



בניית עתיד משותף

بناء المستقبل المشترك

Building A Common Future

Building Relationship: Basis for Change

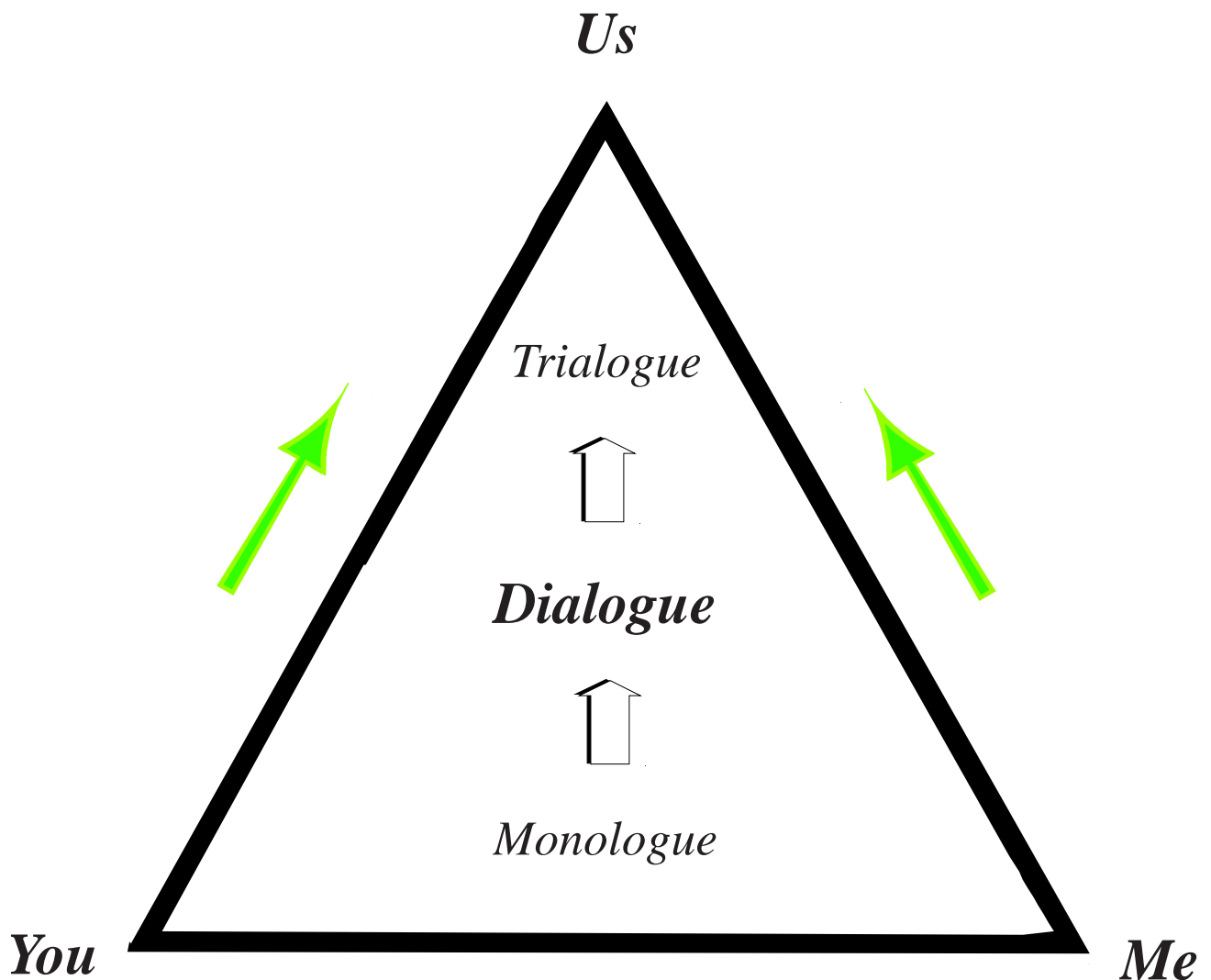
By the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group of San Mateo County, California

***"There are some things that only governments can do,
such as negotiating binding agreements.
But there are some things that
only citizens outside government can do,
such as changing human relationships."***

*Dr. Harold Saunders,
Former Assistant Secretary of State,
Negotiator of Camp David Accords*

A Rationale for Dialogue:

Building Relationship

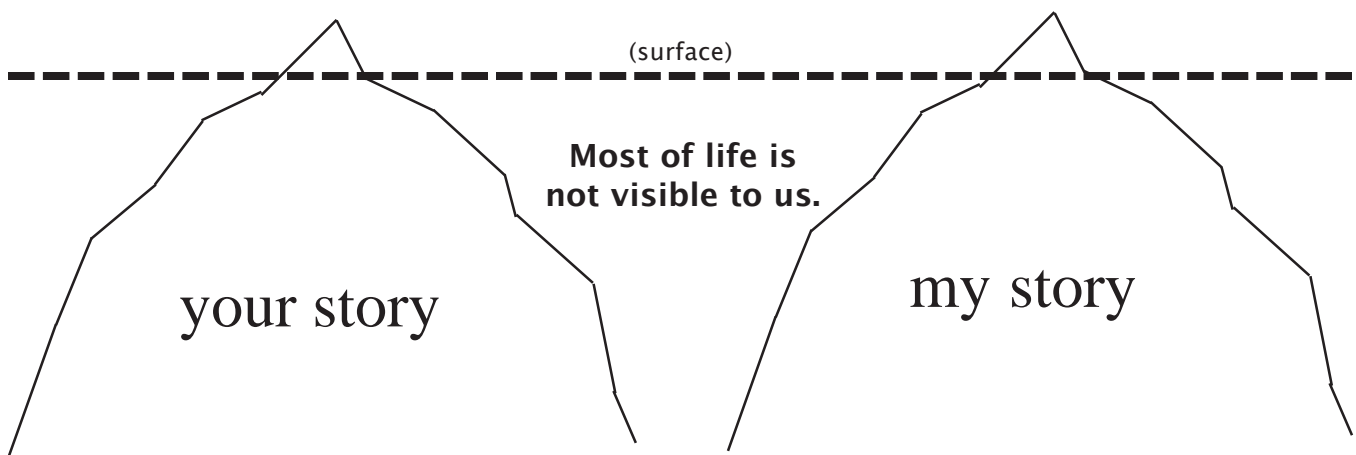


Story

“An enemy is one whose story we have not heard.”

Gene Knudsen-Hoffman

*Like icebergs, most aspects of ourselves are hidden from each other. We do not know one another’s stories. Out of sight and below the surface is our humanity — powerful influences of culture, beliefs, customs, and personal and collective histories. These influences go very, very deep and affect how we view life, how we think, feel, what we do. **Listening with empathy, as equals,** to each other’s stories is one of the great acts of love. It leads to healing.*



Listening

“I want to write about the great and powerful thing that listening is. And how we forget it. And how we don’t listen to our children, or those we love. And least of all — which is so important, too — to those we do not love. But we should. Because listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force.

“...This is the reason: When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand. Ideas actually begin to grow within us and come to life. You know how if a person laughs at your jokes you become funnier and funnier, and if he does not, every tiny little joke in you weakens up and dies. Well, that is the principle of it. It makes people happy and free when they are listened to. And if you are a listener, it is the secret of...of comforting people, of doing them good.

“... We should all know this: that listening, not talking, is the gifted and great role, and the imaginative role....And so try listening. Listen to your wife, your husband, your father, your mother, your children, your friends; to those who love you and those who don’t, to those who bore you, to your enemies. It will work a small miracle. And perhaps a great one.”

Brenda Ueland (1892–1985)

From The Art of Listening

Dialogue

"Dialogue is to love, what blood is to the body. When the flow of blood stops, the body dies. When dialogue stops, love dies and resentment and hate are born.

But dialogue can restore a dead relationship.

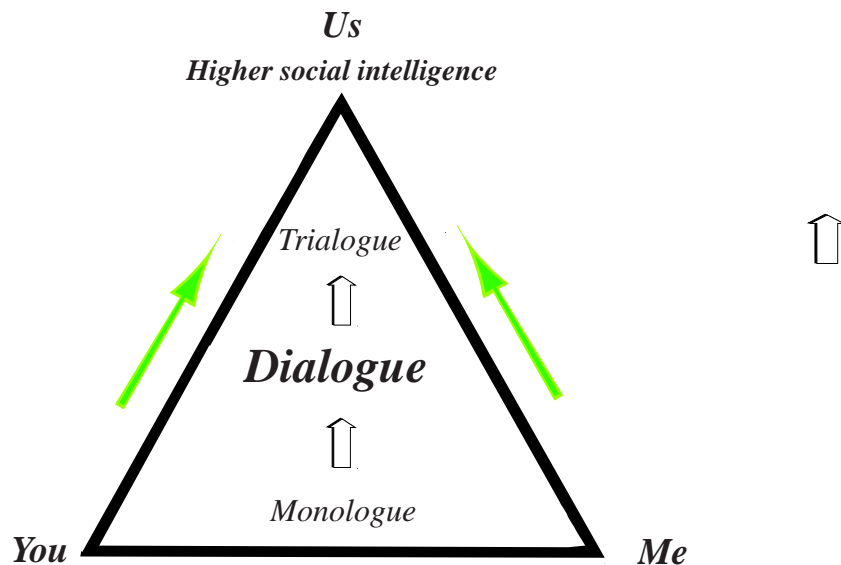
Indeed, this is the miracle of dialogue: it can bring relationship into being, and it can bring into being once again a relationship that has died.

There is only one qualification to these claims for dialogue:

it must be mutual and proceed from both sides, and the parties to it must persist relentlessly."

Reuel L. Howe

The Miracle of Dialogue, 1963



Triialogue

Triialogue is more than dialogue; you can feel the difference. It is the true meeting of persons in a field of goodwill, faithful and open to discovering each other's humanity and a higher social intelligence. It is an event that transcends language and finds, as it is entered into, expression in openness and love. It is a way to cooperation and community in diversity. It is fundamental to human development, and to survival itself.

بعيداً عن المعتقدات والأعمال الصالحة والصارّة هناك حقل ،
جلال الدين الرومي
معبّر لטוב ולרע, לצדק ולעוולה, ישנו מקום. שם נפגש.
ג'אלאדין רומי

**"Out beyond ideas of rightdoing and
wrongdoing, there is a field.
I'll meet you there."**

Jelaluddin Rumi (1207-1273)

Expanding Identification

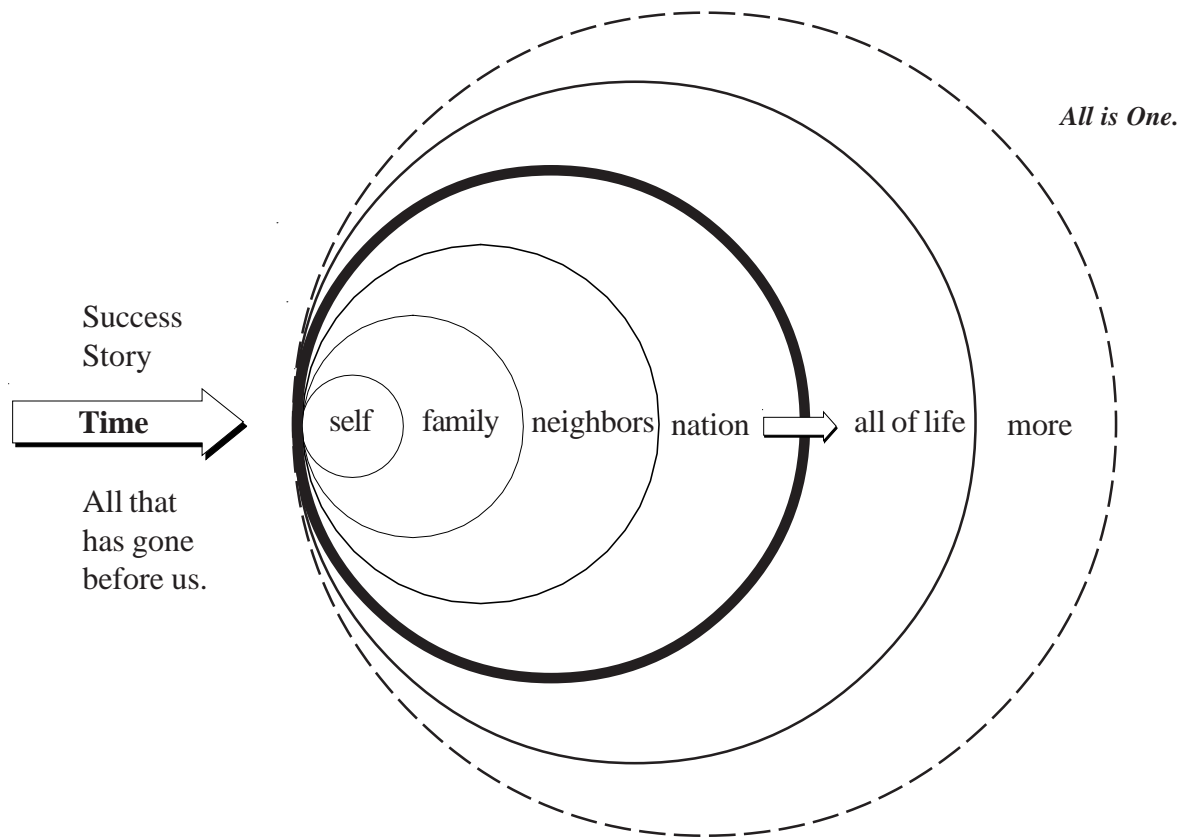
When we are born our world is very small.

What we identify with begins at a personal level. We identify with our own physical body, property, and ideas. We may be hurt when they are criticized, and react strongly to defend them.

We also identify on a collective level. Identification with our family, clan, and race are extensions of identifying with our body. The city, state, and nation become extensions of our property. A person's philosophy, religion, and ideology are extensions of one's ideas.

This natural process of expanding identification cannot stop there. If our sphere of identification is limited, then anything outside is a potential enemy. When the enemy is perceived as too threatening, we may justify killing. Wars result from identification that is too limited, confined to the collective and individual level.

Our survival depends on expanding our identification to include the largest frame of reference, the whole of humankind, even our "enemies." Realizing that we are neighbors forever with a shared, yet diverse, humanity, we can begin building our common future.



"A human being is part of the whole, called by us the "Universe," a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest - a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."

— Albert Einstein

The Song of Songs

*There is one who sings the song of his soul,
discovering in his soul
everything—utter spiritual fulfillment.*

*There is one who sings the song of his people.
Emerging from the private circle of
his soul—not expansive enough,
not yet tranquil—he strives for
fierce heights, clinging to the
entire community of Israel in tender love . . .*

*Then there is one whose soul expands until it
extends beyond the border of Israel,
singing the song of humanity . . .
his spirit spreads,
aspiring to the goal of humankind,
envisioning its consummation . . .*

*Then there is one who expands even further
until he unites with all existence,
with all creatures, with all worlds,
singing a song with them all.*

*There is one who ascends
with all these songs
in unison—the song of the soul,
the song of the nation, the song of humanity,
the song of the cosmos—resounding together,
blending in harmony, circulating the sap of life,
the sound of holy joy.*

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook
20th Century Kabbalist

From *THE ESSENTIAL KABBALAH: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism*
by Daniel C. Matt, Ph.D., HarperCollins, San Francisco, 1995

NOTES: Born in 1865, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook was the Chief Rabbi of Palestine until his death in 1935. A brilliant scholar and mystic, he is remembered for his ability to bring together battling religious and social factions, making harmony out of seemingly irreconcilable differences.

Love Is My Creed

My heart is capable of every form,

*a cloister of the monk,
a temple for idols,*

*a pasture for gazelles,
the votary's Kaaba,*

*the tablets of the Torah,
the Koran.*

Love is the creed I hold:

*Wherever his camels turn,
love is my creed and faith.*

Ibn al-Arabi
13th Century Islamic mystic

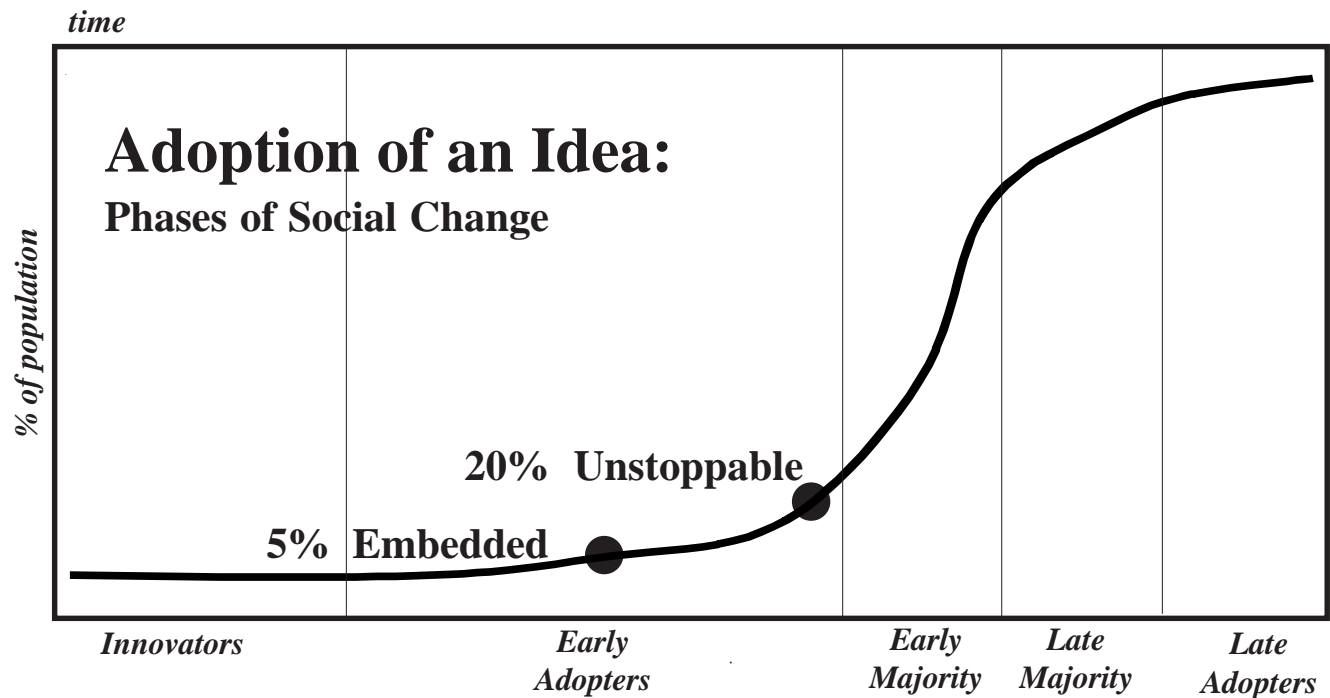
From *MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS OF ISLAM*
Annemarie Schimmel, UNC Press, Chapel Hill, 1975

NOTES: Born in 1165, Abu Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi was one of the most important mystical Islamic theologians and thinkers. With a cosmology relevant for our times, he was preoccupied with the idea that the individual must overcome mere beliefs in specifics of religion and limited identification, and rather immerse one's total being with Allah, the whole of life.

The Process of Social Change

As more and more of us decide to expand our identification to include our neighbors, not to be preoccupied with enemies, and to reject violence, we Palestinians and Jews will continue to build our common future. How many of us is “enough”? One person in twenty is all it takes!

Studies at Stanford University tell us that when just 5% of the society accepts a new idea, it is “embedded.” When 20% adopt the idea, it is “unstoppable.” The studies also show that it normally requires 50% of the population to be “aware” of the idea in order to reach the 5% who will adopt it.



The process of social change and the S-shaped curve: Professor Everett M. Rogers (Stanford Research Institute), *Diffusion of Innovations*, Third Edition, New York, Macmillan Free Press, Chapters 1 and 2, 1983

In the first phase, proponents of a new idea must work incessantly just to keep the idea alive. Work during this phase is often frustrating and seems not to add up. But that is only an illusion. Like laying the foundation for a mosque, synagogue, or cathedral, this work is the necessary first step even though most people cannot yet see the beauty to come. This stage involves Innovators, people open to new ideas and courageous enough to espouse them. Because the idea is still seen as radically new, the recognized leaders of society rarely are among this group.

As Innovators communicate and live the idea, it begins to gain social acceptability. The process begins to include a much larger segment of society — Early Adopters, including recognized leaders — embracing the idea.

At twenty percent, the idea is “unstoppable.” Much work is still required, but it involves implementation rather than trying to convince people that the idea is worthy of consideration.

The Early Majority and Late Majority adopt the idea. There will be Late Adopters — people who resist new ideas and cling tenaciously to the old.

Understanding this process of social change is important for two reasons. First, it explains **how the impossible becomes possible**. As more and more people adopt the new idea, the environment changes. What was radical becomes avant-garde; what was avant-garde becomes common knowledge.

This process also suggests **how we might best spend our time**. It is natural for us to want to convince everyone that true security, prosperity, and fulfillment lies in Jews and Palestinians building our common future. It is natural but perhaps inefficient. And, because time is limited, we must be as efficient as possible. We cannot afford to spend inordinate time vainly trying to convince Late Adopters when we need to be locating Innovators and Early Adopter — the “cultural creatives” of our times.



"The capacity for hope is the most significant fact of life. It gives human beings a sense of destination and the energy to get started."

Norman Cousins

**"The heights by great men (and women) reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."**

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"It's easier to be ignorant and say I don't know about the problem. But once you know, once you've seen it in their eyes, then you have a responsibility to do something. There is strength in numbers, and if we all work together as a team, we can be Unstoppable."

Craig Kielburger

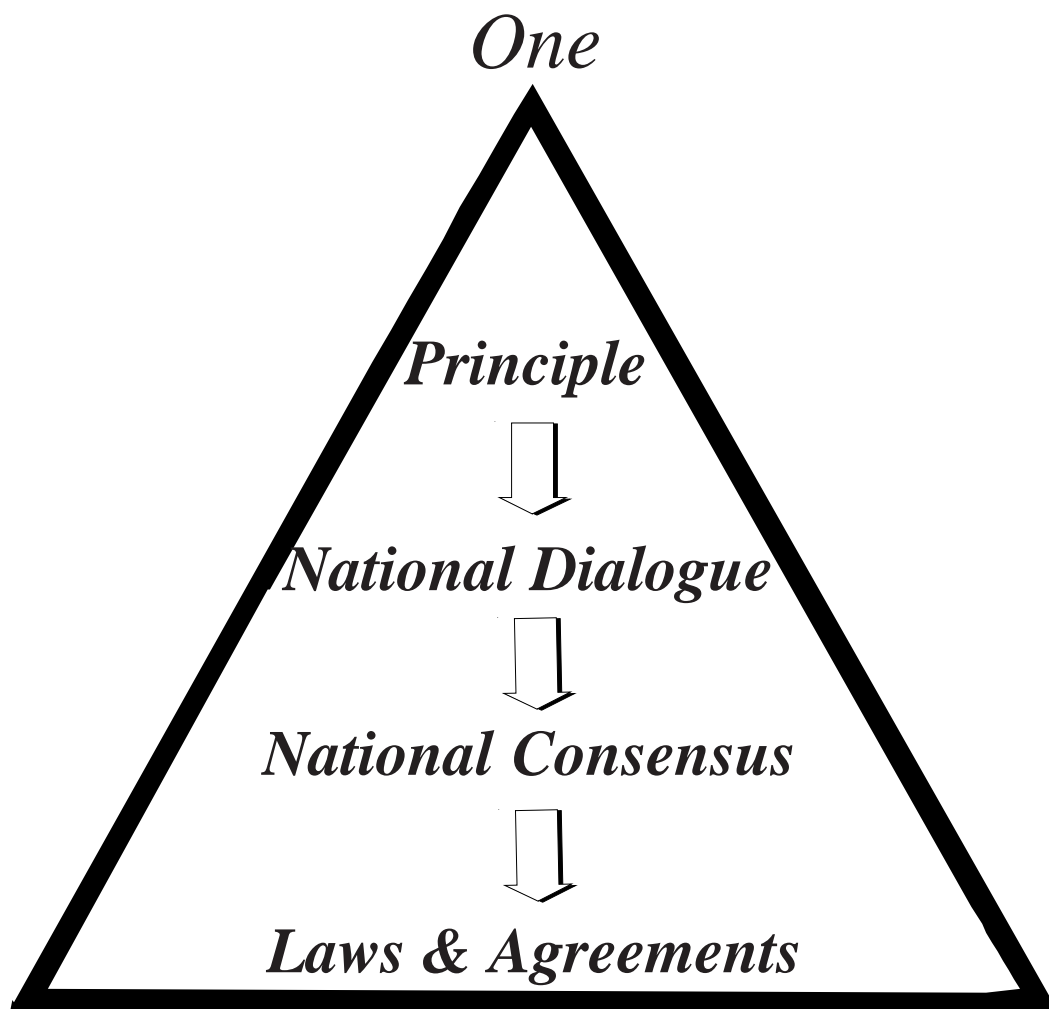
Process of National Change

The process of building agreement which produces lasting societal change begins with the understanding of principle. Then agreement based on principle is built through education. Education is both factual and personal.

Understanding begins with Dialogue — first building authentic human relationships beginning with compassionate listening. This fulfills the essential condition of appreciating one another's humanity, specifically the personal meaning for each other of the "principles" and "facts" behind the issues.

Agreement based on principle is built through education — deepening and multiplying the circles of Dialogue in society. When enough agreement is reached, laws will be passed and treaties written which reflect this agreement. Lawmakers and diplomats cannot move beyond where the citizens are. Prohibiton is an example of a law which was passed "from the top" when there was not enough agreement within the society. The same with some peace treaties.

The principle of One — the interrelatedness, interdependence, and one-ness of all life — is a worthy motivating force upon which to base decisions. Yet we have not always lived up to the highest expression of this closely-held principle recommended by the universal insights of scientific, social, and spiritual wisdom since ancient times. We want to "take sides" and cling to the illusion of "individual survival," when the great need of our time is to listen to each other and to Earth, and to acknowledge that we are one with all life — neighbors forever.



Notes


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***“Never doubt
that a small group of
thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world.
Indeed, it is
the only thing that ever has.”***

Margaret Mead