics@brandeis.edu) (email)  
[www.brandeis.edu/ethics/](http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/) (website)

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 **Preface**

*Working with Integrity: A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions* is a resource for people who promote coexistence and further reconciliation in historically divided communities. It is not a training manual designed to impart skills or a textbook intended to teach peacebuilding theory. It is designed instead to engage its users in practicing an approach to ethical inquiry that is well suited to the kinds of dilemmas and questions that arise in the work of building peace.

The particular ethical issues we explore in these pages emerged from stories told by coexistence facilitators, refugee advocates, and other peacebuilders working in several different conflict regions. We assume that the practitioners using this guidebook might be confronting similar issues and that they find these explorations helpful. More important, however, we hope that users of the guidebook will adapt the approach illustrated here to help them identify and address ethical tensions and questions that emerge from their own work. Our intention is to provide a resource for people to engage with the ethical dimension of their work in ways that strengthen practice.

## **Background**

In recent decades, responsibilities for peacebuilding are no longer shouldered exclusively by career diplomats or representatives of governments. Operating within frameworks of ‘multi-track diplomacy,’ ‘conflict transformation,’ ‘violence prevention,’ ‘coexistence’ and ‘reconciliation,’ citizens from many sectors of society work to build constructive relationships among adversaries and help their communities come to terms with painful history. Professionals such as clergy-people, journalists, artists, doctors and nurses are as likely as trained mediators, negotiators, and conflict resolution experts to facilitate dialogues and plan citizen exchanges. Teachers and recreation workers plan programs designed to help former enemies or current adversaries see each other with a human face. Non-governmental organizations such as peace centers, conflict resolution organizations, summer camps, ecumenical councils and women’s groups – operating on local, regional, national and international levels – can play significant roles in preventing violence, facilitating coexistence, furthering reconciliation and building a culture of peace.

New peacebuilding actors are playing new roles, often working with different assumptions than their predecessors. In addition, there has been a substantial rise in the number of people working towards humanitarian relief, refugee resettlement, sustainable development, and human rights operating in regions of ethnic, religious or national conflict. Such workers ignore conflict dynamics at their peril. Well-intentioned actions -- the distribution of food relief, for instance -- can become completely distorted, resulting in the exacerbation of rivalries and fueling hostilities based on historic inequities. Practitioners working in historically divided communities are sometimes confronted with ethical challenges and questions with immediate life-and-death consequences for themselves, their co-workers, and the people whose lives have been torn apart by conflict.

People working in small non-governmental organizations, persons working on their own or in small informal groups from their positions as educators, artists or relief workers, can be confronted with challenging moral and ethical decisions on a daily basis. Moral theories that

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apply to state actors — theories of just war, for instance, or even recent works that balance commitments to state sovereignty with concerns for human rights — are insufficient to help practitioners on the ground address the kinds of issues that they face on a day-to-day basis. *Working with Integrity: A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions* represents an attempt to address that gap — to address questions and to stimulate useful conversations among practitioners about the ethical dimensions of their work on the ground.

To prepare a guidebook on ethical questions useful for practitioners, the logical place to start was with practitioners themselves: with the stories they tell about their work and the questions they ask themselves about the morality of their decisions. Although many additional scholars and practitioners have been consulted, the themes for the units that follow are based primarily on interviews with peacebuilding practitioners from Sri Lanka, South Africa, the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia. With support from the United State Institute of Peace and from the Brandeis University International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life, extensive interviews were conducted with sixteen practitioners. We asked about the dilemmas that they faced, and we listened to understand the ethical issues embedded within the stories they told about their lives and their work.

### **Stories as a Basis for Ethical Inquiry**

In every culture, moral development is fostered in part through the sharing of stories. In recent years, philosophers, educators and literary scholars have emphasized the ethical dimensions of narrative and the usefulness of stories in conveying values and helping people imagine lives different from their own.

The stories of peacebuilding practitioners, for several reasons, are the basis of this guidebook. Practitioners' reflections on their own work allow us consider ethical issues that emerge from the real experiences of peacebuilders — especially peacebuilders who are members of the communities in which they are working. The stories present ethical dilemmas in forms that are accessible. They reveal aspects of both the cultures and the conflicts out of which the dilemmas emerge. More than any other kind of discourse, stories tend to be understandable across cultures.

Nevertheless, there are some risks involved in basing an ethical guidebook on stories practitioners tell about their own dilemmas. In some cases, the practitioners made themselves quite vulnerable, sharing their personal doubts, describing tensions in relationships, and revealing questions about values that some might find disconcerting. For this reason, we have decided to use pseudonyms and in other ways to refrain from sharing the actual identity of the practitioners. Unfortunately, therefore, we can't recognize them publicly for the substantial contributions they have made to this effort. This lack of recognition does not in any way diminish the appreciation they deserve. We hope, however, it eliminates the risk that they might have experienced any harm from having made themselves vulnerable through the stories they shared so openly.

This guidebook's emphasis on the stories of practitioners leads to another concern. A focus on the ethical dimension of peacebuilding practice might shift our attention away from the powerful policy-makers whose decisions create the extremely difficult circumstances in which peacebuilders work and in which survivors of violence struggle to reconstruct their lives. We request users of this guidebook neither to judge the persons who shared their stories nor to

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ignore all of the prior decisions that created the painful and frightening circumstances in which these peacebuilders grappled with difficult choices. It is often helpful to “think upstream” — to imagine how a difficult ethical problem might have been avoided at an earlier stage.

When we are sitting in a classroom or an institute ‘thinking upstream’ can be an energizing exercise that focuses our attention on the actors who have power to make major changes. All too often, however, as peacebuilders working in communities, we still must make choices in circumstances that are far less than ideal. While not wanting to distract us from the larger social and political dynamics, this guidebook is designed to help us grapple with the ethical dilemmas that emerge from our own practice, and the difficult decisions that are within our power to make.

## **Acknowledgements**

This guidebook is animated by honest and forthright conversations I was privileged to share with sixteen remarkable peacebuilding practitioners from South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia. Not all of their stories appear in this edition, but regardless, I have learned from our conversations and their reflections on each other’s dilemmas.

This work has benefitted enormously from critiques of early drafts. I relished an extensive series of conversation with Dr. Hizkias Assefa of the African Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Network and Dr. Barbara Houston of the University of New Hampshire’s Department of Education. I also am grateful for conversations, at various stages of this project’s development, with Dan Terris, Director of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life; Dr. Louise Diamond, of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy; Dr. Elise Boulding; and Dr. Eileen Babbitt, Director of the Conflict Resolution Program at the Fletcher School for Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

Dr. Paula Green, Director of the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation, and the ‘Conflict Transformation Across Cultures’ at the School for International Training allowed us to test some of these materials with her engaging and intelligent students, themselves peacebuilders from around the globe. Their responses substantially improved this work.

Over the past three years, many students and assistants at the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life transcribed tapes, edited stories, critiqued drafts, and engaged in research. I would like to express my appreciation to all of them and to thank especially Dr. Robert Irwin, who sensitively composed drafts of narratives based on interview transcripts. I appreciate the sensitive design work of June Colvin of Colvin/Williams Design Communications Inc., and the careful and persistent production work of Lesley Yalen, Judith Havas and Melissa Blanchard.

Finally, I thank the United States Institute of Peace, the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life, and the Alan B. Slifka Foundation whose financial support made the project possible. Brandeis University and the Ethics Center have provided an excellent intellectual home for this project, and I look forward to developing it further with our international partners and my colleagues here

C.E.C.  
Brandeis University  
Summer, 2001





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## Suggestions for Using the Guidebook

Welcome to *Working with Integrity: A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions!* These materials are intended to introduce peacebuilding practitioners, students, and others working in historically divided communities to an approach to ethical inquiry. The issues we explore are based on stories collected from practitioners working in several different conflict regions. Please be forewarned, however, that although we raise complex and important questions, we do not provide many answers. Rather, the materials are designed to engage users in a multi-step process of inquiry.

Several of the chapters are introductory and more conceptual in nature. This is true of the two chapters that comprise the introduction — clarifying the nature of ethical inquiry and examining the concept of ‘integrity’ — and the first chapter in Unit II, which explores why listening is so highly valued by peacebuilders. The two chapters that address ethical dilemmas (Unit II Chapters 2 and 3) exemplify a mode of ethical inquiry. We hope practitioners find these chapters useful not only because of the issues they explore, but because of the processes they illustrate.

Although they are not sequenced identically, each of the chapters brings readers through the following steps:

- Identifying an ethical issue
- Identifying ethical possibilities and risks
- Exploring concepts
- Examining assumptions
- Integrating values by exploring what is **right** about opposing views
- Integrating values by imagining feasible alternatives

In each case, inquirers are guided to refer to their own thoughts, feelings and experiences; to consult with colleagues and friends; and to consider additional perspectives presented in the practitioners’ stories and excerpts from literature that we include in each chapter.

This guidebook is designed for use in seminars and institutes, where groups of practitioners work through the ethical questions with the support of a facilitator or discussion leader. It can also be used by someone working independently, however, or be used as a text in an undergraduate or graduate university course.

If you are a discussion leader or a college-level instructor, please adapt the material to the needs, interests and capacities of the participants. The worksheets and the narratives included in each chapter have been designed to be easily photocopied. At the end of each chapter, there are suggestions for activities and exercises and some additional stories you might wish to read aloud or distribute. The questions on the worksheets and within the chapters can all be used as the basis for writing assignments (to be completed during or after class) or for small group or whole class discussions. It is quite likely that more material is presented in each chapter than can be covered in any particular seminar or class session. Please be selective in deciding which sections to highlight for discussion and in assignments and exercises.

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The approach to ethical inquiry relies heavily on Anthony Weston's *A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Ethical Toolbox*, and you are encouraged to use that book as an additional resource. It is filled with excellent advice about pedagogical approaches, activities and additional readings.

In the context of a week-long institute or seminar, we recommend structuring opportunities each day for participants to apply the approach to inquiry they are learning to an ethical dilemma or question that has emerged in their own practice.

If you are an individual peacebuilding practitioner or student using this guidebook on your own, please take the time to think about the questions and fill in the worksheets that appear in each chapter. Both the questions and the worksheets are designed to help you identify your own thoughts and feelings, to support you to link the stories in the chapter with your own experiences, and to engage you actively. Perhaps you can identify a friend or colleague who would be willing to discuss the issues with you.

*Working with Integrity: A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions* is a work in progress. We plan to publish revised editions, based on comments we receive from users. We also hope to publish expanded versions, including additional chapters that explore different dilemmas and incorporate additional perspectives. We welcome comments, suggestions of resources and pedagogical approaches, stories, questions and concerns. Please send them to the author, care of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life. Subsequent versions, along with updated resource lists, can be accessed at our website: [www.brandeis.edu/ethics](http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics).

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 **About the Author**

Cynthia Cohen directs the Brandeis Initiative in Intercommunal Coexistence. She has worked as a coexistence facilitator with teenagers from the Middle East, with Jewish- and Palestinian-Americans living in the greater Boston area, and with diverse groups of American children and adults. She founded, and for ten years directed, the Oral History Center, developing models of coexistence work based on the sharing of stories and engagement with the arts. Her areas of expertise include oral history, intercultural education and the role of the arts and aesthetic perception in the educational work of reconciliation. Dr. Cohen holds degrees from Wesleyan University, the University of New Hampshire and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

*Working with Integrity: A Guidebook for Peacebuilders Asking Ethical Questions* is published jointly by Cynthia Cohen and the Brandeis University International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life. The Ethics Center brings scholars, practitioners and artists from around the globe together to develop new approaches to old ethical questions through scholarship, dialogue and creative practice. The guidebook is being developed as part of the Brandeis Initiative in Intercommunal Coexistence (BIIC), a program of The Ethics Center. BIIC develops creative approaches to facilitating coexistence and reconciliation through scholarship, international collaborations and activities on the Brandeis campus. The BIIC is laying the foundation for a permanent program in coexistence at Brandeis. For more information about the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life and the Brandeis Initiative in Intercommunal Coexistence, please visit [www.brandeis.edu/ethics/coexistence](http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/coexistence).