

INNER PEACE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

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An understanding of self as a relationship makes it possible to apply the basic concepts and methods of conflict resolution and transformation to inner conflict. This understanding allows us to view inner conflict as a normal and natural part of human experience that can be dealt with in constructive as well as destructive ways. Active listening skills can be employed to identify the symptoms of inner conflict, the underlying emotional dynamics, and the typical strategies that are employed to deal with inner conflict. Interest-based negotiation with self can be employed to analyse rigidities in our attitudes toward self in terms of positional thinking in relationship to self and identity, and in terms of the needs and interests underlying these positions. Finally, further reflection on the nature of basic human needs in relationship to self and identity can provide the means to address the most deep-rooted of inner conflicts.

It is widely believed that peaceful relations in the international sphere, in intergroup relations, as well in interpersonal relationships must begin with a level of peaceful relationship with self, or intrapersonal peace. However, very little work has been done in the field of peace and conflict studies to address the resolution and transformation of conflict at the intrapersonal level. This paper sets out directions for the study of inner peacefulness drawing on central concepts from peace and conflict studies as well as a range of resources from psychological, sociological, philosophical, and spiritual perspectives. These provide the basis for an understanding of self as a relationship, which in turn makes it possible to apply the basic concepts and methods of conflict

PEACE RESEARCH

The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies

Volume 46, Number 2 (2014): 31-49

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