

# A Peacemaking Model

© 2002 Ron Claassen

Adapted from a Presentation by Ron Claassen  
The Power of Encounter  
Restorative Justice Conference  
Justice Fellowship, Washington D.C.  
Feb. 19, 1999

## INTRODUCTION

When I use the word "peace" in this article I am thinking of the Hebrew word *Shalom*. Peace-*Shalom* means much more than the absence of war. It is the kind of peace that exists because there are "right relationships," not because each is afraid to strike first because of what the other might be able to do to harm them. I also think we cannot work at *shalom*-making without addressing concerns for justice. And when I refer to justice I am not thinking primarily of procedural justice but of "making things as right as possible" in a very broad sense and not confined to legal justice.

Peacemaking is necessary because of the problem of injustice and violation. To work at peacemaking in this context one must address the question, is it ever possible for an injustice to no longer continue to have a negative impact on a relationship?

I have observed some people responded to an injustice in very constructive ways. Sometimes when they responded this way, not only did the injustice not lead to another injustice, they also moved to the place where it was no longer a barrier to a civil relationship and occasionally they moved to a caring relationship. These stories made me wonder if I could identify a pattern.

My hope was that if a pattern could be identified in stories of reconciliation, that pattern could then be utilized to assist people, who have experienced an injustice between them, in searching for how to make things as right as possible between them. The pattern that I have observed I have condensed into what I call *A Peacemaking Model*. The earliest versions date back to 1985. Appendix A is a copy of a version of the Peacemaking Model as it was in 1985. Appendix B is a copy of the Peacemaking Model dated 1996 and is the one I am using currently.

A model, like a mathematical formula or proof, is most helpful when it is simple yet represents a very big and complex reality. A model is valuable not because it is some new reality but because it describes a complex experience in a condensed form to help people remember, think, feel, analyze and dialogue about insights and intuitions.

The Peacemaking Model emerged from observations of Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) cases, from listening to many other stories of reconciliation, and from the stories and teachings about peacemaking from my faith tradition. In this paper I will be describing the first two with only brief references to my

faith perspective and for the purpose of describing comparative language. In a companion paper (A Peacemaking Model: A Biblical Perspective) I will more fully describe how my faith perspective informs my understanding of *shalom*-making. While the language in the faith tradition is different, the basic elements of peacemaking, I will be suggesting, are the same. I make no assumptions regarding the faith position of the reader. I am hopeful that the papers will stimulate a dialog comparing and contrasting core values and how they relate to one's perspective on peacemaking.

### **OBSERVING VORP CASES AND LISTENING TO STORIES**

In 1982, I helped found a Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) in Fresno, California. I was part-time director of VORP until November of 1999 and continue involvement in a variety of ways. Fresno VORP trains volunteers from the community who meet first with the offender and then with the victim and if both are willing to come together to search for a constructive way of dealing with the offense, the mediator helps arrange and then facilitates a meeting. Our mediators use the Peacemaking Model to guide them in their work. Because of VORP in Fresno County, between 1982 and 1999, approximately 36,200 people participated in a VORP Peacemaking Process.

The following are just two of the thousands of amazing and wonderful stories that have happened in Fresno County since the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) was established in 1982.

One teenage girl stole another's purse. It turned out there wasn't much money in the purse but the victim's sense of violation was intense and the animosity it created between them was seriously escalating. The Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) was asked to work with them. In separate meetings with each of the girls the mediator listened to their experiences and invited each to consider meeting with the other, with the help of the mediator, for the purpose of trying to "make things as right as possible." They each agreed. Each told how they experienced the event, the other summarized, they discussed what they could do to make things as right as possible between them, and they developed a plan to improve their relationship. Agreements were written and signed and a follow-up meeting was scheduled. In the follow-up meeting they acknowledged that their agreements were kept. The girls and their families and friends were relieved and happy with the outcome.

Two boys were upset with their school for ending a sports program that was very important to them. They went to their principal's home with a pipe bomb. The principal heard something, went out to investigate, didn't see a problem and had just gone back into the house when the bomb exploded. The force of the bomb broke two windows and sent a rose bush onto their neighbor's roof. The principal might have been killed or seriously injured if he had been outside. The boys were identified and admitted what they had done. VORP was contacted and after separate meetings led a series of meetings with as many as twenty people involved. The boys acknowledged what they had done and listened intently to the principal and his wife describe their experience and intense feelings, at the time of the bombing and up to the point of the meeting. The whole group

discussed what could be done to repair the damage and demonstrate the boy's commitment to a constructive future. They also discussed the reasons for the cancellation of the sports program. Mutually acceptable agreements were written and follow-up meetings were scheduled. Over the years and as the agreements were kept, all parties reported a high degree of satisfaction with the process and outcome.

While I observed many cases with similar positive results, not all cases were as positive. A concern I had was that simply encouraging an encounter or even arranging an encounter does not necessarily mean it will be constructive!  
You may have seen this Peanuts cartoon:

In the first frame Linus is walking away from Lucy who is exclaiming in a loud voice,  
*“Sure, that’s right! Just walk out of the room!”*

In the next two frames Lucy continues,  
*“You know what your trouble is?”*  
*“You can’t take destructive criticism.”*

In my years of working with the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program I looked for what it was that increased the likelihood that an encounter was a constructive one. Perhaps because in my first career I was a mathematics teacher, I began searching for patterns among those cases that ended with a high degree of reconciliation. And, I thought I could see a pattern emerging.

While VORP represented a particular type of conflict, it seemed to me that another way to search for a pattern would be to ask people some questions and listen to their stories. “Have you ever had an experience where something happened to damage your relationship with someone badly and later that relationship was restored? Would you be willing to tell me what happened to make that possible?” I have listened to many wonderful stories. As I listened, a pattern similar to the VORP pattern emerged. The story that best illustrates the pattern is from Johnny.

Johnny was part of a summer peacemaking camp. All of the kids at this camp had lost a sibling or in some way had been deeply injured by gang violence. Johnny was 11 years old. Nancy, the leader of the camp who had invited me to join them one morning, said I could start by asking these questions. “Have you ever had an experience where something happened to damage your relationship with someone and then later that relationship was good? Would you be willing to tell me what happened to make that possible?” Johnny raised his hand enthusiastically.

This is his story:

*My brother was gone for the weekend to San Francisco.  
My friends and I went into his room. We were not supposed to.  
We just had fun at first but then we trashed it and broke his boom box.  
When he got home, he was really mad.  
But, he didn’t hit me.  
He wanted to know if I did it?  
I told him my friends and I did it.*

*He wanted to know if my friends and I would clean it up?  
I told him we would.  
He wanted to know if I would fix the boom box?  
I told him we would.  
He wanted to know if the next time he was gone, if we would stay out of his room?  
We told him we would.  
We cleaned his room, fixed the boom box, and have stayed out of his room, and everything is cool.*

For the rest of the morning, Johnny and I worked together (as mediators) using his brother's pattern to help the others solve problems they made up and role-played.

I really like Johnny's story because it is so elegant and simple yet so clearly illustrates a pattern.

### **IDENTIFYING A PATTERN**

The pattern Johnny's story illustrates has five parts.

#### **Part 1 - A Commitment to be Constructive**

Johnny's brother decided to be constructive with him even when he wasn't yet sure if Johnny would be constructive.

Fisher and Brown of the Harvard Negotiation Project suggest that one will be most effective when adopting a commitment to an unconditionally constructive strategy. "Do only those things that are both good for the relationship and good for us, whether or not they reciprocate."<sup>1</sup> In Biblical language this kind of decision and action is called *love-agape* (one of the Greek words that is translated into the English word love). It is best defined in the Christian Bible in I Cor. 13: 4-7. I think it is best understood as movement along a continuum (very destructive to very constructive) onto the constructive side and towards the very constructive end.

This commitment to be constructive has to start with someone. Someone has to at least consider the idea that it is possible to respond to an injustice in a way that is constructive, and that doesn't just perpetrate another injustice. That means someone has to take the initiative by making a decision to be constructive even though what was done to them was not constructive. Once one makes this decision, the next step is to make the invitation to the other(s). At the time the invitation is offered, one can never know how the other person(s) will respond. In VORP, the first invitation usually comes from the VORP mediator who meets individually with the victim and offender to listen to their experience, to describe the VORP (Peacemaking Model) process, and to extend an invitation. The Fresno VORP experience is that about 80% of victims and 80% of offenders are willing to accept an invitation to enter a VORP process with an intention to be constructive.

---

<sup>1</sup> Roger Fisher and Scott Brown, *Getting Together: Building Relationships As We Negotiate*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 38

It is important to emphasize that this intention to be constructive doesn't mean overlooking the damage and hurt caused by the offense. Actually, it seems that when both victim and offender decide to be constructive they are both more free to fully describe and understand what happened, the damage, the hurt, and its ongoing impact.

The first part in the pattern (both in stories I heard and in VORP cases) is that those encounters that move in the direction from "things being bad in the relationship to things being good" include at least one of the persons in the conflict acting in constructive ways, even when what happened between them was not constructive. Then, someone offers an invitation, and the others decide to join in a constructive process. For most who have been injured, this means turning from wanting to hurt or avoid the other to wanting to deal constructively with the offense. The timing depends on the parties.

Some refer to this movement from wanting to hurt to being constructive as forgiveness but I prefer to think of this as a commitment to be constructive or as *agape*-love, the first step in the peacemaking process. David Augsburger emphasizes the difference between love-*agape* and forgiveness, how we often interchange them. He emphasizes how helpful it is when we are more careful in how we use them. "Love is a part of forgiveness, the first and basic part."<sup>2</sup>

This first part in the pattern is illustrated in Johnny's story when Johnny said his brother was really mad, "but he didn't hit me. He wanted to know if I did it. And I said, 'my friends and I did it.'" His brother was really mad but his actions were constructive. His brother offered Johnny an invitation to be constructive. Then, Johnny also decided to be constructive, and that created a safe space for them to recognize the injustice and violation.

## **Part 2 - Recognizing the Injustice**

This second part of the pattern, *Recognizing the Injustice*, can happen in many different ways and the time required for this part varies greatly. In some cases it happens quickly and in others it may take a long time. In some cases it happens directly and in some cases it happens in less direct ways or even in intentionally indirect ways.

In our VORP, this part of the process generally means having both or all parties describe their experience and having the other(s) listen and summarize. I do not generally recommend having the mediator do the summary. The reason for this is so each person knows that the other(s), the one(s) who they really wanted to hear and understand, really heard and understood what was said. The summary continues until the speaker says to the person summarizing, "yes, that is what I said." When this summary is left out people tell us they wonder if the other(s) really heard. It is one thing to speak in the presence of those other(s), but what is really more important is to know that the other(s) have really heard. This part of the process is often very painful and brings tears, even in cases that are generally described as minor offenses.

---

<sup>2</sup> David Augsburger, *Caring Enough To Forgive, Caring Enough To Not Forgive* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1981) pp. 26-27.

For example: Mary's purse had been stolen while she was working at the library. Jeremy, a 17 year old, pretty tough looking guy, was the one who took her purse. They agreed to meet at the library, where the offense happened. There were about 15 people present including a probation officer, a police officer, and I was privileged to be one of two mediators. When we got to the *Recognizing the Injustice* part of the meeting, I asked Jeremy to tell what he had done and Mary volunteered to summarize. When he was done, it was Mary's turn. She started crying before she even started speaking. Then she said, "I felt so foolish for having so much money in my purse. I had that much money because my husband had been laid off work and we were trying to save a few pennies by delivering the money for the bills rather than mailing checks." Later in her description she said, "What really hurt was that I trusted you to come behind the counter when you asked to get a drink. But what you did back there was to steal my purse, you *violated* me!" Now it was Jeremy's turn to summarize. He also had some tears as he began the summary. And when he got to the part about the violation, tears were flowing freely. Finally he managed to say it, "and you said, I *violated* you." Mary immediately got up and took him some tissues.

This second part of the process or pattern, *Recognizing The Injustice*, is the part when all of the parties describe their experiences and feelings and have them recognized by the other(s). Bishop Tutu, as Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, says that telling of the experiences was an essential part in moving toward forgiveness and that without forgiveness there would be no future. He said that to accept national amnesia would in effect victimize the victims of apartheid a second time around.<sup>3</sup> In Biblical language I call this part confession.

In Mary and Jeremy's story when I asked if the injustices had been recognized, Jeremy's uncle said that he had one more that he wanted recognized. He turned to Jeremy and said, "We have been fishing at least ten times since this happened, and you had not told me until you invited me to this meeting." For the relationships damaged by this incident to be repaired, it was also necessary for this injustice to be recognized and repaired.

One who is using this Peacemaking Model process as a guide will know it is time to move on to the other parts of the process when everyone agrees that the injustices and violations have been recognized.

### **Part 3 - Restoring Equity**

In Johnny's story, once the injustice was recognized, the next part was to repair the damage as much as possible. Johnny and his brother decided it would help if Johnny and his friends would clean up the room and fix the broken boombox.

This third part I refer to as *Restoring Equity*. In stories where relationships move from being damaged to where things are good, something is done to restore equity as much as possible.

---

<sup>3</sup> Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999) p. 29.

As in Johnny's story, *Restoring Equity* is usually a combination of restitution, something the offender can do, and grace, the "letting go" part by the victim. Restoring Equity could be all grace but usually is some combination of restitution and grace. In Johnny's story, it was probably 95% restitution (cleaning the room and repairing the boombox) and 5% grace (the inconveniences and other intangibles). At least the way Johnny told the story, it appeared that the "grace" portion was relatively small and because of the way Johnny was responding, it appeared to be quite easily and quickly extended. We would have to ask his brother to know for sure. In some offenses this grace portion might take a long time and often depends at least in part on how the offender is responding. The grace portion is completely up to the victim(s).

In Mary and Jeremy's story, after the violations and injustices had been recognized and as the tears were being dried, Jeremy was anxious to apologize very specifically for what he had done. It was also obvious to everyone that restitution was needed and that it should include all of the actual expenses like replacing the drivers' licenses and all of the penalties that were assessed due to the late payments, etc. Everyone also acknowledged that this restitution would not cover everything because there were many intangibles but Mary said that if Jeremy paid the agreed upon restitution, she would be ready to let go of the rest of it (grace).

In many VORP cases involving minor property offenses the movement from one part of the process to the next happens quite quickly and the entire time spent is relatively small when one considers the huge movement in relationships. Often preparation meetings between the mediator and each side only take 15 - 30 minutes and most joint meetings only take 1-2 hours. In cases involving more serious offenses each part usually takes longer and in some cases much longer. In one case involving a wrongful death I have been meeting with them occasionally, at their invitation, for more than six years.

A Biblical story that was recently on the cover of Time magazine, illustrates all of the parts in the pattern. Each part took a very long time (most of a life-time). The story is of Joseph and his brothers in the Book of Genesis (writings valued by Jews, Muslims, and Christians). Although his brothers had seriously violated Joseph, he decided to be constructive with them. It took a long time for the injustice to be recognized and for Joseph to decide that he was ready to extend this grace portion. It wasn't until after significant time and testing of the genuineness of his brothers that Joseph was ready to offer this "grace" portion.<sup>4</sup>

Some refer to this "letting go" or "grace" as forgiveness. I prefer to call this grace and reserve the word forgiveness for what they discover after they complete the process. The language I prefer using for naming this combination of restitution and grace is *Restoring Equity*. The biblical word I use is atonement.

In serious injustice stories the order of the third and fourth parts is often reversed. In an abuse of power situation I worked with in an organization, the victim said, after the injustice was recognized, "It feels so good to have the violations and injustices

---

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 45: 1-15

recognized. I'm not sure if I am ready to restore equity yet. I think it would be helpful if we could clarify the future intentions, including accountability structures, first. Then, if we can resolve that satisfactorily, I think I might be ready to return to the idea of restoring equity."

#### **Part 4 - Clarifying Future Intentions**

In Johnny's story, the fourth part of the process was to make an agreement about not going into his brother's room and messing it up again.

Agreements *Clarifying Future Intentions* are designed to prevent repeating the offense or injustice. In some VORP cases, especially where people know each other, this part also includes a discussion of how they intend to relate in the future. *Clarifying Future Intentions* helps with (re)integration. Johnny's brother wanted to know if Johnny had changed. He wanted to know if he would do it again and Johnny assured him of his intentions.

In Jeremy and Mary's story the *Clarifying Future Intentions* agreements included a sincere statement from Jeremy that he would not do it again. He also agreed to get a job to earn the money to repay the lost money plus penalties due to late payments (a teacher at the meeting agreed to help him with applications, etc.), to go fishing with his uncle, to be more accountable for his time with his parents, and a few other agreements. Everyone in the meeting agreed that if these agreements were kept, the incident could be put behind them and not continue to cloud their relationships.

In all stories I hear where there is the movement from things being bad to things being good, there is some focus on *Clarifying Future Intentions*. It usually relates to some changes that have already occurred or a verifiable plan that will provide some assurance that the violation will not be repeated. It also relates to their future relationship and might be as simple as how they will address each other if they meet somewhere by chance.

This fourth part of the process, *Clarifying Future Intentions*, includes *turning* to do things in a different way in the future. It means changing the way things were done in the past so that the violation or injustice will not happen in the future. This *turning* is similar to the meaning of the biblical word, repentance.

In some VORP cases or stories of reconciliation, as I mentioned before, the order between clarifying the intentions and restoring equity is reversed and in some situations work is done simultaneously on these parts. What I observe is that when people who have decided to be constructive have experienced the three core elements of the process in some order: the injustices have been recognized, equity restored as much as possible, and the future intentions are clear, the relationship between them is considerably different. Some say, "We didn't use the word forgiveness yet but I feel as if that is what has happened." It is often a time for celebration. But the pattern is still not finished. There is one more important part.

## **Part 5 - Follow-up and Accountability**

Johnny ended his story with, “and we did all of the things we agreed to do and now everything is cool.” Johnny did not end his story with the agreements that were made. He knew intuitively that, for them to get to the place where things were good again between himself and his brother, keeping the agreements that had been made was essential.

The fifth part of the pattern is *Follow-up and Accountability*. In stories where things that were once bad are good, agreements that have been made have been kept and have been acknowledged as having been kept.

In the story of Jeremy and Mary, Jeremy's father had written a check to Mary at the meeting for the portion Jeremy owed with the understanding that when Jeremy had earned that amount, it would be given to the priest for some charity to be decided upon at the follow-up meeting. At the follow-up meeting the agreement was read and then an account was made of what had been completed. Jeremy reported on what he had done to fulfill the agreement including that he was now employed at a local grocery store. As agreed, he gave the priest the money equal to his portion of the restitution (the same amount his father had given to Mary at the meeting). The priest then asked Mary if she had received the other portion from the other offender who had been sent through the court system and not referred to VORP. She said that restitution had been ordered but she had not received it or heard anything more about it. The priest suggested that the money be given to her rather than to some charity in order that she would receive the full amount she had lost. Everyone agreed. When everyone acknowledged that all of the agreements that had been made had been kept, there was a spontaneous celebration.

I worked with one VORP case that included the offender's four uncles. In the first follow-up meeting, one of the uncles said, "He hasn't kept the agreement. I think we should ask the court to take over." Another uncle said, "He kept part but not all of the agreement. I think we should celebrate the part he kept and ask him why he hasn't kept the other part." We did that and a new agreement was developed with increased accountability. Each of the next four meetings followed almost the same routine. At the fifth meeting, we celebrated that the agreements were now all being kept.

I have observed that stories that leave out the follow-up part don't experience as much movement from things being bad towards things being good. This seems to be true in both serious and minor offenses.

## **SUMMARY OF THE PATTERN**

I have used Johnny's story to illustrate five parts of A Peacemaking Model. Parts 2, 3, and 4 are the core elements in what I have often referred to as a three-part process. But I am convinced that they are most helpful when parts 1 (preparation) and 5 (follow-up) surround them, as illustrated in Johnny's story.

As I also mentioned before, if in stories of reconciliation we see these patterns, it also seems logical that they can provide direction and guidance for people searching for

ways to make peace between them. In the summary below, I will make some suggestions regarding how to utilize the Peacemaking Model as a guide but I will leave it to another article to describe, in detail, a step-by-step process which I call Reconciling Injustices.

**Part 1. Commitment to be Constructive:** The Peacemaking Model process usually starts when at least one of the parties makes a commitment to be constructive, even though the other(s) may not yet be constructive and even though it is clear that what was experienced was not constructive. The others are invited and decide if they are willing to enter the process with a commitment to be on the constructive side of the continuum. When this happens it creates a safe place for three core elements.

**Part 2. Recognize the Injustice:** When people have decided to be constructive, they are more able to fully describe and really listen to experiences of violation and injustice. It is important that all parties have the opportunity to have their experiences recognized by the one(s) they want to be sure have heard and understood. The question needs to be asked as often as necessary until all say yes, "have all of the injustices been recognized?" Additional opportunities should be given as needed to clarify until all are satisfied that their experiences related to the injustices or violations have been recognized. There are many ways to do this and some, as I have described above are very direct and some are indirect. Facts and feelings are both important.

**Part 3. Restore Equity:** Having listened to what happened and how it was experienced by each person, it is often clear what is needed to make things as right as possible now. Sometimes the future must be clarified (part 4) before one is ready to work on restoring equity and sometimes clarifying the future is part of Restoring Equity. An apology specifically related to the described injustice is often included in this part. Restoring Equity is usually a combination of restitution (something the offender can do toward repairing the damage) and grace (letting go of what has been viewed as being owed, perhaps the intangible portion). Equity is restored as much as possible when the victim and offender mutually agree that there is nothing more that can or needs to be done. Sometimes the level of sincerity of the offender in the other parts of the process affects the grace portion for the victim. Sometimes the grace portion happens over time as agreements are kept.

**Part 4. Clarifying Future Intentions:** This is the part where agreements are made to clarify how things will be different in the future so that the experiences of violation and injustice will not be repeated and so the relationships will at least be civil. No one ever knows for sure what all should be included but this is where a serious attempt is made to clarify as much detail as is needed for all parties to feel reasonably sure that the future will be better. In addition, most agreements include the recognition that there may be a need to modify these agreements in the future if it is discovered in the follow-up and accountability part of the process that the original agreements aren't working as they were envisioned. I encourage writing agreements to avoid future confusion which can lead to new conflicts about what was agreed to.

**Part 5. Follow-up and Accountability:** When agreements have been made, it is helpful to have follow-up meetings to recognize that they have been kept or to modify them if they are not working. In this part of the process the agreements that were made are reviewed and each person has a chance to indicate if they think everyone has been keeping the agreements. It means that each person has agreed to be accountable. If agreements have been kept it is time to celebrate and/or set up additional follow-up meetings until everyone is comfortable that they are not needed. If agreements have not been kept, this is the time to explore why, recognize the violations if any, restore equity as much as possible, and make new or additional agreements to clarify the future. Follow-up meetings should be scheduled as needed until everyone is reasonably comfortable that the agreements have been kept or are working. One agreement that is often included is that when no additional follow-up meetings are scheduled and if one of the parties feels that agreements are not being kept, another follow-up meeting will be scheduled. This is real accountability and it is in this context that trust grows. When agreements are made and kept, trust grows. If people are unwilling to make agreements or if agreements are made and not kept, trust goes down.<sup>5</sup>

## THE PEACEMAKING MODEL

One of the problems of writing this peacemaking pattern as a five-part process is that one might assume it is a linear pattern or process. In addition, from the stories and from my description of each part of the pattern one might assume that each part must be completed before moving on to the next part. While this is often the case, it is also frequently the case that one or more of parts is incomplete until one or more of the others has been completed. The order I used was the order identified by Johnny's story. While most stories I have listened to include these five parts, the order of the parts has varied from story to story. The model that follows makes the elements look a little less linear.

Another problem in writing this pattern is that the descriptions and illustrations of each part may give the impression that there is only one way to do each part of the pattern. I believe that there are as many ways to do each part as there are conflicts that people are willing to work on together.

Please refer to the Peacemaking Model in Appendix B. You will see the words, *Love (agape)*, *Valuing*, *Caring*, and *Commitment to be Constructive* on the outside circle. *One Way* indicates that each person can make this decision independently. Constructive action by at least one of the persons is needed to get the process started. This is the preparation part. Inside the circle it says that *Forgiveness is the Mutual Recognition that Injustices Are Recognized*, that *Equity Is Restored* and that the *Future Intentions Are Clear*. Some look at the diagram and think that it means that forgiveness happens and then there is a mutual recognition of the three core elements. But that is not what I am trying to convey. Rather, I am saying that **forgiveness is discovered** when there is *Mutual Recognition (Two Way)* that these three parts are completed. Below the circle you will see "*When Agreements are Made and Kept, Trust Grows.*" This is the follow-up and accountability part of the process.

---

<sup>5</sup> Claassen, Ron. "Trust Building," *VORP News*. March 1992

The words love-*agape*, forgiveness and trust are important words to me, which I chose to include in the Peacemaking Model. In describing the pattern earlier, I did not use these words often and then not without clarifying what I meant by them. These words mean many different things to different people. Below is a brief attempt to clarify what I am thinking when I use them in the model. In a companion article, "A Peacemaking Model, A Biblical Perspective" I provide additional detail.

**Love-*agape*:** When I use the word love in The Peacemaking Model I am referring to the Greek word *agape*, which is one of three Greek words that get translated in the English word love. The Greek word *agape* means something very similar to a commitment to be constructive. It does not mean having warm feeling for the other but often includes valuing and caring about the other. *Agape* is a commitment each one makes on their own. This is why the words "one way" are included with the word love-*agape*. I use the word love in the model because it is Love-*agape* (a commitment to be constructive) that creates the safe space that makes it possible to do the hard work of forgiveness.

**Forgiveness:** What I hear is that when people experience all of the parts of this pattern, they say they discover forgiveness. The more thoroughly they experience each part of the pattern, the more they experience forgiveness. It is much more than a pronouncement and it is experienced most clearly when the offender and the one who was offended, after significant preparation, "return to contact, to dialogue, to confrontation with caring..."<sup>6</sup> In this process of forgiveness, they make agreements.

**Trust:** When people make agreements between them trust begins to grow. When they keep the agreements that have been made, trust grows even more. When someone is unwilling to make agreements with another trust diminishes. If agreements are made but one side doesn't keep them, trust diminishes. It is very predicable. Finally, it is when the agreements that have been made are kept and acknowledged as having been kept by all parties that the trust increases most dramatically.

## EXTENDING APPLICATION OF THE MODEL

I chose to use clear victim/offender conflicts in most of my examples because it is from these examples that the pattern has emerged most clearly. I think this is because a victim/offender conflict, where the offender says, "I am the one who did it" and the "victim is the one who was offended" is what I call a half of a usual conflict. In most conflicts each side feels like they are the victim and the other the offender. Each may or may not recognize their part on the offending side. Both of these factors (not a clear victim and offender, and perhaps neither accepting responsibility for offending the other) make a situation more complex. But the pattern is equally effective in complex conflicts.

In a mutual battery case with two teenage girls the conflict had been escalating for over five years. A boyfriend on one side and a brother on the other had become involved and were threatening each other. The parents on both sides described the situation in very seriously escalating language. One parent said, "That girl and her boyfriend had

---

<sup>6</sup> David Augsburger, *Helping People Forgive* (Louisville, Westminster John Know Press, 1996), p. 71.

better not come by here if they know what is good for them, you know what I mean?" Each said they could be constructive but doubted if the other could so they weren't sure there would be any value in meeting. After focusing with each on their commitment to be constructive, we decided to meet. In the presence of the boyfriend, the brother and both sets of parents, we agreed to identify one injustice at a time, one from one and then one from the other. We then worked through the three core elements of the pattern (recognizing the injustice, restoring equity, and clarifying the future) with each and ended up with three full pages of agreements. Everyone signed the agreement. The follow-up meetings indicated that the agreements were kept, the conflict ended, each was greatly relieved, and a civil relationship developed.

It has been very exciting to hear how others have utilized the model and the examples are many but I will include just two.

Example One: At a seminar after I introduced the Peacemaking Model a participant said he had been introduced to the model before and wanted to share a recent experience. I made some plans that affected my wife and I hadn't consulted her. When she found out she was very upset and let me know. I listened. I decided not to defend myself but to confess my error. I recognized the injustice, I apologized, and I offered to renegotiate the plans, preferably while eating ice cream at her favorite ice cream shop, a fun restitution for both of us. She appreciated my confession, accepted my apology, and agreed to going to the ice cream shop to renegotiate our plans. It worked for both of us. In the past, an incident like this might have led to days of very uncomfortable silence and another stored up injustice.

Example two: At another seminar, during the break a woman approached me and told me about her experience with the Peacemaking Model. "My brothers and sisters and I never went home to visit with our parents at the same time because if we did it always ended in a fight. To the surprise of all of us, we all received a letter from our father inviting us to come home on the same weekend. He said that he had been at a Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) training and had been introduced to a Peacemaking Model. He wanted us to try it out. I guess we all wanted to be constructive. We all showed up and he asked us all to sit in the living room. He introduced the Peacemaking Model and said we need to start somewhere and turned to me and asked if I would be willing to share one of the injustices that I was holding against him or one of my siblings. I started with one that was not too big and it worked. We kept going around the circle all day. Our family is now getting together on special occasions without it ending in a big fight. Although we still have some work to do, we are making great progress. Thanks for the model."

## CONCLUSION

My hope is that *A Peacemaking Model* will contribute to the dialog about how we respond to injustices and violations? My hope is that this model will encourage and assist peacemaking efforts in our homes, communities, schools, faith communities,

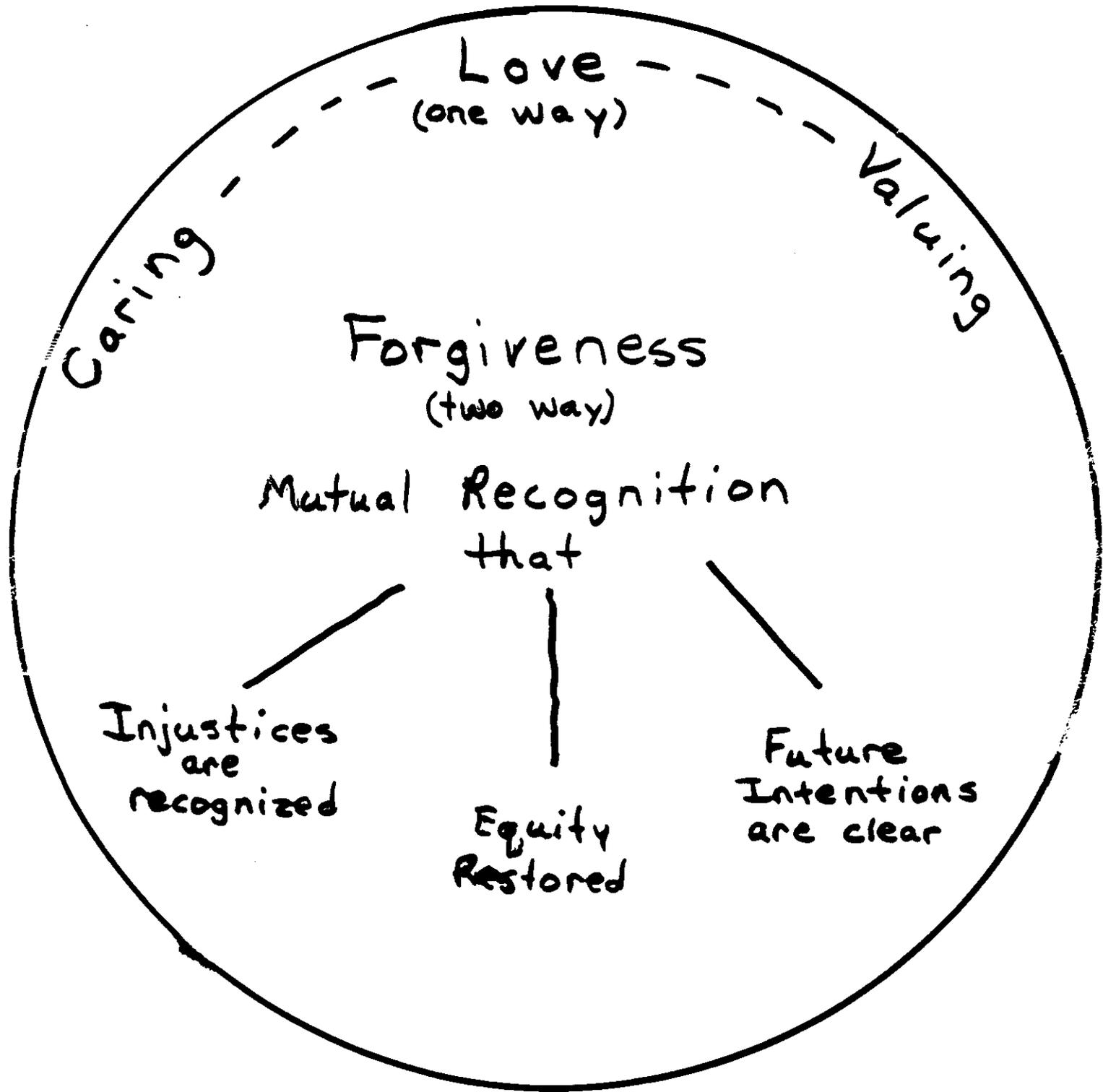
criminal justice systems, and even in our international relationships. While individual efforts for peace and justice are essential, organizational system changes that incorporate opportunities for peacemaking are also essential. If your community does not have a VORP, I would encourage you to start one. If your schools are responding to injustice and violations only with punishment, I would encourage you to introduce a peer mediation program and Discipline that Restores. It would be helpful for all organizations to examine their grievance systems and be sure they include opportunities for peacemaking.

For training and technical assistance contact the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies at 1-800-909-VORP or [pacs@fresno.edu](mailto:pacs@fresno.edu) and please visit our web site at <http://www.fresno.edu/pacs/>. The companion article, "A Peacemaking Model: A Biblical Perspective" can be found at <http://www.fresno.edu/pacs/docs/model.shtml>.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Augsburger, David. *Caring Enough To Forgive, Caring Enough To Not Forgive*. Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1981.
- Augsburger, David. *Helping People Forgive*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
- Bush, Robert. *The Promise of Mediation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.
- Claassen, Ron and Reimer, Dalton. "Basic Institute in Conflict Management and Mediation - A Manual," Fresno: Center for Conflict Studies and Peacemaking, 1992.
- Fisher, Roger and Brown, Scott. *Getting Together: Building Relationships As We Negotiate*. New York: Penguin Books, 1988.
- Fisher, Robert and Ury, William, *Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. New York: Penguin Books, 1981.
- Lang, Michael and Taylor, Alison. *The Making Of A Mediator: Developing Artistry in Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000.
- The Bible. Revised Standard Version
- Tutu, Desmond. *No Future Without Forgiveness*. New York: Image Doubleday, 1999.
- Wink, Walter. *The Powers that Be*. New York: Doubleday, 1998.

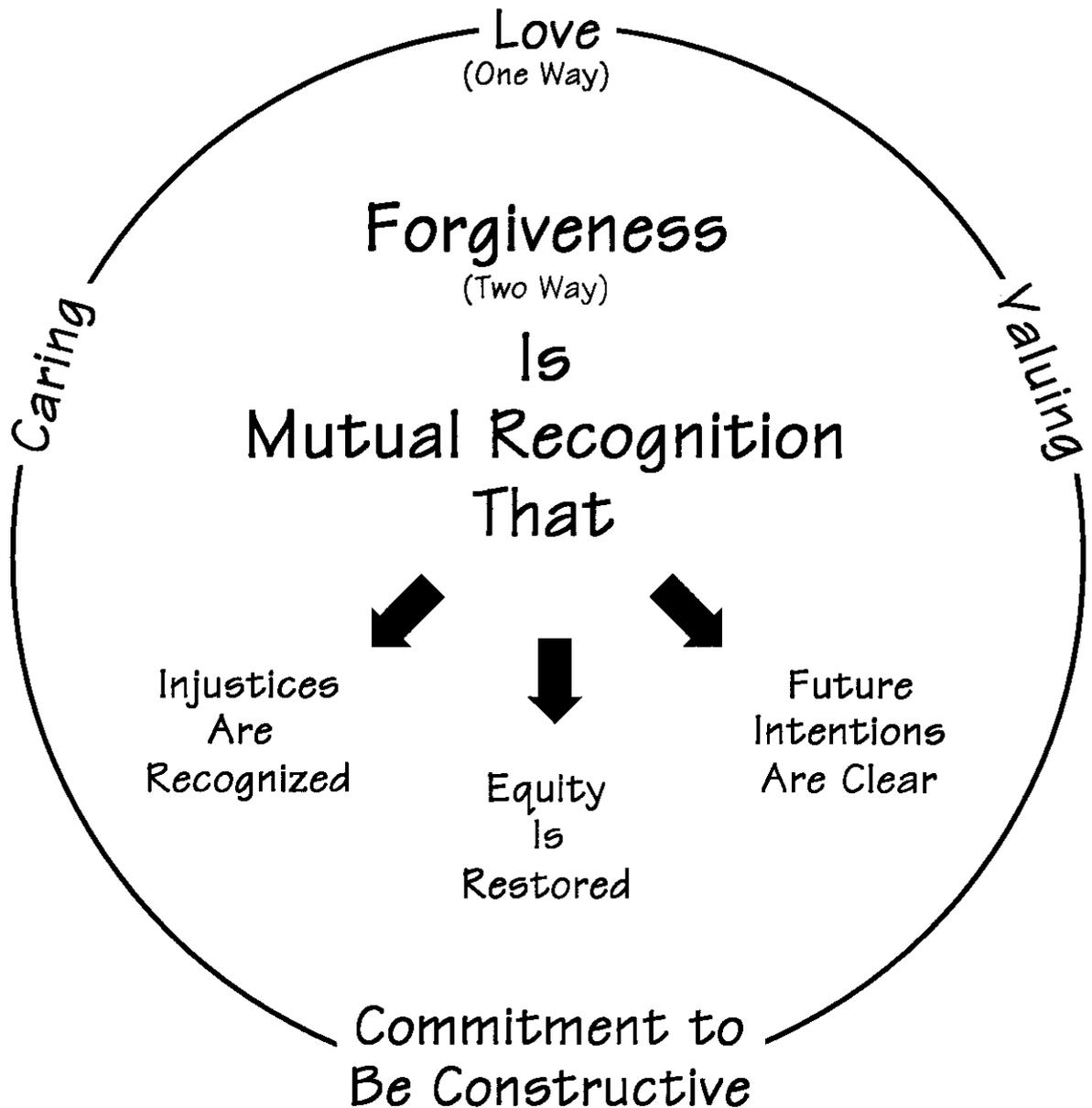
# Peacemaking Model



When Peace and Justice are clear, Trust Builds  
Reconciliation is Happening

---

# Peacemaking Model



*When Agreements Are Made and Kept,  
Trust Grows.*