OVERCOMING PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO PEACEMAKING: THE INFLUENCE OF BELIEFS ABOUT LOSSES

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One of the fundamental questions that preoccupies students of conflict resolution, as well as negotiators who attempt to resolve international conflicts, is how to overcome the psychological barriers to peacemaking in cases of serious and violent conflicts. Such conflicts concern real goods, such as territories, natural resources, and the right to self-government, and disagreements about basic values. In attempting to resolve such conflicts, it is necessary to address the incompatibility of some of the adversaries’ positions, but it is also necessary to consider and deal with the important social-psychological foundations of the conflict that feed and maintain the evolved culture of conflict. These foundations are quite rigid and resistant to change, and they fuel continued conflict and create almost insurmountable barriers to conflict resolution.

This chapter examines ways of overcoming the psychological barriers to peaceful resolution of conflicts and outlines preliminary ideas that may be

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useful in stimulating further theory development and empirical research. We begin by briefly examining the nature of intractable conflicts and the associated cultures of conflict. The bulk of the chapter then addresses ways of overcoming the psychological barriers to conflict resolution, focusing on the extent to which thoughts about losses involved in a conflict can destabilize ("unfreeze") rigid beliefs and attitudes toward the conflict and lead to its reevaluation and resolution. Finally, we discuss other kinds of beliefs and attitudes that can move conflicted parties toward development of an ethos of peace, which is necessary for lasting conflict resolution and reconciliation.

CULTURE OF CONFLICT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflicts are a natural part of intergroup relations, but we are interested here in conflicts that are prolonged, harsh, and violent—ones that are often called intractable. In these conflicts, each of the opposing groups has typically evolved a culture of conflict based on shared societal beliefs, an ethos of conflict, collective memories, and shared collective emotions (Bar-Tal, 2007a). Collective memories of a conflict involve a history shared by group members that summarizes how the conflict arose and evolved to its present state (e.g., Cairns & Roe, 2003; Wertsch, 2002). An ethos of conflict provides a unique, general, dominant orientation to a society in times of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2000a; Bar-Tal & Salomon, 2006). The societal beliefs based on collective memory and an ethos of conflict are selective, biased, and distorted because their major function is to justify one side's position in the conflict rather than to provide an objective account of reality. The beliefs fuel intractable conflict by portraying one's own group very positively and as an unjustly injured or mistreated victim, while delegitimizing the opponent. Beyond societal beliefs, intractable conflicts are also fueled by collective emotional tendencies. The most notable such reaction is fear and apprehension with respect to the rival (Bar-Tal, 2001), but also important are anger toward and hatred of the opponent (e.g., de Rivera & Paez, 2007; Halperin, 2008; Petersen, 2002).

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1 Intractable conflicts can be characterized as violent, lasting at least 25 years, centering on goals perceived as necessary for existence, being viewed as unresolvable because of their zero-sum nature, greatly preoccupying society members, and involving parties who are heavily invested in continuing the conflict (Bar-Tal, 1998).

2 Societal beliefs are defined as shared cognitions about topics and issues of special concern to a society and about its unique characteristics (Bar-Tal, 2000a).

3 Bar-Tal (2000a, 2007a) proposed that the challenges of an intractable conflict lead to the development of an ethos of conflict that consists of the following eight themes of societal beliefs: the Justness of the society's goals, security, positive collective self-image, the group's victimization, the illegitimacy of the adversary's goals, patriotism, societal unity, and conceptions of peace.
These beliefs and emotions are disseminated to all members of a society, maintained by societal institutions, transmitted to new generations by socialization processes, and suffused throughout all kinds of cultural productions (Ross, 1998). As a result, they amount to a rigid, change-resistant culture of conflict (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2007b). This cognitive-emotional-cultural system enables members of a society to cope with the challenges and strains of the conflict, but it also perpetuates the conflict, thereby constituting a major obstacle to peacemaking.

Attempts to resolve an intractable conflict require major changes in societal beliefs and collective emotional reactions, which of course cannot be changed overnight. They are familiar, deeply rooted, and held with great confidence, and they have fulfilled many functions for a society during the conflict and have been continuously supported by mass media and other societal institutions (for an analysis of the Jewish society in Israel, see, e.g., Bar-Tal, 2007b). Even when leaders of rival groups seem to resolve a conflict peacefully and have signed a peace agreement, the cultures of conflict may live on in group members' minds and interfere with peaceful relations and reconciliation efforts. Hence, changing collective cognitions and emotions from ones that support conflict to ones that support reconciliation presents one of the most important challenges to anyone who aspires to live in a peaceful world.

The rigidity of cultures of conflict is an example of what Kruglanski (2004) called cognitive freezing (see also Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Kunda, 1990). When freezing has occurred, information is subjected to top-down processing. That is, information that fits the reigning cognitive-emotional structure is encoded and accepted as valid; incongruent information is unattended, rejected, and forgotten, or even when absorbed, is processed in a biased and distorted manner (Bar-Tal, 2007a). According to Kruglanski (2004), cognitive freezing is maintained by “specific needs for closure,” which cause group members “to freeze on their prior knowledge if such knowledge was congruent with their needs” (pp. 17-18). Cognitive freezing encourages tunnel vision with respect to a conflict, precluding consideration of ways to resolve it (see Bar-Tal & Halperin, in press, for a more complete analysis of the barriers to peaceful conflict resolution).

To achieve conflict resolution and lasting peace, an alternative repertoire of collective cognitions and emotions must be constructed and disseminated among members of a society. This repertoire should include proposals for conflict resolution that can be accepted by both sides, beliefs that a peaceful agreement can be reached and implemented, a sense of trust in the rival, goals of forming peaceful relations with the rival, and eventually, recognition of the importance of reconciliation and readiness to carry it out (J. Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004; de Rivera, 2008). We realize, of course, that this is bound to be a long, complex, and nonlinear process. Moreover, in most intractable conflicts, the process begins with only a small minority of society's members...
who have the courage to present new alternatives to the majority—a majority that is likely to react initially with mistrust, hostility, devaluation, and rejection.

According to Lewin's (1947/1976) classic ideas, every process of cognitive change, in individuals and groups, requires cognitive unfreezing and destabilizing of the dominant cognitive-emotional structure (see also Kruglanski, 2004). In Figure 22.1, we depict the process of reevaluation and change of the beliefs and emotions that fuel a conflict. In this figure, changes in sociocultural contexts ("stimulating contexts") make salient the potential losses involved in the conflict, increase the accessibility of cognitions and emotions related to these losses, and then cause members of the society, or at least some of them, to entertain fundamental questions and worries about continuing the conflict. These questions can become the most effective force for reevaluating and changing the culture of conflict.

We focus here on the first part of the process—the emergence of beliefs about losses entailed by conflict, beliefs that can bring about the unfreezing and reevaluation of strongly held beliefs. We will sidestep a discussion of changes in sociocultural contexts that increase the accessibility of these beliefs because it would take us beyond the scope of the present chapter. Changing the beliefs and emotions that fuel a conflict depends on processes occurring both within each rival group and between the groups. Here, however, we focus mainly on the realization within a group that perpetuating a conflict entails losses for the group. This realization paves the way for changes in beliefs and emotions related to the conflict, which in turn makes communication and cooperation with the rival more likely.

THE UNFREEZING PROCESS

The most important factor in the unfreezing process is the arousal of motivation to reevaluate long-held beliefs and attitudes, to search for new ideas and information, and to consider the new alternatives. The second stage involves accepting and adopting new beliefs that facilitate peacemaking that eventually become the foundation for a culture of peace.

The unfreezing process usually begins with an appearance of a new idea (or ideas) inconsistent with previously held beliefs, an idea that creates some kind of tension, dissonance, dilemma, or internal conflict, thereby stimulating people to move away from their previous stance and search for new information (e.g., Bartunek, 1993; Kruglanski, 1989). In the cases we are considering here, the new idea, which we call the instigating belief, has to contradict the accepted belief that it is necessary to continue the conflict because it, or its imagined outcome, is beneficial, even crucial, for one's group. We propose that the instigating beliefs that motivate people to unfreeze previous beliefs and attitudes require recognition of the incompatibility between a desired
future, on the one hand, and the emerging future or current state of the society, on the other. In other words, motivation to reevaluate firmly held beliefs and consider alternatives is based on realizing that continuation of the conflict will not lead to a better or desired future but may drastically reduce the chances of the desired future coming about (Barunek, 1993). Instigating beliefs may appear spontaneously in some group members' minds without
any special surrounding circumstances, but usually they arise because of
changes in the sociocultural context.

If unfreezing is to occur, forces that push for change (which we call
driving forces) must be stronger than restraining forces (see Marcus, 2006, for
elaboration). One of the most important challenges for anyone attempting
to remove or attenuate psychological barriers to peace is to identify both
kinds of forces and strengthen the driving forces while weakening the re-
straining forces. According to Marcus (2006), unfreezing a culture of conflict
requires that members of a society have confidence in the inner strength of
their society and its ability to cope with expected challenges that the peace
process may present. (This is similar to Bandura's, 1997, well-known indi-
vidual-level concept of self-efficacy.)

Kruglanski and his colleagues (Freund, Kruglanski, & Shpitzajzen, 1985;
Kruglanski & Freund, 1983) proposed that two key mechanisms underlie the
process of unfreezing. The first is fear of invalidity, defined by Kunda (1990)
as accuracy motivation. When people are afraid of holding inaccurate beliefs
or attitudes and of making a faulty decision (i.e., when they believe they will
be held responsible for their decision), they may open their minds, unfreeze
previously firm beliefs, process information more thoroughly, and search for
more valid information. The second mechanism is recognizing that the cur-
rent beliefs interfere with the attainment of important goals (Tetlock,
Peterson, & Lerner, 1996). Both mechanisms contribute to cognitive un-
freezing by emphasizing the costs of holding invalid cognitions or the ben-
efits of cognitive openness (Kruglanski, 2004). Hence, increasing the salience
of validity concerns or highlighting the costs of misperceptions or of biased,
distorted information processing may foster openness and influence people
to consider alternative beliefs about a conflict and new ways to end it
(Kruglanski & Webster, 1996).

Another way to encourage unfreezing is related to emotions. In an early
protection motivation theory, Rogers (1983) suggested that fear appeals are
effective in changing attitudes if they are not overwhelming and they con-
vince people that the negative consequences of holding onto a belief or an
associated mode of conduct will be severe. An early meta-analysis of fear
studies found that the use of fear appeals was associated with increased per-
suasion (Boster & Mongeau, 1984). Similarly, according to affective intelli-
gence theory (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993), moderate levels of "surveillance
system" emotions, such as fear and anxiety, can move people to reassess their
attitudes and search for additional information and new alternatives (Marcus,
2006). Valencia (2008), who examined the effects of various emotions on
peace negotiations in the Basque Country (a semiautonomous region of
Spain), found that in some cases fear can increase people's support for nego-
tiations with terrorists. Overall, it seems that moderate use of fear of nega-
tive consequences might be useful in unfreezing cognitions and emotions
that fuel conflicts.
INSTIGATING BELIEFS ABOUT LOSSES

As already mentioned, we suspect that the most effective instigator of an unfreezing process is contemplation of severe losses made likely by continuation of a conflict. This idea is based partly on Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) prospect theory, which has been adapted to apply to conflict situations (e.g., Boettcher, 2004; Geva & Mintz, 1997; Levy, 1997). According to prospect theory, people are more reluctant to lose what they already have than they are motivated to gain what they do not have (Tversky & Kahneman, 1986). In the language of prospect theory, the value function is steeper on the loss side than on the gain side. The theory's claim about the larger impact of imagined losses than of imagined gains has also been part of other theories. One example is conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which states that losing resources through a traumatic event evokes greater distress than an equivalent failure to gain new resources. A similar negativity bias has been noted within the literature on persuasion: Negative events and information tend to be more closely attended, better remembered, and more able to produce attitude change than positive events and information (for a review, see Cacioppo & Berntson, 1994).

One way to emphasize the potential losses associated with continuing a conflict and to reduce the emphasis on losses associated with a peaceful settlement is to reframe the reference point. Prospect theory proposes that people react more strongly to changes in assets than to net asset levels; that is, they react to gains and losses from a reference point rather than to absolute values of gains or losses (e.g., Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Tversky & Kahneman, 1986). In most cases, the reference point is the status quo, but in some situations it can be a person's "aspiration level" (Payne, Laughhunn, & Crum, 1981) or a desired goal (Heath, Larson, & Wu, 1999). Very often, members of societies involved in a conflict are socialized to believe in the feasibility of future gains from the conflict or even the victory of their group over the rival (Bar-Tal, 2007a). The alternative possibility of paying a high price for continuing the conflict or being defeated is often ignored. As a result, when the compromises required by a peaceful settlement of the conflict are compared with the society's aspirations, or even with the status-quo (mostly for the stronger group), they are perceived as requiring an enormous loss.

To unfreeze the conflicting parties' cultures of conflict, negotiators or mediators should encourage new reference points. The potential losses of continuing the conflict should be presented very concretely, as relevant to

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*The motivation to reevaluate attitudes and behavior within the context of a conflict does not always stem from gain-loss considerations. There are members in every society who judge the situation from a moral perspective. Yet, according to Kohlberg's (1984) theory of moral development, most people do not reach the highest stages of moral development, so the subgroup that makes judgments based on a high level of moral development is a small minority.*
individual members of a society and to their collective well-being, as blocking the satisfaction of basic needs and as having a high probability of occurring. When compared with the new reference point, the losses entailed by peaceful compromise may seem acceptable. Because both societies have to give up some of their aspirations and dreams to achieve an end to conflict, the principles involved in selecting instigating beliefs (i.e., beliefs that can unfreeze the culture of conflict) are similar for both sides, although the content of the beliefs may differ, especially if the two societies are unequal in certain respects (see chap. 10, this volume).

POTENTIAL FUTURE LOSSES

According to prospect theory, thinking about losses entailed or threatened if the conflict is continued is likely to be more effective in unfreezing beliefs than thinking about the benefits of peace. People find it difficult to imagine peace after living through years of brutal conflict; the vision of peace is clouded by ambiguity, uncertainty, and perceived risk (Mitzen, 2006). Hence, instead of highlighting the advantages of peace, it may be necessary to arouse fear by pointing out that the losses incurred if the conflict continues would be greater than the losses incurred by accepting a peaceful solution. This is especially important for the stronger participant in the conflict because that side may have gained a great deal from years of struggle and may not want to give any of it up to attain peace. 5

In many cases, the conflict has continued because at least one side believes that “time is on our side” and eventually “we will win or at least improve our gains from a settlement.” Therefore, it is important for negotiators to stress that “time is not on your side” and the future may bring greater costs rather than benefits. For the stronger party in the conflict, beliefs such as “We don’t have the resources to continue the conflict” or “We may pay a heavy price if the conflict continues” can change the reference point for comparing expected losses from peace with expected losses from continued conflict or defeat.

This movement of the reference point and the subsequent cognitive unfreezing process were illustrated in the peacemaking processes of Northern Ireland, South Africa, and the Middle East. With reference to Northern Ireland, Mac Ginty and Darby (2002) argued that in the early 1990s, people on the unionist side of the conflict began to expect increased losses if they refused to negotiate, and the unionist leaders decided to enter negotiations to

5The lion’s share of our discussion focuses on the beliefs of members of the more powerful side of a conflict, because in most cases the radical revaluations of alternatives, as well as most compromises, are required from the side that holds most of the tangible and intangible resources. The side that has military, economic, and political advantages has more to lose by ending the conflict.
gain greater influence over a possible agreement. Mac Gintry and Darby quoted a statement by a senior Orangeman that, according to them, reflected a view shared by many unionists: "Every time something comes along it is worse than what came before" (p. 23). Concerning the South African conflict, Mufson (1991) pointed out that when President F. W. de Klerk and his associates realized that "White South Africans' bargaining position would only grow weaker with time" (p. 124), they opened negotiations and made every effort to move as quickly as possible toward an agreement.

In an attempt to mobilize public support for the Israeli–Palestinian peacemaking process, Ehud Olmert, Israel's Prime Minister, said, "If the day comes when the two-state solution collapses and we face a South African-style struggle for equal voting rights . . . then, as soon as that happens, the state of Israel is finished" (Ben, Landau, Ravid, & Rosner, 2007, para. 1). On another occasion he said,

Israel needs to internalize that even its supportive friends on the international stage conceive of the country's future on the basis of the 1967 borders and with Jerusalem divided. . . . If Israel will have to deal with a reality of one state for two peoples . . . [it] could bring about the end of the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. That is a danger one cannot deny; it exists, and is even realistic. (Keinon & Horovitz, 2008, paras. 1 & 4)

Recently this line of thinking was tested experimentally with the Israeli Jewish population. The results clearly showed that exposure to information about losses inherent to the conflict induces a higher willingness to acquire new information about possible solutions to the conflict, a higher willingness to reevaluate current positions about it, and more support for compromises than exposure to neutral information or to information about possible gains derived from a peace agreement (Gayer, Tal, Halperin, & Bar-Tal, 2008).

Similar, although not identical, beliefs about future losses may motivate reevaluation of existing beliefs on the weaker side of a conflict, which is militarily, economically, and politically at a disadvantage. For members of the less advantaged society, cognitive unfreezing can be motivated by a wish to end the losses and suffering. Alternatively, unfreezing can result from believing that in the current stage of the conflict, the gains of a near-term peace agreement are larger than the gains possibly available in the future, after the conflict has continued to deplete resources.

This kind of reasoning was evident in a speech by Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian National Authority, during the Annapolis Conference attended by Palestinian and Israeli leaders in November 2007. Abbas stressed that what Palestinians could get at that time was better than what they could expect to get if the peace process were delayed: "The possibilities offered by today's conference must not be wasted. This window of opportu-
nity might never open again . . . we must not lose this opportunity that might never be repeated” (para. 8). He pointed to the necessity of achieving peace so as to end the Palestinians’ suffering:

This is how we will end occupation and long years of suffering for our refugees . . . to Palestinian mothers who are awaiting the return of their jailed sons; to the children who are dreaming of a new life and a prosperous and more peaceful future; to our brave prisoners and to all of my sons and daughters wherever you are: Have faith in tomorrow and the future because an independent Palestine is coming. (Abbas, 2007, paras. 17 & 27)

COLLATERAL THREATS AND UNACHIEVED GOALS

Another way to unfreeze a culture of conflict is to emphasize imminent threats to society that although unrelated to the conflict itself, may result from continuing the conflict. This places the conflict into a broader perspective and highlights possible collateral damage from the conflict, such as depletion of limited resources that could be used to meet other important goals. An example of such a collateral threat occurred in South Africa. According to Sisk (1989), the rise in the late 1980s of a reactionary right-wing party, the Conservative Party, accelerated the peace process because it forced Whites in general and members of the governing National Party to reassess their views of the conflict and develop an alternative perspective on the apartheid regime. The rise of the new party caused National Party leaders to realize that if they did not act immediately they might lose their long-standing control of the government. This new threat instigated a notable unfreezing of the apartheid policy toward Black South Africans.

In the case of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak used consideration of emerging global threats to convince Israelis of the urgency of achieving a peace agreement, even if they had to make huge compromises. Barak frequently argued that international terrorism, the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, and the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by Islamic countries outweighed any potential Israeli achievements in future negotiations with the Palestinians (Sher, 2001).

PAST AND PRESENT LOSSES

Another method of unfreezing a culture of conflict is to focus on past losses, emphasizing the enormous price that a society involved in the conflict has paid over the years. Often the cost includes an enormous number of deaths—the loss of untold community and family members who can never be brought back to life, a loss for which there is no adequate compensation.
The cost may also be tallied in terms of huge financial investments that have deprived the society of many important contributions to the general welfare (e.g., Swirski, 2005). This may lead to public discussion of how resources invested in the conflict (human, financial, societal, and psychological) could have been invested differently. Such a discussion can cause people to view the continuing conflict as a vain and tragic waste. By themselves, these discussions and debates may not convince people that peace is desirable, but they may motivate them to unfreeze existing beliefs and begin to reevaluate their investments in the conflict.

Discussions of past losses seem to have been among the most important factors in changing the American public’s opinions about the war in Vietnam (Burstein & Freudenburg, 1978). The main theme of antiwar messages by both demonstrators and antiwar politicians was the huge cost of the war, whether calculated in terms of lost lives or lost financial resources (Small, 1987). Similar, though not identical, issues are being raised in the United States by critics of the war in Iraq. At the time of this writing, it is impossible to be certain of the outcome of these discussions, but certainly there has been a notable shift in American public opinion. Although the wars in Vietnam and Iraq may not meet the criteria for “intractable conflicts,” we use them as examples because they illustrate how emphasizing past and continuing costs can destabilize war-related public opinion.

**AWARENESS OF LOSSES ATTRIBUTABLE TO CLOSEDMINDEDNESS**

For both sides of a conflict, becoming aware of the rigidity of one’s own beliefs about a conflict may initiate an unfreezing process. That is, once the members of a society (or at least some of them) begin to recognize their society’s closedmindedness, they may push their fellow citizens to examine alternatives. Frequently this awareness evolves as a consequence of realizing that a war is unnecessary or recognizing a missed opportunity for peace. These are situations in which people begin to acknowledge the costs they have incurred by failing to consider alternatives. Opinion leaders begin to dare to say, “This conflict is unjustified” or “Perhaps we are contributing unreasonably to the continuation of this costly conflict” or “Maybe the other side also has a reasonable case.” This was the stance taken by Senator Barack Obama in the recent American presidential campaign.

Although beliefs about losses and recognition of closedmindedness sometimes emerge from enlightened reflection by a minority of a society’s members, in most cases they are due to a change in the context of the conflict as perceived by most members of society. This change may be a result of fatigue (as when Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said, appearing with then Palestinian leader Yassar Arafat, following peace negotiations in Washington, DC,
"Enough of war"), an increase in human and property losses, continuing violence and stalemate negotiations, or an absence of effective governance. It may be a matter of a sudden, very violent outbreak of full-scale war, a dramatic peace gesture, or a change in the international context. It may come from conciliatory or trust-building actions by the rival or from a change in the rival's leadership that alters appraisals of the rival's character, goals, or intentions. The contextual change that begins an unfreezing process may not be directly related to the conflict (recession, widespread hunger or disease, the appearance on the scene of an even more threatening enemy), but it can cause people to reassess the conflict.

Sometimes a third party may change the conflict context by an intervention. That intervention can take various forms, such as mediation, bombing, sending troops, or even economic boycott. In some cases, the tide-changing event is the arrival of new leaders, a change in the relative dominance of a particular political party, or a major generational change in perspectives or values. Finally, more global geopolitical processes, such as the collapse of a superpower or a change in the global economy, can trigger reappraisals that lead to a major unfreezing of the culture of conflict. Often, the change process requires what we call a mediating belief about the need for change. In the next section, we discuss this important factor in the peacemaking process.

MEDIATING BELIEFS ON THE ROAD TO AN ETHOS OF PEACE

Achieving an ethos of peace may take many years. In the absence of actual peace and reconciliation, the great challenge is to lead a population to the realization that an alternative to the present unsatisfactory situation is badly needed and that previously held beliefs and expectations are invalid. This mediating stage in dissonance arousal and desire for dissonance resolution is an important step on the way to a peaceful solution to a long-standing conflict. It is quite different from the previously reigning culture of conflict, which made victory seem essential and peacemaking seem unthinkable. Once it becomes thinkable, minds are open to evaluate possible alternative strategies.

Mediating beliefs are usually stated in the form of arguments: "We absolutely must change strategy or we are going to suffer further losses;" "Some kind of change is inevitable;" "We have been going down a self-destructive path; we must alter our goals and strategies"; "The proposed change is clearly in the national interest; it is necessary for national security" (Y. Bar-Siman-Tov, 1996). These inducements open a discussion of alternatives and thereby deepen the process of unfreezing that is begun by instigating beliefs.

To be effective in moving the conflict toward resolution, the mediating beliefs must introduce new strategic possibilities around which a new consensus can be built. This process works best when it is coordinated by leaders
on both sides of the conflict. They need to take successive steps to show the
other side that new beliefs are emerging. This can be done by reciprocal acts
of goodwill, meetings between representatives of the two groups, initiation
of cooperative projects, encouraging peace education, and so on (Bar-Tal,
2008).

The full establishment of an ethos of peace and an eventual culture of
peace requires complete cessation of violence, putting into place institutional-
ized mechanisms for resolving disagreements, investing in large-scale peace
education, building cooperative relations in many domains of life (education,
athletics, joint business ventures, and so on), and a continuing series of recip-
rocal acts of friendship that promote trust and sensitivity to both sides’ needs.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

We conclude with a brief description of the cultural repertoire that is
needed to solidify peace. Achievement of reconciliation requires changes in
at least five kinds of societal beliefs that were formed during the conflict
(Bar-Tal, 2000b; Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004). First, the goals of the society
with respect to the conflict (societal beliefs about the group’s goals) must be
revised. In particular, societal beliefs about the justness of the goals that
underlie the conflict must be changed (e.g., Bloomfield, Barnes, & Huyse,
2003). A new set of goals and beliefs about goals is necessary if peace is to be att-
tained. Second, the image of the rival group (societal beliefs about the rival
group) must be changed in ways that legitimize, personalize, differentiate,
and equalize the rival (e.g., Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Theidon, 2006).
Third, the peace process needs to facilitate new beliefs about the formal rela-
tionship with the adversary (societal beliefs about the relationship with the
past rival) that emphasize cooperation and friendship (e.g., Gardner Feldman,
1999). In other words, the deeply rooted zero-sum perception of the conflict
has to be replaced with a mixed-motives approach, which acknowledges the
possibility of win-win and loss-loss situations.

Fourth, a successful peace process requires a change in collective mem-
ories of the conflict (societal beliefs about the history of the conflict). An
example is the way in which former long-standing enemies such as the Brit-
ish and the French or the Germans and the French can eventually have highly
cooperative relations. The narratives on both sides need to be revised and
integrated, a process made easier as one generation gives way to another (e.g.,
Borer, 2006; Nets-Zehngut, 2006; Rothenberg, 2006; Salomon, 2004). Fifth, a
peace process requires new beliefs about the multidimensional nature of peace
(societal beliefs about peace), the conditions necessary for its achievement
(e.g., negotiations, compromises), the real benefits and costs of achieving
peace, the meaning of living in peace, and the conditions for building and
maintaining a culture of peace.

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The peace process must also include the creation of positive emotions on both sides. Fear, anger, and hatred must be largely replaced at least by hope, if not by actual optimism about the future (e.g., Averill, Catlin, & Chon, 1990; Bar-Tal, Halperin, & de Rivera, 2007; Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006). The ethos of peace requires that the fundamental needs of group members on both sides are met. People on both sides need to have confidence that their basic needs for physical and economic security are met; they also need a new positive social identity—one no longer based on stalwart opposition to the former rival. The new ethos must include a new ideology that offers more rewarding, moral, constructive beliefs than the previous ethos. As with the ethos of conflict, however, the ethos of peace may benefit from occasional fear appeals, but now these appeals should focus on the dangers inherent in sliding back toward conflict.

Obviously, making peace is not easy. Despite the strong evidence in other chapters in this volume concerning the human capacity for empathy and prosocial behavior, this capacity has been largely overridden all through human history by fear, conflict, hatred, and violence. Human good cannot flourish in a context of large-scale intergroup aggression and violence. Group behavior operates by different principles than does individual behavior, and it is easier to rally group members for conflict and war than for peace. It will take considerable insight and perseverance to build the conditions necessary for peace, but surely there is no better use of human intelligence and energy.

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