

The Peace Memo

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FRAMING

I was preparing an issue on food and violence when the Republican and Democratic conventions derailed every attempt to focus on the matter at hand. Initially, I listened to coverage of the Republican convention; it was predictable and, to me, not terribly engaging. As usual, the speakers presented a united vision, framed in the same terms; conservatives have shown us all the way in effective framing. But, I felt sad hearing the same policies that have caused such pain around the world and led to such economic stratification laid out as the solution to all our problems. If it hasn't worked in the last thirty years, why will it work now? No one addressed that question.

By the time the Democratic convention started, I was hooked to television coverage. As one amazing speaker followed another. I soon noticed something intriguing: almost every speaker used the same phrases. It was almost as if they'd all used the same speechwriter. That's a stretch, but by Thursday, it was clear that the Democrats were finally clear on their framing. After thirty years of letting the Republicans name issues – “entitlement programs,” “Obamacare,” “educational reform” – the Democrats were finally naming the same services from their own perspective. They reminded listeners that workers pay – in advance – for Social Security and Medicare; these programs are investments that belong to the People. They reminded listeners that government's job is to support public life – with health care and education, for example – from which we all benefit.

The Republican delegates looked good. Lots of suits, dresses, hose and heels, crew cuts and fresh coiffures. On a personal note, I was delighted to see Romney wearing a red tie; I'm so tired of GWB blue! The Democratic delegates, on the other hand looked messy as democracy. Not only was their dress more casual and colorful, their faces were more colorful, too. And it wasn't just the crowd. I cheered inwardly each time

a woman or a Latino speaker took the podium. Several salted their talks with Spanish phrases, not all of which were easily understood by us non-Spanish speakers. It felt revolutionary: people historically relegated to the shadows reaching out to white people with proposals that benefit us all, and saying, “Vamos juntos.”

This is not a political newsletter, so that's enough of that. But what I took away is the power of framing. Words elicit visceral, as well as intellectual, responses. Take, for example some common phrases we hear in daily discourse:

Common Phrase	Another Frame
Prostitute	or Sex trade worker
Unemployed	or Laid off
Illegal alien	or Undocumented person
Job creator	or Business owner
Bailout	or Economic stimulus

And so many more. Language, metaphor, forms our visual thinking, which limits our vision. Think for a moment how much of our framing comes from sport, and how many sports metaphors employ warrior imagery. We commonly frame our discourse to remind ourselves how threatened we felt on September 11, 2001. Legislators foment fearful memories into appropriations for arms at home and abroad, and reductions of civil rights for all citizens.

How do we frame non-violence to convey its complexity and strength? How do power structures frame violence to make it acceptable? As we in Knoxville prepare for our Third Conference on Violence in Knoxville, we might consider constructing strong frames for each of our topics.



GEORGE LAKEOFF

George Lakeoff is an authority on framing. His research covers many areas of Conceptual Analysis within Cognitive Linguistics, including development of a neural theory of grammar. In simpler terms, he studies ways our brain interpret the world and how those interpretations affect our bodies and behaviors.

Pick up almost anything he's written in the last eight years and you will learn framing fundamentals. He sums it up, "About framing: It's normal. Everybody engages in it all the time. Frames are just structures of thought that we use every day. All words in all languages are defined in terms of frame-circuits in the brain. But, ultimately, framing is about ideas, about how we see the world, which determines how we act.

"[Words That Don't Work](#)," from December 2011, offers an accessible example of framing. In discussing the Occupy movement, Lakeoff says, "What has been learned from the brain and cognitive sciences is that words are defined by fixed frames we use in thinking, frames come in hierarchical systems, and political frames are defined in moral terms, where "morality" is very different for conservatives and progressives."

FRAMING PEACE AS VIOLENCE

Writing for the [North American Congress on Latin America](#), Otto Santa Ana provides this very concrete example of using framing to direct public perception.

On May 1, 2007, thousands of Los Angeles residents took to the streets to reprise the massive immigrant rights march that captured the nation's attention a year earlier. The day began with a peaceful march of about 25,000 people in downtown Los Angeles, followed by a smaller afternoon march to MacArthur Park. ...

How did the TV newsrooms represent this important event to the public at a time when the nation's

attention was focused on immigration policy? To find out, my research team and I examined 51 stories about the day's events, broadcast by three national networks and five local L.A. stations. Our study combined three independent approaches: fact-checking (we evaluated the accuracy of the reporting by comparing it to the LAPD account); critical discourse analysis (we focused on the metaphors that anchors and reporters used when they spoke about the social agents involved); and visual semiotics analysis (we interpreted how the newsrooms visually represented the events).

LIFE IS SACRED

Chris Hedges worked for *The New York Times* as a foreign correspondent from 1990-2005. He spent much of that time covering wars in Kosovo, Iraq, and El Salvador. He was member of a *Times* team awarded a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage of terrorism. His first book, [War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning](#), told of how war changed him. Even as a non-combatant, he became addicted to the high adrenaline levels that are part of life in a war zone.

Hedges has experienced war. As a writer, he understands the framing employed to keep citizens enthusiastic about sending young people far from home, to fight such unsubstantial enemies as "terrorism".

Hedges's vision is uncompromising. He is a prophet crying doom. If he weren't such a good writer, one could ignore him. If he hadn't been right so frequently, he would be easy to discount. But he sees truly and describes clearly; his work deserves attention.

Recently, he has found a way to describe a future



– and a path to it – that has drawn me back into his work. “[Life is Sacred](#)” frames our converging crises in a context where renewed purpose and hard work can yet make a difference. The situation is discouraging, but his framing shows us effective ways to respond.

HOW NOT TO PROTEST THE RNC

“When it comes down to it, effective direct action doesn’t lie in tactics that are merely about expressing our minds and making a public spectacle; it is in our ability to organize people to break social scripts.”



OTHER RESOURCES

Framing fascinates me, especially as I become aware of how pervasive it is. Some force – usually political or social – is always trying to rouse my fears of inadequacy, of the future, of the Other. For many years, I ignored it, which has left me way out of the mainstream. That, in turn, makes it hard to find common ground with my neighbors. Recently, I’ve tuned back in, at least enough to have some understanding of what’s going on in the world outside my head. I recommend it, not as an end in itself, but as a community survival technique.

[The FrameWorks Institute](#), which appears to be a liberal think tank whose mission is “...to advance the nonprofit sector’s communications capacity by identifying, translating and modeling relevant scholarly research for framing the public discourse about social problems. ... Current projects focus on such issues as mental health, education, budget and taxes, early childhood development, child nutrition, children’s oral health, and other children’s issues.” They offer a .pdf [Toolkit](#) and “[Framing eWorkshop](#)”. I’m going to spend some time with the workshop.

[The Institute for Community Peace](#) (ICP) is a national organization dedicated to transforming community by changing the structures that cause social problems. Based in Washington, DC, ICP works at the national and local levels. Nationally, we provide tools, trainings and technical assistance to a broad audience of practitioners, funders and policymakers. We also partner with other national non-profit organizations, federal agencies and funders to shift the public dialogue on how we engage social problems. Locally, we partner with communities and funders on a variety of issues to support community health.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu does not use framing in his article in the [Guardian](#) (U.K.), “[Why I had](#)

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[no choice but to spurn Tony Blair](#)". Rather, he simply refuses to accept the commonly accepted framing of Mr. Blair and George W. Bush. He states, "Leadership and morality are indivisible. Good leaders are the custodians of morality. ... If it is acceptable for leaders to take drastic action on the basis of a lie, without an acknowledgment or an apology when they are found out, what should we teach our children?"

NEWS FROM KNOXVILLE

A note from Carrie...

Many of you may know that the Peacebuilding Institute, and its Knoxville affiliate, PIET, have been in a restructuring process since March of this year. As the new director of both organizations, my initial goal in March was to breathe new life into our group and to make PIET more present in the Knoxville community. Since then, we hosted the Second Annual Conference on Violence in Knoxville in May; members of PIET marched in the Knoxville Pride Parade in June; and several of our members attended the Interfaith Service of Healing for the Sikh Community in August. In addition to staying busy with community events, we have also taken time in our monthly discussion group to invest in ourselves and to develop a deeper understanding of peace.

We began reading and discussing Thich Nhat Hanh's *Peace is Every Step* in July, and because it is conveniently separated into three sections, the book served as material for our group through September. I am grateful for this selection as our first discussion material because it provided a foundation for incorporating peace into our individual lives. Though many of us may be social activists, and though we have worked hard at being a visually supportive presence to peace issues here in Knoxville, I think the first step in creating a more peaceful society starts with becoming people of peace. *Peace is Every Step*

takes a very practical approach to this instruction.

We first learned a bit about mindfulness in daily life. We learned ways to breathe, walk, answer the phone, wash the dishes, and wait in traffic, all mindfully. Though they are such simple actions, they have far-reaching effects in teaching us how to navigate daily life without accumulating needless stress and anxiety. Practicing mindfulness as described in *Peace is Every Step* provides a foundation for how to find meaning in otherwise mundane parts of life, thus fostering a deep appreciation for all facets of life.

We also learned that practicing mindfulness has healing and transforming powers. Thich Nhat Hanh teaches us that everyone suffers and that everyone wants to be happy. Just as with daily mindfulness trainings, it sounds so simple, but actually incorporating this idea seems incredibly challenging. Think of how you have suffered in life. I'm sure those thoughts come to us all quickly. After reading *Peace is Every Step*, I think our suffering is so accessible to us because we are intent on holding onto it. We let our suffering define us and how we interact with others. But if we practice mindfulness when we think about our suffering, we may gain some objectivity about it and eventual freedom from it. The nonviolent protesters of the Civil Rights Movement accessed this objectivity; and though they were met with horrific violence and abuse, they never let their suffering define how they would act. They absorbed this suffering and refused to let it pass onto future generations. For this, they serve as an inspiration to us to let go of our suffering, and though we still have much work to do to continue the efforts of the Civil Rights Movement, we have the benefit of their example to teach us. We can stop many cycles of suffering by learning how to engage in life free of suffering's influence. We

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can heal ourselves and transform our society, thereby creating a better future.

Moving from mindfulness and healing, Thich Nhat Hanh's final chapter taught us about reconciliation and the Fourteen Precepts of Interbeing. According to Thich Nhat Hanh, we must acknowledge our part in the suffering we create for ourselves and others, and we must change ourselves to prevent creating more. We must also stay in contact with suffering to bear witness to it and thereby acknowledge it for those who cannot do so for themselves. He gives us the Fourteen Precepts as practical guidelines for living as such. Ending the book with the Fourteen Precepts of Interbeing summarizes much of the book and also provides practical direction for how to actually incorporate mindfulness and healing peace in our lives.

Also, this last chapter provided a wonderful transition into our next book discussion. We are moving on to *The Price of Peace* by James Johnston, which gives a challenging context to our discussion of reconciliation and justice. The book is set in 1998 Northern Ireland just after the Peace Agreement. Though this treaty brought "peace" to Northern Ireland, we will explore how the release of those arrested for crimes committed during the Troubles might influence attempts at reconciliation and the question of justice. We are incredibly fortunate to have the author join us for this discussion, and I wholeheartedly encourage you to be a part of our group in October. We meet the second Sunday of each month from 2-3pm at Church of the Savior's Shalom House, located at 934 N. Weisgarber Rd, Knoxville, TN 37909. To order a copy of Mr. Johnston's book, please visit his website at www.thepriceofpeace.net.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to learn how to be more peaceful as well as a way to engage in the local Knoxville community. I am grateful for the rewarding work we are doing, and I am looking

forward to this new growth in our organizations.

Shalom,
Carrie Mayes San Angelo, Director
Peacebuilding Institute & Peacebuilding Institute
of East Tennessee

[Jim is a local author and owner of [Celtic Cat Publishing](#). He and his wife grew up in Belfast and emigrated in 1974. He will be joining us for some of our discussion.

Newcomers are always welcome. If you are interested in the peace process or in Ulster and the Troubles, please join us in reading this excellent story. --ed.]



The Tennessee Justice Center and Family Voices are working together to educate families about an option for children who have special health care needs. The [Katie Beckett Waiver](#) lets states offer Medicaid for children who have disabilities if it will keep them from going to an institution. It does not count parents' income. Tennessee does not offer the Katie Beckett Waiver. To help bring access to it to Tennessee, meet at the Bearden Branch Public Library on Wednesday, September 19th, 12:00-1:30 PM. RSVP to [Nikki](#) by September 14th, 615-255-0331.

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... AND FROM FARTHER AFIELD

On behalf of the Afghan Peace Volunteers, I'm writing to people who have been in touch with Voices for Creative Nonviolence campaigns over the years.

Afghan Peace Volunteers face grave threats of escalated violence in their country. Most have already experienced traumas of displacement and bereavement. Yet, rather than seek revenge over the deaths of 2 million people in the past four decades of war, the Afghan Peace Volunteers steadfastly insist they want to build 2 million friendships, allied in the cause of seeking a ceasefire and an end to wars in Afghanistan.

Could you kindly help us reach out to people in your network, encouraging them to visit the website? The website www.2millionfriends.org includes a petition we hope you'll sign, and gives information for everyone interested in setting up December 10th (International Human Rights Day) solidarity events in their communities.

Here at the Voices office/home in Chicago we'll be very pleased to remain in touch with you. Please also feel free to contact addresses listed on the website with questions and ideas.

Again, thanks for your friendship and guidance!
Sincerely,
Kathy Kelly

HOUSEKEEPING

We are always looking for news and events from all over. Not only does it inform readers of nearby opportunities, it provides tremendous support by letting us know what our colleagues are doing. So please send stories and calendar items to the editor.

Please consider supporting our work in ways that are appropriate to your location and means. We would

love to have more willing hands. Check the calendar for meetings and events in Knoxville.

You may subscribe to The Peace Memo at our [website](#). If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, you may unsubscribe by sending an email to peacememonewsletter-off@csot.com from your email program. This will automatically unsubscribe you. If for some reason you have problems with this, please send an email to hubbard@csot.com with your name and the email address you want to unsubscribe and it will be removed manually.



(Sr. Corita Kent five-cent postage stamp)

THE SPARROW SINGS

August, 2012

I recently had a discussion with someone who disagreed with my contention that one cannot be a Christian and a millionaire at the same time. I believe that if someone is Christian then s/he cannot but help others in need with any excess wealth s/he has. How can one call oneself a Christian and refuse to give one's surplus wealth to help the billions who struggle to survive due to disasters that lead to starvation, lack of water, sanitation, housing, etc. Most of us have more material wealth than we actually need, but we have great fear that if we give to others we will not have enough means to survive in the future. A Christian or follower of Christ does what Christ instructed. The rich young man was told that if he wants to be a follower of Christ he must sell all he has and give it to the poor. Christ also said that we

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should not worry about what we are to eat, wear, drink, etc since God cares and provides for even the flowers and birds of the earth. The problem is that we fail to believe in Christ's message. We continue to believe we know better than Christ. I believe that one cannot be a Christian and be materially rich. If one follows Christ one will be poor, and be the better for it. One will not fight others to gain more and more wealth for oneself. I believe sharing one's bounty with those in need is the secret to being happy. That is why Christ told us, "Blessed are the poor..." not blessed are the rich ---Don Timmerman

"Love your enemies. Put up your sword. Do good to those who hate you. Pray for those who mistreat you. Turn the other cheek. Whatever you do to the least you do to me. Be merciful as your Father/Mother in heaven, who make the sun rise on the bad and the good and causes rain to all on the righteous and unrighteous. What else could Jesus, the Word (logos) of god, truthfully say about Himself other than, 'I have to bring not peace, but the sword.' (Mt. 10:34) Christian just war theory in all its variegate and mutant forms and manifestations (e.g. Si vis pacem, para bellum, If you want peace prepare for war) is exactly the wanted human untruth the Nonviolent Jesus of the Gospels, the Word (Logos) of God, puts the two edged sword of the unwanted Divine Truth to....

Killing a human being, legally or illegally, was not only a grave evil in original Christianity but also an excommunicable offense with no possibility of re-admittance to the church, until the year 265 AD.....and then, only after years of public penance....How many Christian cathedrals, parish churches, schools have a statue, a monument or a place set aside to remember the Christians of that Christian Community who were conscientious objectors to war? I have probably seen thousands of memorials in Churches or on the property of Christian cathedrals, churches and schools that are dedicated to remembering, in general or in

particular, Christians who went to kill in wars.".
--E.C. McCarthy

NOTES FROM 21ST STREEET: It is the end of summer. Don and I spent the last two weeks in northern Wisconsin. We picked blackberries in the national forest. The beautiful dark purple berries are protected by sharp thorns. We came out scratched, but happy, with our harvest. In the middle of winter when we sprinkle blackberries on our cereal memories of a warm, late summer day will float back to us. The loons were singing out on the lake at about 4 AM. each morning. The first night their call woke me from a deep sleep. It took a moment for my mind to register what I was hearing. I felt a deep sense of contentment, and with a smile on my lips fell back to sleep. As the wind sung softly through the pine trees there was a feeling of change. There was a sense of fall in the air. Goldenrod and fall asters were blooming throughout fields and roadways. There seemed a lessening of birdsong and bees. The loon swam out on the lake, and occasionally a dragonfly flew by. There is a certain stillness that comes with the changing of the seasons. I sensed the change acutely. I pray that we all have a chance to reflect on the changing seasons both in nature and in our lives.

Peace, Roberta

THE SPARROW SINGS
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