A CALL FOR ADVENTURE-BASED CONFLICT RESOLUTION

by

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Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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DEDICATION

To all who refuse to be deterred in their search for and development of nonadversarial ways to address seemingly intractable conflict.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

A CALL FOR ADVENTURE-BASED CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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The following thesis addresses the role of *learning* within conflict resolution

interventions, drawing particular attention to *kinesthetic intelligence* (Gardner, 1993).

While current conflict resolution practices typically involve verbal and logical modes of

learning, this inquiry explores the value of physical movement and interaction in the

context of conflict intervention processes. Looking at conflict resolution from an

experiential learning frame (learning by "doing" and by reflecting on actions), the value

of learning from movement, or "kinesthetic encoding," is considered in terms of its

potentially transformative qualities associated with the "liminal" phase of a "ritual"

process.

Building from a popular approach to kinesthetic experiential learning known as

"adventure-based learning" (methods that incorporate teambuilding, outdoor adventure

sports, and wilderness travel), a model for "adventure-based conflict resolution" (ABCR), which maps the natural overlap between adventure-based learning and conflict resolution, illustrates the practical utility of using adventure-based approaches in processes intended for preventing, resolving, or reconciling conflict. The model specifies salient characteristics of adventure-based approaches with regard to intended outcomes—specifically in terms of developing positive relationship between parties, developing collaboration skills, and developing potential-realization (confidence).

Three case studies are described as exemplars of the proposed model: one each for illustrating conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and conflict reconciliation. Each case is analyzed with regard to the level of relationship, skills, and confidence gained in association from the respective adventure-based intervention. Further implications regarding level of conflict and nature of party relationships are discussed, as are the strengths and limitations of the model.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

As a professional youth and corporate team development facilitator and

consultant, I have led hundreds of experiential, "adventure-based" sessions with a wide

variety of individuals and groups aimed at improving communication, collaboration, and

problem-solving skills, not to mention self-esteem and other personal-growth attributes. I

am also versed in conflict mediation and facilitation and have often wondered about the

implication of adventure-based activities for conflict resolution. After all, adventure-

based learning experiences and conflict resolution processes often share similar—and at

time, identical—intended outcomes. For example, practitioners from both fields often try

to build positive relationships, instill skills for collaboration, and increase levels of trust

and confidence in achieving seemingly unachievable goals. Ironically, however, it seems

that many (if not most) adventure-based learning facilitators are not well versed in the

principles of conflict analysis and resolution and therefore are not typically called upon to

address conflict, even though they may have much to offer. Likewise, the lack of

attention to this subject in the conflict resolution literature indicates that few conflict

analysis and resolution specialists are aware of the relevance of adventure-based

approaches to conflict intervention.

During a workshop on international conflict resolution and negotiation skills in

2002, I facilitated a collaborative problem-solving exercise, or "initiative," with a group

of international nongovernmental organization (NGO) leaders, and for the first time I

broached the idea of "adventure-based conflict resolution" (ABCR).

I had been thinking for a while about attempting to bridge the gap between

adventure-based learning and conflict resolution, but until the NGO workshop, I had

never actually raised the ideas and questions to any authority or expert in the field of

conflict resolution. On this occasion, however, after the activity concluded, I had a

candid conversation with the lead trainer from workshop, an individual with a Ph.D. in

international conflict and over a decade's worth of experience teaching international

conflict and negotiation. If anyone was able to offer a reality check, I thought this person

could. Indeed, the individual seemed confident that adventure-based activities might in

fact be extremely useful in the realm of conflict resolution, but in terms of mainstream

theory might not be taken seriously. I took this as a promising affirmation of my intuitive

thoughts, yet as a considerable challenge in terms of moving forward in an academic

sense. Without hesitating, I decided to give it a try.

As considered the challenge further and, and after many attempts to determine the

most appropriate way to frame the issue and move forward with a comprehensive inquiry,

it became apparent that the real problem—the common thread—to be addressed by this

investigation lies with the nature of *learning* in conflict resolution interventions.

Specifically, I became interested in focusing on how parties to a conflict come to learn

about each other and about the conflict itself relative to a given type of intervention

process. This is where the study begins.

Introduction

The practice of conflict analysis and resolution includes a variety of structured intervention processes (e.g. mediation, facilitated dialogue, problem-solving workshops, etc). However, little is known about how the structured nature of these processes contribute to *learning*. By "learning" I mean the process by which important insights and lessons—which might be conducive to resolving/mitigating the conflict—is conducted. Specifically, what are the learning mechanism(s) by which parties come to understand, conceptualize, and process real-time thoughts during an intervention? The structures described in conflict resolution literature are generally abstract and lacking when it comes to explaining any specific mechanisms by which participants learn during an intervention.

Consider the nature of interaction between participants in most conflict resolution processes. A quick examination reveals that conventional methods such as mediation, facilitated dialogue, and problem solving workshops are typically driven by strategies focused on predominantly *verbal* processing. These approaches ostensibly rely on a belief that a carefully facilitated process of verbal communication—taking turns talking, responding to questions, listening, etc.—can lead towards better mutual understanding, increased empathy, and ultimately, partially—or completely—integrative solutions, depending on the intended objectives. Presumably, these methods are quite valid, and have merit—or the practice of conflict resolution would not be as popular as it is. But are they as comprehensive as they could be?

Bush and Folger (1994), for instance, have described in great detail what a transformative mediation process looks like. Yet, while they suggest potentially

achievable outcomes such as empowerment and recognition, they do not provide or acknowledge any specific learning theory that may play a part in leading to those outcomes. How do parties learn what to think from the exchange? How do they learn about their roles in the conflict? How do they learn about the dynamics of a potential, current, or past conflict in a way that they might be more successful in contributing to preventing, resolving, or reconciling the important issues at stake? While conventional approaches such as mediation imply that learning happens, little explanation is given as to how—by what mechanisms—it happens best, or even happens at all.

With regard to conventional processes, both theory and training literature currently demonstrate a significant lack of attention to the quality of interaction between participants, aside from considerations of communication styles (both verbal and nonverbal) and other rules regarding dialogue (e.g., turn taking, type of question/statement phrasing, etc.) and other considerations regarding proximity and architecture of room setup (e.g., chair placement, distance and angles between participants, etc.). But according to research in education and social psychology (to be discussed), other dimensions beyond verbal/linguistic modes may be important to consider; communication is only one slice of the information-processing pie. Some may argue that this criticism is moot—that the default mode of communicative interaction is perfectly adequate for resolving conflicts. Either way, one might find it curious that the field of conflict analysis and resolution does not clearly articulate a rationale or theory for how even verbal interaction relates to learning (with parties in an intervention—not in a pedagogy context). For that matter, not much written about how *any* other mode

facilitates learning (aside from brood social-psychology questions about stereotype-formation, etc.).

Indeed, perhaps conflict resolution scholars and practitioners should take more notice of theories and practices from fields such as psychology and education concerning modes of interaction and information processing. It is widely known from these fields' perspectives that the degree to which humans process information and learn and understand concepts—be they academic facts, interpersonal feelings, or other types of cognitive sense—can depend very much on the modes by which we come in contact with the stimuli of such thought. For example, Howard Gardner (1993) has suggested at least seven ways of knowing, or "intelligences": musical, bodily-kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

While "multiple intelligence" theory is generally intended to describe how people learn, it really speaks to how people *encode*—how they process information and come to know the world relative to how they interact with it. Gardner's intentions may have been directed more towards identifying one's dominant learning style; however, he suggests that everyone is able to encode learning in all of the different modes with more or less proficiency. Aside from considering which mode resonates the most with a particular person, conflict resolution scholars and practitioners should at least consider the claim that different styles of processing are possible, relevant, and available, and should seek to explore the added value of employing them.

Conflict analysis and resolution theorists and practitioners might benefit from paying particular attention to such dimensions in order to enhance the efficacy of their

current approaches. It could be that by looking no further than how best to sit and talk,

scholars and practitioners are overlooking a potentially deep goldmine of techniques and

strategies for maximizing the success of conflict resolution interventions. To be fair,

some authors (Michelle LeBaron, 2002, 2003) have already pointed this out, but few have

gone to any great depth to create *prescriptions* for change or to provide a framework for

how to apply such techniques. The one exception I have come across is the 1999

doctoral dissertation by Lisa Schirch, who presented a compelling argument for the

intentional use of *ritual* in conflict resolution interventions.

Indeed, other modes of interaction (beyond verbal, logical, or perhaps emotional)

are becoming more widely recognized with respect to conflict resolution practices. For

instance, researchers such as Craig Zelizer (2004) are beginning to identify and explore

modalities such as music and dance as they relate to conflict resolution. Still, little

investigation has shown up in the literature regarding how such structures operate to elicit

change in terms of learning process and outcomes. Many possible modes of interaction,

such as the ones elucidated by Gardner, could be analyzed more closely.

The good news is that people are beginning to suggest looking out of the box; the

challenge is to focus on one out-of-the-box idea closely enough to make practical sense

of it. For the purposes of this study I will investigate the *bodily-kinesthetic* mode of

human interaction as it does, or might, relate to learning within conflict resolution

interventions. I choose to consider this mode for three reasons: (1) There are examples

among some conflict resolution practices of intentional use of physical activity, but little

published theory exists to support or explain such initiatives. Such examples serve as

precedents for this inquiry and imply an urgent call to build upon a foundational and generative framework for such work. (2) There is established literature on kinesthetic processing but it has not been explicitly linked to conflict analysis and resolution in mainstream conflict resolution literature. This study will focus on building a bridge to link the salient overlapping characteristics in the fields of conflict analysis and resolution and *adventure-based experiential learning* (which, in a latent sense, already shares a great deal with conflict resolution in terms of intended outcomes). (3) As a cross-trained professional in both fields, I am in a unique position to call upon my own experiences to complement and inform this inquiry. Though I will rely predominantly on external sources, I will also draw upon my own experiences in explaining the potential for "Adventure-Based Conflict Resolution" (ABCR).

Research Objectives

This research examines the realm of bodily movement as a means by which parties might "kinesthetically encode" valuable emotional and cognitive information pertaining to the conflict in which they are immersed. Specifically, I will explore the nature of kinesthetic encoding to gain a better understanding of why and how such a phenomenon might function. Drawing on the notion of liminality—an "in-between" transformative state of being often associated with ritual experience—this study aims to provide a preliminary model for understanding a process of transformation that may be induced via kinesthetic experiences and may be useful in designing and conducting effective conflict resolution interventions.

In order that this study might lend added value to practicable means by which to apply and test such ideas, I will present a model through which third-party intervenors might see ways to augment their traditional intervention strategies by using existing theory, practice, and technology from the already-established field of adventure-based experiential learning—a field that relies heavily on kinesthetic processing. By exploring the nature of adventure-based experiential learning through a lens of conflict analysis and resolution, I will frame experiential concepts in a new light—an illumination of why, how, and where adventure-based approaches to conflict resolution might effectively augment conventional methods.

Since I will be considering kinesthetic approaches as they are applied by adventure-based traditions, I will pay particular attention to the espoused objectives of such traditions in terms of how they overlap with useful conflict resolution objectives. Since there is scarce theory for how kinesthetic processing relates to conflict resolution, the model proposed by this study will provide a foundational rationale for how an adventure-based approach towards conflict analysis and resolution might enhance the efficacy of how parties develop one or more of the following: (1) positive human relationships, (2) crucial skills for effective cooperation, and (3) transformation of their paradigmatic understanding of limitations to reconceptualize seemingly impossible or unrealistic goals as in fact reachable. To make this proposal practical, I will discuss how these outcomes are commonly achieved through adventure-based processes, and thus how such processes can be useful for enhancing the learning within conflict resolution interventions.

To be clear, I am not arguing for an entirely new conflict resolution process, per se, but rather for adding a kinesthetic dimension to already-established processes where appropriate. If the theory that a kinesthetic-based approach to learning in conflict resolution is valid—in a general sense—then additional challenges lie with determining appropriate levels of kinesthetic involvement for different types/levels/etc. of intervention. While this thesis should not be considered comprehensive in this regard, I hope to provide a meaningful discussion about such issues that can serve as starting points for testing and exploring the nuances through subsequent research.

It should also be noted that the suggestions and hypotheses within this study are not based on rigorous, *scientific* analysis of underlying assumptions; they are not justified by statistical probabilities. Rather, they are based on possibilities. They are a product of a broad analysis of theory and practice from a handful of distinct research traditions and professional fields and filtered through my own unique experience. This study represents an independent attempt to build bridges between certain islands of thought so that others might be able to see, understand, and apply useful concepts with more informed intention—or at least in a new light. Ultimately, I hope that this thesis will contribute to a new line of research that can more closely test some of the assumptions. For now, this is an exploration, not an explanation. Indeed, this is an adventure!

Methodology

An inductive method, building from a review of relevant literature, will be used to explore and articulate the relevance of kinesthetic experiential learning within conflict

intervention practices. This study will lead to a model that supports practicable

applications of the ABCR ideas introduced within. I will exemplify the model in three

actual case studies of intervention (one case, *prevention*; one, *resolution*; one,

reconciliation) where kinesthetic learning may have been a salient feature, specifically in

terms of the three outputs of the model: relationship development, skills development,

and potential-realization development. As will be discussed in the following chapters,

relationship development is important for conflict resolution because when parties'

personal relations are in order, they are in a better position to effectively address conflict.

When they have the skills for collaborating, they are better equipped to address conflict,

and when they have a realization that conflict can be resolvable, they are more likely to

make an honest effort based in the possibility of success.

Simply analyzing the potential for kinesthetic experience to lead towards

development of relationship, skills, and potential-realization would not be sufficient

without further attention to which types of conflict scenarios would be more or less

conducive to such an approach (e.g., husband-wife vs. diplomat-diplomat). Therefore, I

will also provide additional analysis into the applicability of the model with specific

attention to some of the most conceivable caveats about an ABCR approach, including

how such methods might be more or less appropriate with regard to type of conflict, level

of escalation, and nature of relationship between the parties (e.g., temporary vs. long-

term).

Finally, I will present a thorough discussion of implications of the analysis with

regard to limitations and suggested areas for further research.

Definitions

 Conflict. Given that the ultimate purpose of this thesis is to understand ways to prevent, resolve, and reconcile conflict, it is important to start with an understanding of what is meant by the term "conflict." As an example of a typical definition, Rubin, Pruitt & Kim (1994), conceive conflict as "perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously" (p. 5). While I believe such a definition adequately describes the psychological perception of conflict, practitioners ought to be aware of potential attitudinal and behavioral dimensions as well.

 Mitchell's (1981) definition goes beyond the psychological situation to include associated attitudes and behaviors: He describes a situation of conflict as "any situation in which two or more social entities or 'parties' (however defined or structured) perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals" (p. 17), which can lead to "conflict attitudes [which] are regarded as those psychological states (both common attitudes, emotions and evaluations, as well as patterns of perception and misperception) that frequently accompany and arise from involvement in a situation of conflict" (p. 27). Conflict behaviors, Mitchell explains, are "actions undertaken by one party in any situation of conflict aimed at the opposing party with the intention of making that opponent abandon or modify its goals" (p. 29).

 Because I am interested in addressing the manner in which third parties design interventions, it becomes important to consider the current attitudes and behaviors of the parties as well as the perceived situation in which they exist.

Conflict Resolution. Taken alone, the term "conflict resolution" often refers generally to a variety of approaches to *addressing conflict in nonadversarial ways*. While further delineation can be made with respect to different types and aims of interventions, including prevention, resolution, settlement, reconciliation, transformation, etc., the field of study and practice that subsumes such approaches is generally referred to as "conflict resolution."

Still, where does one draw the line around what the term means? Fast (2002) has argued, "to advance as a practice and academic discipline, conflict resolution must define more clearly its theoretical and practice boundaries" (p. 540). Fast suggested that *impartiality* and *inclusiveness* differentiate conflict resolution from other fields. For the purposes of this study, unless described in specific terms relative to different types of intervention, I use the term "conflict resolution" to refer generally to the *multiple* ways of addressing conflict, none of which contradict Fast's "boundaries".

Intervention. Cheldelin, Druckman, & Fast (2003) recently provided a comprehensive discussion of the field of conflict analysis and resolution with particular attention to theory, research, and practice in order to make sense of where the field stands today. Following a broad definition of *intervention* to include any effort that "[brings] together the various sides of a conflict in order to resolve their differences" (p. 190), their analysis revealed four categories: *negotiation, informal intervention* (family, friends, neighbors, police, or social workers)*, formal intervention* (mediators and arbitrators, conciliators and facilitators, and third-party problem solvers)*,* and *systematic intervention* (involving attempts to change systems and structures).

Third-Party Intervenors. For the purposes of this study, I consider a *third-party intervenor* to be anyone (including anyone assuming one of the roles listed above) who plans, coordinates, or facilitates an appropriate conflict intervention. In other words, to be responsible for bringing parties together in a situation conducive to preventing, resolving, or reconciling conflict is to intervene, regardless of whether a third-party actually facilitates the interaction between parties.

Learning. On the most fundamental level, this study critically considers the modes in which parties interact and process information during an intervention and come to know new things about the conflict during—and as a product of—the intervention. The following chapter takes a look at the modes (verbal, logical, emotional, etc.) of learning implied within contemporary conflict resolution methods.

Multiple Intelligences. As the introduction alluded to, according to a vast amount of research first synthesized and reported by Howard Gardner in his 1993 book, Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice, humans are generally capable of processing information in at least seven distinctly separate modes: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Furthermore, Gardner suggested that these intelligences are biologically universal to all humans and therefore universal across cultures (though he does not elaborate on "culture" beyond biological implications). Going against conventional wisdom—or at least conventional habits—Gardner asserted that, while society tends to put linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences on a pedestal, all seven modes are equally important and available to tap into.

Gardner has not been the only one to criticize mainstream education theory as overemphasizing certain traditional learning modes. Michelle LeBaron's <u>Bridging Troubled Waters</u> (2002) advocated four "ways of knowing" specific to addressing conflict, including *emotional, somatic, imaginative/intuitive,* and *connected.* As an expert in creative approaches to addressing conflict, LeBaron has been very critical of the apparent over-reliance on purely verbal and logical ways of interacting and continues to advocate other ways of conceiving conflict resolution processes.

At this point, I will break down the "building blocks" of ABCR into more manageable pieces. Now that I have laid out a basic overview of the importance of addressing the role of learning, I will slowly begin to take a closer look at theories and practices that might help to inform a model of ABCR. The next chapter will uncover "modes of learning" implied by current conflict resolution practices. I will first explore the implied learning modes associated with "traditional" conflict resolution practices, and then I will highlight some of the cutting-edge work that scholars and practitioners in the field are expanding into.

CHAPTER 2: Modes of Learning in Contemporary Conflict Resolution Practice

Ostensibly, most conflict resolution processes require at least a minimal degree of learning to take place in order for progress to occur. Whether by conventional processes such as mediation, group dialogue, or problem-solving workshops, or by less traditional approaches such as arts-based or sports-based activities, parties come to know new things during an intervention, including facts, feelings, options, and opportunities for solutions associated with both own situation as well as their adversary's. In his popular book, <u>The Mediation Process</u>, Chris Moore (1996) pointed out that parties are often unaware of what their interests are and must therefore [learn] about them by virtue of the facilitated (verbal) process. The focus for this study with regard to learning is to critically consider the *mechanisms* by which parties learn, and ultimately to elaborate on the relevance of kinesthetic modes of learning. This will be explained in greater detail in the next chapter.

Conventional Approaches to Conflict Resolution

In terms of how parties learn during interventions, it is difficult to ascertain what learning theories, if any, various intervenors relate to their techniques, except when they explicitly depart from the typical norms, as does LeBaron. Consider the modes of learning implicit in the institutionalized approaches to conflict resolution methods of mediation, facilitated dialogue, and problem-solving workshops.

Mediation. Perhaps the most widely recognized and most commonly institutionalized form of systematically addressing conflict, mediation epitomizes the fundamental principles of conflict resolution. At its most basic, interest-based level, the process of mediation generally aims to address conflict between parties in such a way that the parties themselves are able to design and mutually agree upon a solution, ideally one that integrates the interests of all stakeholders, and therefore represents a "win-win" outcome. Transformative mediation generally aims beyond merely satisfying tangible, temporal interests to also address the long-term nature of the relationship between parties in order to transform a negative relationship into a more constructive, positive and lasting one. Regardless of the type of mediation employed, however, the nature of facilitated interaction between parties—indeed, the learning mode—as described by most conventional theory and training literature, is basically similar: it implies a lot of sitting and talking (which also entails observing behaviors and sending/receiving nonverbal messages).

This should not be a surprise. After all, mediation by its very definition is a cognitive process conducted through *discussion*. One of the most comprehensive anthologies on mediation and facilitation skills, the <u>Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual</u> (4th ed., Mennonite Conciliation Service, 2000), a manual for students and practitioners alike, defines the typical form of mediation that has been practiced in North America for over 30 years as "…a process, facilitated by a third party, by which disputants discuss their concerns and issues and explore possible options for mutually satisfactory solutions to differences…"(p. 175). Questioning the process of direct

communication, as a way to address conflict, might seem strange given that it may be taken for granted as the only way. Therefore, it might seem out of place to ask for a theory on learning related to verbal interaction without comparing it to another mode— which, in the case of mediation, is not openly considered.

As will be made more clear later, I do not suggest that the verbal dimension of mediation be *replaced* with another mode, but rather that when we consider the goals of learning during an intervention such as mediation it becomes apparent that other modes of interaction might be appropriate for moving towards such goals. Should mediation be replaced? I think not, but it might be integrated with a more holistic approach that includes other modes, such as kinesthetic, in certain situations. In terms of *multiple intelligence theory*, when it comes to understanding possible solutions to a conflict, parties may tap into logical-mathematical, or even emotional intelligences, but the interaction is still assumed to be conducted mostly through the mode of talking.

Facilitated Dialogue. The practice of facilitated dialogue employs many of the same methods as are used in mediation, and other than the fact that it deals with more people, it shares a virtually identical definition. Cheldelin & Lyons (2003) describe facilitation, as a method for intervention "…conducted by a third party – individuals external to a dispute between two or more people – whose task is to help disputants reach an agreement" (p. 256). As is the case with mediation, the learning modes associated with group dialogue typically include a lot of sitting and talking (and other forms of direct communication). More attention may be given to how and where participants sit, but they sit nonetheless. Again, the question arises: Given facilitation's tactical goals

(e.g., building trust, rapport, confidence, and empathy, to name just a few), is the intended learning during such a process best achieved through sitting and talking, or might there be other ways?

Problem-Solving Workshops. One of the founders of problem-solving workshops—an apparently revolutionary approach to addressing international conflict via principal negotiators—John Burton (1987) explained:

> When parties to disputes come into an analytical and exploratory framework they
> discover that their definitions of conflict are false, that they are pursuing what are
> essentially common goals by adversary tactics, and that once their fundamental
> goals are defined accurately, options can be achieved in cooperation. (p. 69)

How exactly *do* parties come to understand their "analytical and exploratory" frameworks? Problem-solving workshops entail their own set of strategies and tactics, but like mediation and group dialogue, they are still by default based in verbal modes of interaction.

Though this brief mention of conventional approaches seems critical, it is really intended simply to point out the lack of attention given to different possible modes of learning. On the other hand, there are emerging approaches to addressing conflict that do give more attention to the varying ways of knowing.

Emerging Approaches: An Evolving Paradigm

As Thomas Kuhn explained in his treatise on the paradigmatic implications of scientific research (1962/1996), while research communities may adopt multiple

paradigms, or complex lenses through which they observe and think, they may also be subsumed by an overarching paradigm of which they may or may not be aware, and indeed blindly subscribe to. This notion of "paradigmatic dominance" may tend to limit or narrow the assumptions and questions that researchers in a particular tradition consider. Perhaps the question of learning vis-à-vis different types of intervention modes is often not considered simply because it is not asked, and it is not asked because the dominant paradigm regarding intervention strategies assumes verbal modes of reasoning as the only way. Nevertheless, some in the field of conflict analysis and resolution have fortunately broken through the blinds, and less conventional methods for addressing conflict are becoming more apparent and discussed.

While such unconventional approaches may not yet be institutionalized, they are at least starting to make their way into the literature—or at least the conversations— within the field of conflict resolution. Some practitioners are already conducting kinesthetic conflict resolution—or at least talking about the possibility. Indeed, the idea of making use of physical activity for conflict resolution is not entirely new. For example, John McDonald's Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy has organized canoe-camping trips for youth from Bosnia; an NGO called "Play for Peace" uses experiential activities to bring youth together in ethnically divided communities, and many corporate development consultants use physical activities in conjunction with conflict resolution workshops on a regular basis. When it comes to conflict resolution education, there are even books on the subject (e.g. Adventures in Peacemaking, a curriculum manual for teaching conflict resolution skills and concepts to school children). Nevertheless, such

approaches of using kinesthetic interaction lack a comprehensive theoretical foundation. While the facilitators of such approaches are, in fact, making use of valuable concepts associated with kinesthetic activity and experiential learning, there is little evidence to explain how intentionally they design their activities with regard to conflict analysis and resolution theory, though research is beginning to emerge from the conflict analysis and resolution field that departs from the apparent norms.

A handful of recent theses and dissertations have supplied the beginning of a foundation of examples and explanatory theory. Examining approaches through an "artistic" frame, Craig Zelizer recently suggested how artistic processes can serve peacebuilding efforts both as a form of communication and well as interaction, for example, with dance and theatre. Specifically in terms of kinesthetics, Renée Rothman (2000) described how the compassionate martial art, Aikido, might be used to bring a community in conflict closer together. Martha Eddy (1996) pointed out the role of physical activity in violence prevention programs for youth, and Patricia Deer (1999) discussed how all the bodily senses could be brought into conflict transformation processes. In terms of a comprehensive explanation of why such out-of-the-ordinary approaches might be appropriate and, moreover, how they function, Lisa Schirch (1999) explored the notion of *ritual* as a powerful phenomenon that can create situations conducive to effective intervention. And she went so far as to suggest the intentional use of physical activity in conjunction with conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. I will refer to her research in greater depth in Chapter 5.

Each of the researchers mentioned above discussed various reasons why kinesthetic approaches might be appropriate, but none of them framed the connection around learning. The next chapter explores the notion of kinesthetic encoding (learning) as a product of experiential learning.

CHAPTER 3: Learning Through the Body: Kinesthetic Encoding

The fundamental premise of this study is that learning within conflict resolution interventions can occur—and should be promoted—in ways other than those that are strictly verbal. By exploring the realm of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence I am suggesting that physical movement and interaction by and between parties in conflict may positively contribute to the quality of learning appropriate for preventing, resolving, or reconciling conflict situations. If one considers that knowledge can be verbally encoded by talking, the ideas presented within this thesis serve as a rationale for why and how knowledge might be encoded kinesthetically. In order to understand kinesthetic encoding, a few definitions need to be addressed.

Definitions

Kinesthetic. From the Greek roots, *kinein*, to move; and *aesthesis*, perception. Kinesthetic refers to sensual perception through movement of the body.

Somatic. From the Greek word, *soma*, the body. Somatic refers to "of the [physical] body."

Kinesthetic Encoding. For the purposes of this study, I derived this term simply to refer to the mode of learning that can occur when knowledge (e.g., ideas, insights, understandings, etc.) becomes internalized as a unique result of an experiential learning

process that utilizes kinesthetic activity. The implication here is not that learning happens completely subconsciously as a result of doing something physical, but rather that, when reflected upon (using verbal and cognitive modes), a kinesthetic experience can serve as a visceral path into ones consciousness. To kinesthetically encode is to imprint an idea not just by thinking about it, but also by experiencing it with one's body. The tangible experience is what sets it apart from other types of learning.

Experiential Learning Theory

As the old proverb by Confucius goes: "What I hear, I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand." In the simplest sense, experiential learning is best described as a process that encodes understanding within the learner by virtue of doing something—rather than passively thinking, listening, or reading about a particular subject. Kolb (1984) described learning as "…the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it" (p. 41). Kolb, drawing on the foundational learning theories from the legacies of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget, conceived the experiential learning cycle as follows:

> The process of experiential learning can be described as a four-stage cycle involving four adaptive learning modes—concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In this model, concrete experience/abstract conceptualization and active experimentation/reflection observation are two distinct dimensions, each

representing two dialectically opposed adaptive orientations. The structural bases of the learning process lie in the transactions among these four adaptive modes and the way in which the adaptive dialectics get resolved. (p. 41-42)

Kolb summed up the four respective types of knowledge as follows:

Experience grasped through apprehension [physically doing/feeling/sensing] and transformed through intention [internal reflection] results in what will be called *divergent* knowledge. Experience grasped through comprehension [conceptual interpretation or symbolic representation] and transformed through intention results in *assimilative* knowledge. When experience is grasped through comprehension and transformed through extension [external manipulation of the external world], the result is *convergent* knowledge. And finally, when experience is grasped by apprehension and transformed by extension, *accommodative* knowledge is the result. (p. 42)

In terms of how experiential education concepts are actually implemented, Michael Gass (1993, p. 4), a leader in the field of experiential learning offered the following practical set of considerations and beliefs that he suggested most experiential programs are founded on:

- Learning must focus on including direct experience in processes of growth
- Experiential process is more valuable for transmission of knowledge than other forms of learning
- Experiential process often requires problem solving, curiosity, and inquiry of the learner

- Sometimes loosely defined as "learning by doing combined with reflection"

- Active rather than passive process, requiring learner to be self-motivated and responsible for learning, while the "teacher" is responsible to, not for, the learner

- Change occurs when people are placed outside of positions of comfort and into states of dissonance

- Learner is participant rather than observer

- Learning activity is real and meaningful in terms of natural consequences for the learner

- Reflection is a critical element of learning process

According to Porter (1999), experiential learning is operationalized in a variety of forms, including adventure therapy, corporate-based teambuilding, group development, educational programming, and other applications. While any experience may be conducive to learning from, certain experiences may have more potential than others to instill concepts within the learner depending on how the experience came to pass. Perhaps the notion of "ritual" plays an important role with physical aspects of experiential learning.

Ritual

In his seminal work, <u>The Rites of Passage</u> (1960), Arnold van Gennep defined ritual in relation to significant transitions in life, e.g. birth, puberty, marriage, death, etc. He was the first to describe three phases of ritual: separation, transition, & incorporation

(or "aggregation"), the transition phase being "liminal", meaning neither here nor there, but in between. Victor Turner (1977) described Van Gennep's phases like this:

> The first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a "state"), or from both. During the intervening "liminal" period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the "passenger") are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming states. In the third phase (reaggregation or reincorporation), the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more… (pp. 94-95)

In the context of conflict resolution, LeBaron (2002) explains that rituals happen outside ordinary time and habits and can be defined as "…a time when senses are heightened, moments are distinct and marked, and participants feel connected to each other and to the meaning of what they are doing" (p. 253). LeBaron further suggests that all rituals include the elements of purpose, method, and outcome.

Making the connection to kinesthetics, Rappaport (1979) offered that "…rituals generally include physical acts as well as words…[and]…in including both word and act ritual may hold within itself a paradigm of creation" (p. 175).

Kinesthetic Encoding

A "paradigm of creation" is precisely what kinesthetic encoding can provide. By gaining important knowledge through bodily movement, we come to know it and retain it in a fundamentally different manner than we would if someone tried to verbally convey the same ideas to us. It is not so much that we cannot understand concepts that are encoded verbally, but rather that when a concept is connected to something that we physically experienced, the potential for internalizing the given concept is much greater. Moreover, because we can physically experience things for which finding words to explain can be quite difficult, we can come to know things that we might have not otherwise conceived.

One powerful example of kinesthetically encoding knowledge comes from the Japanese martial art, Aikido. The world's leading expert in the implications of Aikido for understanding conflict and conflict resolution and the author of The Magic of Conflict (1987), Thomas Crum, explained how by learning how to physically "blend" energy, students of Aikido can internalize the metaphor in ways that better equip them to deal with conflict in non-physical ways as well:

> The Aiki approach presents conditions that each of us can choose to create at *any* time. It allows us to break through to a state of artistry, a state beyond success. It allows for conflicts in our lives to be resolved naturally and peacefully, with all sides being mutually supported, and it brings us closer in touch with our true self: a fully integrated mind, body, and spirit. (p. 53)

The main point here is that ritual (often in the form of kinesthetic experiences) often draws people away from "everyday" life and it is in that separation (i.e. "liminal space") that people can come to know themselves and their place in the world differently, so that they might return to "everyday" life slightly transformed as a result of the experience. Ritual can come in many different forms, and Chapter 5 will include a richer discussion on how it can be actualized through "adventure" and open space for kinesthetic encoding related to conflict intervention approaches. In the meantime, in order to better understand how adventure experiences can be relevant to conflict resolution in terms of intended outcomes, the next chapter independently describes the field of adventure-based learning.

CHAPTER 4: Adventure-Based Learning

Experiential education philosophy can be applied in just about any context, but when it comes to learning through kinesthetic experience—by physically doing things—one approach that heavily relies on the philosophy is *adventure-based learning*. This chapter delves into an explanation of adventure-based learning as a powerful way to kinesthetically encode valuable knowledge associated with effective human interaction and build confidence within and among participants.

The term "adventure" is often used to refer to adventure sports such as rock climbing, white-water rafting, kayaking, etc., but more broadly it describes scenarios where participants enter into an experience of curiosity and uncertain outcome. When used in conjunction with learning, it can be understood to encompass a wide range of experiential activities and exercises beyond sports. The greatest challenge with researching adventure learning, however, stems from its predominant existence as more of an oral tradition than a well-documented method. Indeed, adventure learning is practiced a great deal more than it is researched and it is rarely evaluated by peer-review methods.

In many regards, adventure-based experiential learning and conflict resolution share a similar challenge. In both fields, it is often difficult to ascertain what exactly is being practiced, by whom, based on what theory and with what success. Nevertheless, I

will attempt to provide a description of adventure learning based on my own experience, as well as on a variety of literature sources.

Whether through structured teambuilding exercises, challenging physical trials, or tranquil wilderness experiences, the realm of adventure-based learning can teach lessons that last a lifetime.

Experiential Education and Adventure-Based Learning

By its very nature, the practice of adventure-based experiential education can hardly be defined in a single statement; even if it could, it is doubtful that all those who work in the profession would agree to a single statement. The industry is very entrepreneurially driven, and based on nearly ten years of personal experience in the field as well as a review of literature (which I will allude to), it seems to me that many theorists and practitioners have their own ideas of how the traditional concepts of experiential learning relate to adventure-based approaches. Moreover, practitioners often do not distinguish "adventure-based" as a *sub-category* of experiential learning but instead often use the term interchangeably with experiential learning. Perhaps this has to do with the popularity of adventure learning. As an illustration of the prevalence of experiential education being operationalized through adventure, the Association for Experiential Education's website (www.aee.org) lists over 2,000 members from more than 35 countries and an informal review of the listed organizations showed that the majority were "adventure-based."

While many ideas exist as to what constitutes adventure-based experiential learning, they mostly represent rehashed descriptions of the classic theories of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget. And while the experiential learning *cycle* is fairly universal across various learning environments, the specific features of intentional experiences, adventure-based or otherwise, can vary. Again, it is important to recognize that experiential learning, per se, is not defined by the specific activities through which is operates, but rather how an activity is utilized for learning. Indeed, Gass (1993) reminds us that experiential learning "is not a product of learning but a learning process that should be implemented under appropriate circumstances" (p. 4). This begs the question, given "appropriate circumstances" (e.g. teambuilding, therapy, etc.), what types of activities are used to infuse learning in an *adventure-based* experience, and what is unique about adventure activities?

Though one might imagine additional contexts for adventure, traditionally, most adventure-based learning environments utilized by those in the field of adventure-based learning can be characterized by one or a combination of the following features: teambuilding, challenge, or wilderness. Following are brief descriptions and rationales for each.

Teambuilding Initiatives: Trust-Building and Problem-Solving

Several hundred popular initiative activities have been developed that can be carried out with groups in just about any setting (for examples of typical activities, see Rohnke, 1989). Whether in a boardroom, at a park, or on a mountaintop, trained

facilitators utilize such activities to provide group members experiential opportunities to learn about themselves and the dynamics of the group with regard to general themes of teamwork, including problem-solving, trust, cooperation, and communication.

For example, one well-known initiative (teambuilding exercise) called "the spider web" requires a group to devise and execute a process for getting all their fellow teammates through a limited number of openings in a large web of rope or string (usually strung up between two trees or poles about 8-10 feet apart) without touching the web. A limit may be placed on how many times each opening can be used. Typically, if the web is touched while passing a person through, the group either must start over with that person or with the entire group. The guidelines to such activities are not carved in stone, and depending on the level of difficulty or learning lessons intended, many of the rules are adjusted to suit the group (e.g. number of openings, number of times each can be used, penalties for touching the web, etc.).

When the Spider Web is facilitated with groups of youth, myth and imagination can enhance the intensity of the activity (e.g. "If you touch the web, you'll wake up the spider. If you touch it twice, the spider will come down and eat you!"). Often times, with older groups, such overtones can attract cynical criticism for not appearing relevant to the serious work environment for which they are preparing, so the activities are described as metaphors in relation to the "real-world" mission of the group.

With a corporate group of customer-service representatives, the web could be framed in terms of their real-world responsibilities. For example, the task of passing people through the openings in the web could represent handling a client. Mishandling

one client might jeopardize an account (close that opening in the web), but still allow for a second chance. Mishandling multiple clients, or abusing the same client over and over, might result in a poor customer service reputation and damage company success. The ultimate goal of initiatives such as the spider web is to transfer learning from the contrived experience to the literal application. Gass (1993) has argued that the closer the experience mirrors the real-world (i.e., an isomorphic experience), the more profound the learning transfer can be:

> Isomorphism…occurs when two complex structures of different situations can be mapped on to one another so that similar features can be linked together. Once the connection of these features is made, the similarity of roles they play in their respective structures creates a medium for change. This medium provides possible connections for the transfer of valuable information learned in one environment for future use in another. (p. 247)

Other exercises focus on building trust and cohesion within the group, such as the "trust fall"—where group members take turns falling backwards off the edge of a picnic table, stump, or rock, into the supporting arms of their peers—or "trust walk"—where group members pair off into sighted and blind (blindfolded) and the sighted lead the blind through an obstacle course.

Teambuilding goals are usually integrated within most adventure-based learning contexts, but when the level of challenge and perceived physical risk significantly increases, the context becomes quite different. The next section elaborates on the tradition of adventure-based challenge.

Challenge: Ropes Courses and Outdoor Adventure

The term "ropes course" (also commonly referred to as "challenge course") is often associated with group initiative activities (also known as "low ropes"), but the most spectacular features of ropes courses are the "high ropes" elements. Some might question the purpose of climbing a tree or telephone pole with the intention to walk across a cable 40 feet above the ground or leap through the air towards a trapeze, but when the safety procedures are put in place (harnesses and rope "belay" lines to the climber), participants often find that such experiences are not only fun and exhilarating but can also lead towards learning how to overcome fear, anxiety, and mental blocks in everyday environments. Giving and receiving peer support and encouragement is usually a salient feature of a challenge course as well.

Ropes courses are not the only forums for adventure learning through challenge, however. Organizations such as Outward Bound and the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) were founded on the tradition of outdoor adventure. While their courses usually incorporate structured teambuilding initiatives and trust-building activities into the schedule, the underlying challenges occur through a variety of outdoor adventure activities such as rock climbing and mountaineering, backpacking, orienteering, wilderness travel, canoeing, and white water rafting. The following program description offers important insight into the design of outdoor adventure learning:

> The program or course curriculum usually consists of a series of challenges,
> which incrementally increase in difficulty. The challenges tend to be designed so
> that mastery requires the group to persevere, to be creative, to apply skills, and to

rely on each other. Often the challenges are structured so that they appear to be

insurmountable or dangerous. In reality, this is only a perception; usually the

tasks are quite resolvable and all of the activities are designed to be safe. The

essential idea is to present challenges that are high in perceived risk but low in

actual risk. An example of such a challenge is the rock climb where the novice

feels tremendously exposed even though he/she is tied in firmly to a safety line.

While most of the challenges are offered to the group, the program may also

include some individual challenges such as a long-distance run. (Kimball &

Bacon, 1993, p. 14)

Just like "challenge" is rarely implemented without collaboration (teambuilding)

as well, third category, "wilderness" is also not typically experienced without some

degree of challenge.

Wilderness Adventure

Often a setting for both teambuilding and challenge, wilderness adventure refers

simply to experiential learning that takes place by virtue of being in the wilderness.

While it is possible to conduct teambuilding initiatives and challenges in urban settings, a

journey into the wilderness provides a unique opportunity for transformation through

escape. Andrews (1999, Introduction section) has suggested that:

From an anthropological perspective, the wilderness expedition can be examined

as a meaningful cultural phenomenon—as a rite of passage through which

participants journey from the conventional structures of society through the transitional phase of liminality and back into society again."

Void of modern props, buildings, technology, and other people apart from the group, wilderness settings bring unto the participants literally a whole new world from which to emerge as a changed person.

Adventure as a Category

It may seem unreasonable to cover such widely different concepts as teambuilding initiatives, outdoor adventure, and wilderness adventure all under the same umbrella of "adventure." Yet, as the above subcategory descriptions allude to, practitioners who describe their programs as "adventure learning" tend to create hybrid programs that include all the above elements. On an Outward Bound trip, participants will not only go to the wilderness, but also the physical obstacles inherent to backpacking, mountaineering, rock climbing, etc will *challenge* them. And while those outdoor adventure activities inherently require team effort and lead to team-building, trip leaders will often lead specific teambuilding initiatives as well.

Since much research in adventure learning tends to focus on the outcomes of such trips (which often include a variety of experiential learning opportunities), it is hard to say which variables are more salient or correlate with which outcomes. For example, Cross (2002) suggested that the following aspects of an adventure program resulted in a lowered sense of alienation and locus of control in participants, but did not attempt to control for any of them independently: novel setting, cooperation, caring and trusting

environment, unique problem solving opportunities, feelings of success or accomplishment, and time set aside for processing.

My sense from reading the literature, as well as from personal experience, is that many of these perceived causal links and benefits inherent in adventure-based experiences are explained much more through intuition than any type of empirical research. The research on adventure learning is scattered and arbitrary at best, building on examples rather than variable analytic methods. Nevertheless, the research does at least offer descriptions of what is going on in adventure programs, and from those, we will be able infer some useful implications towards applications for conflict resolution.

Key Features of Adventure-Based Learning Experiences

Regardless of the context for adventure-learning (teambuilding, challenge, or wilderness) at the core of any adventure-based learning experience is a selection of features from a comprehensive repertoire. Selections of the most fundamental features are described below. Some are typical elements of just about any adventure experience while others are more specific to certain types of experiences. Some of these elements are plotted on the ABCR model in the next chapter.

Challenge & Risk. A key feature of most adventure-based learning experiences is an appropriate degree of challenge. Adventure-based experiential learning philosophy holds that people learn best when they are out of their comfort zone, and a good way to get them out of their comfort zone is to present them with physically and/or mentally challenging situations. Such situations are often *perceived* as more or less risky, and

while a facilitator's ultimate responsibility for safety is to manage the *actual* risk according to their expert judgment, the degree of perceived risk, or "potential to lose something of value" (Priest, 1990), as perceived by the participant is not always easy to gauge. Therefore, from an ethical as well as practical standpoint, facilitators must be sure that participants assume responsibility for assessing the appropriate level of challenge for themselves.

Coined by Project Adventure, one of the first organizations to promote adventure-based experiential learning, the notion of "challenge by choice" reflects a fundamental necessity for ensuring participants are duly advised that they are the best judge of their own psychological comfort. Whether the level of challenge is associated with obvious physical trials, such as climbing a rock, navigating a high ropes course, or whitewater rafting with a group of peers, equal attention must be paid to discomfort that can arise from stepping dramatically outside of the normal bounds of everyday life: for some, assuming a new role as leader, or for that matter, follower, can cause anxiety and stress. While learning occurs best when the learners are out of their "comfort zone," attention must be paid to seeing that they do not go so far as to end up in a "panic zone." The sentiments of "challenge by choice"—or as some facilitators like to suggest, "choose your challenge"—are typically communicated to participants early on in any adventure-based learning environment.

Fun. Plato once said, "You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation" (unknown source). Fun experiences can do more than just contribute to building relationships, they can also facilitate learning by sharpening the

senses and raising the level of full engagement by participants. It should not take much digging for most people to recall a time when a personal relationship was developed in conjunction with a fun experience and/or when something was vividly learned in association with having fun.

Reflective Processing. Whether done spontaneously as a solo activity or facilitated by someone else, the process of reflecting upon an experience can be critically important for effectively transferring knowledge from the adventure back into relevant real-life situations. The act of reflection is a catalyst for kinesthetic encoding. Even if the goals of the experience were merely to have fun and get to know the other participants, a reflective conversation can help focus the energy of the individual or group around recalling, analyzing, and taking away lessons (for a comprehensive discussion on reflective learning, see Sugerman, et al., 2000).

Novel, Shared Experience. Whether by virtue of their fun qualities or just plain out-of-the-ordinary-ness, novel shared experiences contribute to bonding as well. By departing from the normal bounds of everyday life, novel experiences can level the playing field and normalize the social status between participants. Chapter 5 will elaborate on the *liminal* characteristics of novel shared experiences.

Metaphor. Adventure-based learning experiences are rife with metaphors that help frame the experiences themselves, as well as the debriefing processes, and ultimately enrich the learning process all around. When teambuilding activities are frontloaded with metaphors (e.g., "this web is your customer service system") participants can engage in a parallel, sometimes mythical, challenge as a proxy to their own "real-life" issues.

Because adventure-based teambuilding activities are usually novel and sometimes goofy, participants can engage in knowledge acquisition that is meaningful and relevant to the real world, but do so in a way that is fun and memorable.

When it comes to reflective processing, metaphors help to communicate the nuances of the experiences and help to codify the lessons learned (Bacon, 1983). Given that the subject matters of reflection are often kinesthetic experiences shared by the participants, such experiences become unique referents to which particular metaphors might refer. Metaphors in everyday vocabulary can be very powerful when they evoke kinesthetic images (Corsini, 2002); to have actually *shared* a kinesthetic experience, however, presumes a much higher degree of understanding about the ideas being communicated.

For example, in an attempt to help you empathize with someone who is trying to kick a drug addiction, I might suggest, "quitting drugs is like trying to backpaddle up a raging river on an inner tube: it is nearly impossible to do alone." You might know what I mean and at least get the point, but to have actually experienced struggling in whitewater to the extent that you can relate to the physical challenge of trying to backpaddle against a strong current, it would be hard to forget what the kinesthetically encoded experience felt like. All of a sudden, your understanding of the situation becomes much more real than it is abstract. Moreover, if the experience to which the metaphor refers was actually shared between the parties who are attempting to communicate with it, the shared "adventure metaphor" now holds a level of meaning so

deep that only those who actually shared the experience can fully appreciate the implications.

Trust-Building. Integral to many adventure experiences, the element of trust is something that cannot be taken for granted; it must be learned and earned. Depending on the ultimate objectives of a particular experience, trust-building measures may be more or less intentionally presented to participants, but when it comes to relying on each other—especially in situations perceived as risky—progress is often completely dependent on a trusting relationship. To trust someone for the first time is to take a risk, but to come out of the experience supported by the one you trusted is to solidify that sense of trust in a way that presumably enables you to transfer it to other environments and situations.

Training/Practice. When the goals of an adventure experience are framed specifically in terms of gaining objective skills such as learning specific communication tactics associated with decision-making and leadership, workshops can be designed with more of a training orientation so that the group has repeated opportunities to solve a particular problem or overcome a particular challenge. In such scenarios, repeated practice and occasional prompting or directing on behalf of the facilitator can be appropriate and useful. Training approaches are presumably already common within other types of conflict resolution trainings, but when implemented using less-traditional (novel) adventure initiatives, such a process can be quite memorable.

Superordinate Goals. Though it is not clear that the field of adventure-based learning consciously adopted the theory of "superordinate goals" (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961), most adventure activities are designed and framed in ways that

require, or at least encourage, relatively equal contribution of ideas and effort by all participants, regardless of their individual strengths and weaknesses, in order for the group to be successful. The notion that the value of collaboration is greater than merely the sum of the parts is pervasive throughout nearly every adventure-learning experience.

Controlled Communication. It is often said that if a facilitator is doing his/her job well, the group will not even know he/she is there. Beyond designing and presenting certain activities and scenarios to a group, the facilitator's usually stands back during the activity to observe and only re-enters the scene to facilitate reflective discussions (debriefs). However, depending on the situation, a facilitator may exercise latent authority to intervene if the group is not dealing with frustration or impasse in a constructive manner, or for that matter, the facilitator may intervene midway through a process in order to help the group capitalize on the learning from a particular moment of success. Even when it comes to the end of the activity, the facilitator's role vis-à-vis intragroup communication is often to direct it. Depending on the types of questions a facilitator asks, he/she can lead the group towards a variety of different trains of thought and subsequently set them up for focusing more on certain lessons than others.

Appreciative Inquiry. Though appreciative inquiry theory (Cooperrider & Srivasta, 1987) is not often intentionally applied to adventure learning processes, most adventure experiences typically can and do serve as a platform for appreciation. Debrief discussions will typically capitalize on "what worked" in order to apply it to future challenges or situations—as opposed to focusing on what did not work, or problems, in order to fix them.

CHAPTER 5: Bridging the Gap – Adventure and Conflict Resolution

This chapter is dedicated to explicitly linking salient elements of adventure that

might be useful for enhancing learning within approaches to conflict intervention. After

considering some thoughts and theory in support of a kinesthetic approach to conflict

resolution, I will briefly discuss how one of the transformative qualities of bodily

movement might have something to do with the notion of "liminality." I will then point

out some precedents for ABCR by pointing out some people and organizations who have

intentionally used adventure-like ideas in conflict resolution, and then I will detail a

model of ABCR in terms of three major outcomes: relationship-building, skills-building,

and potential-realization.

First, to briefly revisit the notion of kinesthetic encoding, consider once again the

somatic sensory aspects of adventure contexts. Whether by participating in the "Spider

Web" initiative, or climbing to the top of a granite mountainside, adventure learners

encode their lessons through, not just thinking, pondering, and planning, but *enacting*.

Sitting around discussing the "Spider Web" might elicit some interesting points or

theoretical lessons, but *doing* the activity forces one to touch, feel, and move through the

learning process, thereby encoding the concepts kinesthetically. When it comes to

addressing conflict, one might imagine participants in an intervention process actually

enacting the dynamics of conflict in some way instead of strictly communicating through voice and limited nonverbal signals.

When it comes to relationship and conflict, the somatic implications of adventure learning offer a whole world of possibilities that conventional approaches (e.g., mediation and dialogue) cannot come close to. When one considers that, as LeBaron (2002, p. 82) pointed out, "…we cannot extricate ourselves from the conflicts we have gotten into through logic and analysis alone," the realm of adventure presents itself as a meaningful setting for catalyzing change.

As LeBaron further suggested, "Our bodies engage in dynamic and subliminal exchange with others in ways that connect or distance, mediated by the release of hormones and nonverbal signals" (p. 84). When a group is actively engaged in an adventure initiative or challenge, such signals cannot be hidden, and the more room for movement there is, the more freedom for connecting and communicating there becomes. By allowing the physical space for such exchanges to take place, the experiential lessons and insights discussed in reflective debriefs go beyond mere objective facts of achievement and efficiency and draw out empathic emotional and relational dynamics between parties and within the group as a body. Perhaps the dynamics of such situations are powerful due to their potential to evoke "liminal space" for participants.

Transformation through Liminal Spaces

Perhaps the single most promising aspect of why kinesthetic adventure approaches might function to lead towards a better understanding of conflict is the notion

of liminality (see discussion on liminality in chapter 3). By separating

participants/parties from their normal roles and identities of everyday life, novel

adventure experiences can help to place them in a zone where transformation can occur.

As LeBaron (2002) explained:

> From liminal spaces, we can look out onto the past and toward possible futures of
>
> our lives and see more clearly. In liminal times, we have the freedom to imagine
>
> ourselves in new ways and to build the foundation on which we will become
>
> them…. Liminality is a feature of both conflict and ritual. As a conflict is a
>
> passage between times of harmony, ritual is a passage between different
>
> identities, purposes, or states. In liminal times, the usual 'givens' are suspended.
>
> (p. 256)

Liminal space can be particularly conducive to building new and more positive

relationships. Turner (1977) explained it best:

> What is interesting about liminal phenomena…is the blend they offer of lowliness
>
> and sacredness, of homogeneity and comradeship. We are presented, in such
>
> rites, with a 'moment in and out of time,' and in and out of secular social structure,
>
> which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (in symbol if not always in
>
> language) of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has
>
> simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties. (p. 96)

So, if it is true that adventure experiences carry the mark of rituals, which in turn contribute to creating liminal space—and liminal spaces are conducive to transforming conflict through enlightened relationships and perspectives—then adventure experiences may indeed be quite valuable in the context of conflict resolution interventions. Though the following precedents have not been explicitly explained with such a rationale, perhaps the latter sentiments are descriptive nonetheless.

Precedents for Adventure-Based Conflict Resolution

Adventure concepts could probably be related to conflict in many ways, but for the purpose of understanding how adventure could be applied differently depending on the situation, three types of interventions are worth considering independently: conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and reconciliation. The following sections reveal some historical or theoretical precedents for applying adventure in these different areas.

Conflict Prevention. Only a few sources of literature in the field of conflict analysis and resolution specifically suggests the use of adventure-based approaches to conflict intervention, including cursory suggestions of "creative approaches" (e.g., LeBaron, 2002). It is clear, however, that thousands of adventure-based organizations (Attarian, 2001) and trainers are, in fact, serving a purpose already with regard to conflict, perhaps unbeknownst to conflict researchers. By their very nature, teambuilding initiatives and outdoor adventure activities presumably serve to lessen the chance of group conflict by addressing many potential causes before they get out of hand. Experiential education literature clearly describes the benefits of adventure learning in

terms of generating improved communication skills (e.g., Russell, 2001), focusing on superordinate goals, and enhancing anger control abilities (e.g. Garst , Scheider, & Baker, 2001). Since a core principle of the action-learning cycle (do, reflect, modify, do…) is to *transfer* the learning from the contrived adventure experience back into the "real world," one might speculate that if knowledge transfer regarding, for instance, collaboration skills, indeed occurs, such increased levels of skill and understanding may, in fact, prevent certain types of conflict from occurring.

Conflict Resolution. Many adventure activities have been developed for *teaching* conflict resolution. For instance, in addition to his work with Aikido, Thomas Crum is known for teaching conflict resolution concepts through skiing. Michael Murphy (1997) has made the connection via golfing. Entire summer camps, such as Seeds of Peace in Maine, are intended to hopefully prevent future conflict by building mutual understanding between youth from divided cultures. And books have been written about using adventure activities to *teach* conflict resolution skills, particularly to children (see Kreidler & Furlong, 1995), yet despite emerging suggestions and a few anecdotes, there still seems to be very little literature on using adventure to conduct conflict resolution *interventions*.

As was noted earlier, conflict resolution theorists and practitioners do not appear to promote any particular theory of learning within the context of actual interventions. Nevertheless, many aspects of adventure activities have independently appeared relevant for addressing conflict. Depending on the nature of the conflict, nontraditional approaches have appeared from time to time even in high profile situations.

For instance, consider the famous Camp David peace accords facilitated by President Carter in 1978. Did the rural setting of Camp David serve as a space for an experiential process that never would have occurred around a mahogany table in the White House? We will never know, but we certainly may speculate and be inspired to study the element of adventure present in such environments. Schirch (1999) reported that President Carter was intentional about the novel environment of Camp David:

> Former President Carter chose to bring Begin and Sadat to Camp David specifically because of the atmosphere he thought the informal surroundings would create for the adversaries. Carter claimed Camp David was [a] harmonious environment because Egyptians and Israelis who had been devoting their adult life to killing each other were required to swim in the same swimming pool, watch the same movies, play on the same tennis courts, throw horse-shoes together; sit on the same rock and talk…' (p. 5)

While the theory may not yet be in place, it seems that the notion of ABCR has already been implicitly suggested in different ways; it just has not been spelled out.

Reconciliation. Adventure Therapy is a rapidly growing niche field that actively employs experiential education principles to treat clinical patients dealing with problems such as substance abuse and self-esteem issues. When it comes to variables such as self-confidence, self-concept, locus of control, and achievement motivation, adventure activities applied as therapy have served to transform individuals to a more healthy state (e.g. Kimball & Bacon, 1993).

Could adventure therapy successes set a precedent for using adventure to aid in a reconciliation process involving group conflict?   As an expert in both therapy and conflict resolution, Sara Cobb has suggested that they do not (personal communication, November 19, 2002). She asserted that *most* therapy is not directly analogous to conflict resolution, as it tends to address [conflict] problems through a lens of psychopathology, which considers that problems exist *inside* the person and must be treated as a disease, whereas conflict resolution theory suggests that problems are grounded more in the dynamics *between* people, and within the *structures* that surround relationships.

Before discounting adventure therapy's relevance to conflict, however, consider Kimball and Bacon's (1993) thoughts on the epistemology of wilderness therapy. They acknowledged the notion that most therapeutic treatment programs do focus on psychopathology (as Cobb described) and place emphasis on obstacles; however, they suggested that—albeit still on an intrapersonal level of analysis—*wilderness* therapy focuses on strengths, capabilities, and potential of the individual. "Whereas most traditional treatment programs define the [patient] as sick and dependent, in the wilderness, the therapeutic journey is largely one of self-discovery and autonomy." So perhaps the field of wilderness therapy is worth taking a look at after all, not so much for the psychotherapeutic qualities it explains, but rather in terms of its predominantly ability-based outlook, as opposed to a *dis*-ability frame that often characterizes therapy.

Furthermore, when looking at transformation in terms of factors directly relevant to group conflict, returning to the notion of ritual, Andrews (1999, Introduction section) has suggested that wilderness expeditions can serve as a ritualistic rite of passage that can

transform participants vis-à-vis communication skills and teamwork competencies by

virtue of "phenomena" that occur when participants "…journey from the conventional

structures of society through the transitional phase of liminality and back into society

again." Much work has to be done to explore ways in which adventure can transform

conflicting parties, but nothing yet suggests that it cannot. Indeed, Sara Cobb also

suggested that when considering the therapeutic dynamics of wilderness adventure

through a relational frame it does seem to connect after all.

Developing Positive Relationships

In terms of research on negotiation, studies have noted that developing positive

relationships between parties helps to foster an atmosphere of trust, which can lead to

"decision makers [having] higher levels of constructive types of conflict and openness"

(Mannix, Tinsley, & Bazerman, 1995, p. 242). Conversely, studies have also shown, as

Druckman (2002) described, that relationship developed to the level of 'friendship' can

sometimes be disadvantageous when parties do not work as hard (as non-friends might)

to reach good agreements or when one party becomes disappointed when the other does

not act as expected.

In general, however, most conflict resolution practitioners and scholars

presumably support the notion that if a process can develop positive relationship between

parties in a conflict situation (as opposed to just a negotiation—which may not fit the

definition of conflict), such a relationship is ultimately advantageous to the cause of

constructively addressing the conflict. Bush & Folger (1994) have even suggested that

transforming the relationship may actually be *more* important than the tangible outcomes of an intervention process.

In terms of building positive relationship between parties from apparently different racial/ethnic groups, Allport's (1954) "contact hypothesis" suggested that interaction between such parties should lead to more positive, more tolerant racial attitudes, so long as the contact situation meets the following criteria: it should allow for equal status; participants should engage in purposeful, interdependent activities toward achieving common goals; contact should not be in a competitive situation; and contact should have support/approval of relevant authorities to the situation.

If Allport's hypothesis is correct, then most adventure-learning environments provide the exact blend of characteristics listed above. Even though his work has focused on building relationship between members of different ethnic/racial groups, perhaps parties to other types of conflict may also be able to develop more positive attitudes about each other through appropriate contact situations. After all, the major implied premise is that conflict is allowed/tolerated/propagated, in part, due to a lack of understanding of the other. Through appropriate contact, parties come to know each other in a new light.

On a personal note, I have been involved in countless outdoor adventure exercises and expeditions that started out with groups of complete strangers (or relatively unacquainted or malacquainted peers) and ended with significant, lasting positive bonds. During post activity/trip debriefs, it is not uncommon to hear reflections from participants regarding how they came to learn about their peers with new-found respect and admiration, especially when they may have had negative impressions early on.

So, in a general sense, a natural overlap appears between adventure and conflict resolution once again. Developing positive relationship is mostly advantageous to conflict resolution, and adventure-based learning experiences are usually predisposed towards developing positive relationships among participants.

Developing Skills for Collaboration

Implicit in the process of mediation or other facilitated dialogue processes is the fact that a mediator/facilitator has advanced training in specific skills conducive to effectively addressing conflict (e.g., reframing, perception-checking, clarifying, etc.) and can be particularly helpful by facilitating a conversation between the conflicting parties by employing such skills. Many programs aimed at teaching such conflict resolution skills presumably expect that parties who are more familiar with collaboration strategies can more effectively cope with their own conflict situations (without as much third-party assistance). In the organizational setting, Kolb (1990) has suggested that gaining collaboration skills is important for enhancing a team's capacity to deal with conflict.

When it comes to adventure-learning environments, clients often contract with facilitators to provide them experiences from which they can learn and practice a wide variety of skills associated with teamwork, including effective communication tactics, problem-solving strategies and tactics, and decision-making skills. Martin (1994) even went so far as to state that experiential learning/training programs can help to "vaccinate" the "body" of an organization against "corporate disease" and prepare for the challenges

that lie ahead (pg. 212). Though not usually framed in terms of conflict prevention, one can easily see the parallels.

Currently, parties to conflicts do not typically retain the assistance of teambuilding facilitators. Given that adventure-based approaches can be uniquely suited for imparting crucial skills for collaboration, however, perhaps there is a place for it to become more institutionalized as an option.

Developing Potential Realization.

The world-renowned rock climber, Royal Robbins, once said, "We cannot know what we can accomplish in advance. The only way to find out is to go all out trying, thinking only of success." Does this sound a bit overly idealistic? Do Robbins' statements represent a denial of a world perceived by some as a place where human potential has recognizable limits and where idealism is often considered synonymous with *un*realism? Perhaps. But then again, Royal Robbins was the first to climb the 3,000 foot El Capitan rock face in Yosemite Valley, California, a feat most considered impossible. That was in 1960, and he took nearly a week, assisted by lots of artificial anchors and slings to make the climb. Thirty-five years later, a female climber, Lynn Hill, scaled the same granite monolith in less than 24 hours, and she did it without the help of any artificial gear. Today, it is not unheard of for expert climbers to make the same ascent in as little as four hours! (Florine & Wright, 2002).

In a day and age where people often suggest, "anything is possible," do we *really* believe it? And if so, then what do we base it on? Have we experienced something

firsthand from which we can draw such an idealistic conclusion? Where does one draw the line with such optimism?

In the realm of conflict, where do parties—including third parties—perceive the limits? And how is it that they come to believe what is or is not possible when seeking solutions? The notion of potential realization—a deeply understood belief that more is possible than meets the eye, which informs a faith that something can be achievable, even if the path to success is not apparent at the outset—is key to any successful conflict resolution intervention. But how do parties come to trust each other and believe in the possibility of integrative solutions, for instance, when conventional wisdom suggests that such outcomes are not possible? Given current practices, do they?

Surely, two major obstacles to overcoming conflict are negative attitudes and lack of faith (that conflict is resolvable). Adventure learning can serve as "attitude training" to help parties overcome these mental blocks. By overcoming seemingly impossible obstacles in adventure settings, participants may adopt a new sense of faith—a faith that they *can* accomplish more than they realize, as individuals *and* as groups. Whether succeeding as a group with a difficult problem-solving initiative or as an individual, by climbing a rock that seemed unclimbable, we learn—kinesthetically encoded through our bodies and emotional experiences—that we are capable of much more than we once realized. Nothing feels better than achieving the seemingly impossible, and by doing so, we develop a more positive attitude inspirited with faith that there is a way; we just have to find it. Adventure experiences, above all, hold a unique potential to kinesthetically encode these valuable lessons.

A Model of Adventure-Based Conflict Resolution

So far I have described adventure-based experiential learning in the context of its relevance to conflict resolution and I have highlighted some of the salient characteristics of adventure processes that may be particularly useful for achieving the intended outcomes associated with relationship, skills, and potential-realization. The following model illustrates *where* the salient features of adventure experiences may be more apt to link with the intended outcomes. Essentially, the model is a sorting mechanism: a map of ABCR that can serve as a tool for determining the fit of various experiential methods for achieving one or more of three specific intended outcomes in conflict resolution interventions: development of positive relationships between parties (e.g. Bush & Folger, 1994), development of collaboration skills (e.g., Kolb, 1990), and development of potential realization (reconceptualized confidence). Individual features of adventure-based experiential learning (e.g., challenge, risk, novelty, etc.) are mapped in such a way that suggests their *relative* connection to each of the intended outcomes; some adventure features are central to all the outcomes while others are more specific. In order to make sense of how the features relate to the outcomes, I will elaborate on a few.

For instance, if a major goal of an intervention is to engender a more positive relationship between parties, we can see from the diagram that a "novel shared experience" might be useful. Conducting an adventure exercise that is not very novel or shared and instead takes participants through a constant trial-and error process might not do much for building personal relationship, but it might do a lot for building collaborative skills.

Why does a novel shared experience relate to relationship development? Drawing
from the notion of ritual, many (e.g. LeBaron, 2002) would argue that out-of-the-ordinary
experiences are more conducive to creating liminal space, and liminal space is where
personal and relational transformation is likely to occur. It is doubtful that positive

Elements of Adventure-Based Conflict Resolution

Positive Relationship

Collaboration Skills

Wilderness

Novel Shared
Experience

Training

Fun

Superordinate
Goals

Reflection

Metaphor

Problem-Solving

Challenge

Trust-Building

Practice / Trial &
Error
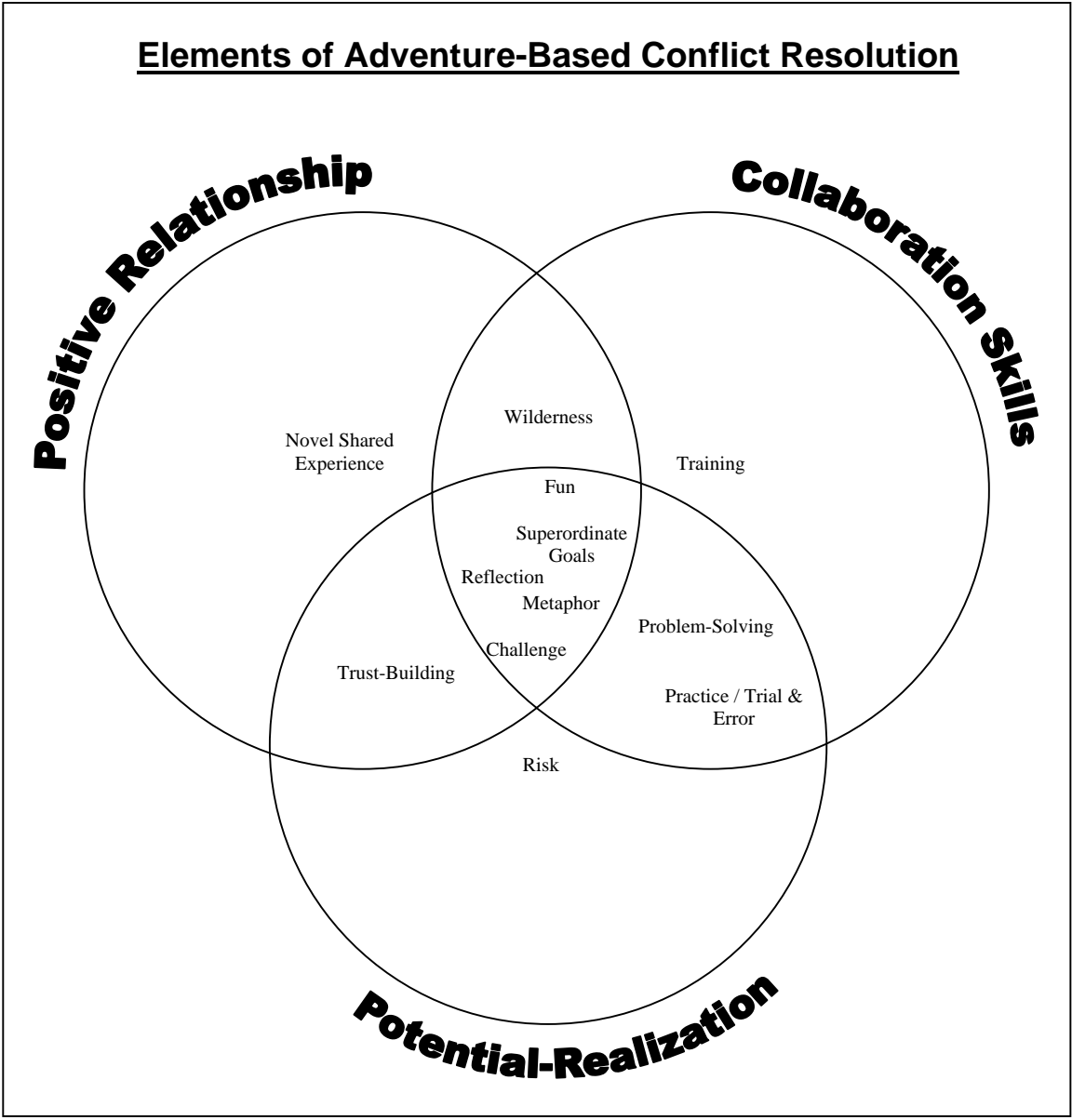
Risk

Potential-Realization

Figure 1, Elements of Adventure-Based Conflict Resolution

relationship could be developed 100% of the time by subjecting parties to contrived

adventure rituals, but of all the features of adventure, this is arguably the most relevant in

terms or relationship-development. Conducting an adventure ritual in a wilderness

setting might augment the effect even more, again, by virtue of the liminal qualities of

nature.

Take a look at "risk." The reason why I have it situated in the "potential-

realization" sector is that to realize previously undiscovered potential generally

necessitates doing something one thought not possible to do. Often times, the best

experiences for offering such an opportunity involve entering into situations that one may

perceive as risky (i.e. rock climbing or public speaking). As was mentioned earlier, the

fact that the situation is *perceived* as risky is more important, and indeed safer, than

"real" risk. To take a risk is to possibly accomplish something previously considered

unreachable, in turn leading to an attitude that "more is possible than it seems," including

solutions to conflict.

Other features are plotted at various intersections of the three sectors simply to

denote their relative importance of necessity for those outcomes. It should be noted that

all of the features could potentially be intermingled in a different fashion and still make

some sense, but this map serves to highlight which features are *most* relevant to the

respective outcomes so as to avoid haphazard applications (e.g., the "one size fits all"

approach used by many facilitators).

When it comes to developing skills, it may often be the case that a positive

relationship already exists, but the parties simply do not have the appropriate

collaboration skills necessary to work on their conflict effectively. In this case, a training or trial-and-error approach using teambuilding initiatives would likely be helpful.

The center region of the model includes some of the most salient core features of most effective adventure-based learning experiences. *Fun* is central to all learning, as it helps to level the playing field and positively effect our physical and emotional chemistry; *superordinate goals* are helpful to keep in mind whenever relational interests are at stake (e.g. "we are all in this together"); *metaphor* helps us to elaborate and conceptualize physical experiences in creative and narrative ways, regardless of the intended outcome; c*hallenge* helps us to escape our comfort zone, with allows for more vivid and engaged encoding processes; and *reflection* is the critical process of intellectually and cognitively processing an experience so that it makes sense on more than just a visceral level—indeed, so that the lessons may be transferred to bigger and more important issues.

Regardless of how scientifically accurate the model may be, one could argue that simply applying a more intentional approach to designing interventions is more effective than a one-size-fits-all approach. The following chapter looks at some historical cases where ABCR may have been relevant, even if it was not an intended process as conceptualized by this model. Rather, these cases will help to paint a picture of how this model might function if used intentionally.

CHAPTER 6: Applications of Adventure-Based Conflict Resolution

The following exemplars of the ABCR model are provided to illustrate the hypothetical potential of the model in that the model will be used to make sense of the cases. More in-depth case-study analysis might lead towards a better understanding of causation, or at least reveal empirical significance of relevancy between kinesthetic experiential processes and conflict resolution. While my choice to present the following cases is based in the theory and reasoning already discussed, I must reiterate that to draw any conclusions would be premature and potentially incorrect. Nevertheless, it may be helpful to imagine the possibilities. Specifically, one might gather from the following cases the potential of ABCR for preventing, resolving, and reconciling conflict.

As an exemplar of conflict *prevention*, I will discuss how US-Soviet relations in the early 1990's may have been positively affected by a fly-fishing trip between the nations' respective head negotiators, James Baker and Eduard Shevardnadze. To highlight the appropriateness of ABCR for conflict *resolution*, I will describe an incident where international NGO leaders uncovered latent conflict and learned a valuable lesson about strategic cooperation through participating in a teambuilding initiative called "the leaky pipe". And turning to *reconciliation*, I will highlight a recent Antarctic sailing and mountaineering expedition undertaken by an unprecedented team of Israelis and Palestinians.

Prevention: US-Soviet Fly Fishing

An instance of conflict prevention can be tricky to identify. After all, how can we know if a particular intervention prevented conflict? And how can we determine what aspect(s) of the intervention may have been most salient? Scientifically controlled experiments might help isolate likely variables, but such experimentation would also be ethically and operationally challenging. Furthermore, where does one draw the line between prevention and resolution? In terms of US-Soviet relations in 1989, one would be hard pressed to consider the relationship free of conflict. Indeed, the two nations were at war, albeit "cold" war. The fact that the cold war never turned "hot," however, suggests that further escalation was somehow prevented. For this case, I consider prevention to mean prevention of further escalation. Consider the following story.

In September 1989 tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union were running high amid the apparent revolution underway within the Soviet Union. Gorbachev had recently proclaimed a new era of Perestroika (economic restructuring) and Glasnost (openness), but the new Bush Administration was skeptical. Could the Soviets really transform their society without force? Could the Berlin Wall come down without a nuclear Armageddon?   Even though the threat of nuclear war had already been significantly diminished, major arms-control treaties had yet to be negotiated. In an effort to achieve more stable relations and a to secure fresh line of communication, US Secretary of State, James A. Baker III, on advice of his Assistant Secretary of State for Communications Margaret Tutwiler, made a unique move that strayed far from the norms of international diplomacy: He invited Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze on

a wilderness retreat to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Shevardnadze accepted, and while *fly-fishing near the Grand Tetons*, the two undertook "complex and technical negotiations on…esoteric arms control matters." According to Baker (1999), they made "very significant breakthroughs [on issues] that [had] been hanging up the relationship for quite some time." Ultimately, they achieved a "new atmosphere of trust", and months later, Shevardnadze invited Baker on a fishing trip to Lake Baikal in Siberia.

From all indications, the Jackson Hole summit in 1989 unequivocally led US-Soviet relations down a yet untraveled path of positive progress. In examining the unique qualities of the summit—what made it different than other meetings—one must consider the unprecedented nature of the setting, both symbolically and physically. Never before had the Soviets been allowed outside a 25-mile radius of Washington DC or the UN in New York, but Baker believed that "Moving [the] talks from the bureaucratic environment of Washington to the rugged grandeur of the American West might help forge a new spirit of cooperation, openness, and mutual trust between us and our staffs" (Baker, 1995, p. 3). Apparently it worked. Headlines across the country reported, "Where the Elk and the Diplomats Roam" (NY Times, 9/22/89), and "Mountain Air Appears to Invigorate U.S. Relationship With Soviet Union" (Washington Post, 9/25/89). Reporters observed that, "scenic and relaxed surroundings played [a part] in their deliberations" (Washington Post, 9/25/89). In a summary of the atmosphere, the New York Times (9/22/89) referred to Jackson Hole as the "Geneva of the Rockies."

Indeed, even while the two diplomats fished together on the Snake River, much progress was made. The Christian Science Monitor (9/25/89) reported that the summit

"sent a jolt of energy into relations between the superpowers," that Shevardnadze and Baker "found common ground. . .[and made an]. . . important move down the road to a long-range nuclear arms agreement." Baker was reported as saying, "Those who want to see a full range of progress in US-Soviet relations should take heart from this ministerial." Furthermore, the same article suggested that "the changing character of US-Soviet relations was perhaps best disclosed not by the official agenda, but by unofficial discussions." A senior US official was quoted as saying, "It reveals something about a degree of trust which has already emerged in this relationship." The Washington Post (9/24/89) reported that among a total of seven bilateral accords successfully produced by the meeting, Baker and Shevardnadze (according to Baker) "broke a 15-year deadlock" on a critical issue dealing with nuclear testing.

While it may seem that such newspaper accounts were glorified headline hyperbole, the implications from the Jackson Hole summit resonated in the minds of Baker and Shevardnadze long after their historic meeting. In his memoirs, Baker (1995) clearly recalled the significance of the meeting:

> Above all, these achievements occurred in an open and informal atmosphere. Not only had Shevardnadze and I broken down the formal barriers in our talks, but so had many members of our delegations. My sense was that Wyoming ushered in a new tone in our personal relations—and that those ties became the key to much of the progress we made during the dramatic events later in the fall as Soviet internal problems multiplied and Eastern Europe liberated itself from the USSR. (p. 151)

At Jackson Hole, we had made progress on every part of our agenda. We

had turned a corner—as I had put it during the ministerial—"from confrontation

to dialogue, to cooperation." I was determined to do what I could to consolidate

this change—not only in terms of official U.S. government policy but also with

the Congress and the American public at large. (p. 155)

And even much later—nearly ten years after the ministerial—Baker recounted, "Most of

all what I remember from that meeting was that the tone and the environment were so far

different than what we had experienced in our formal get-togethers . . . . Jackson Hole

was the beginning of a lot of good things" (Quoted in Durbin, 2000, p. 2).

Shevardnadze's interpreter, Pavel Palazchenko (1997), also recalled the

significance of the Jackson Hole meeting as a major turning point in the human

relationship between the negotiators.

[Shevardnadze] trusted Baker's good intentions. The two men were in agreement

about the basic course of the relationship: from confrontation . . . to mutual

understanding and cooperation, and eventually to partnership. And between the

two of them it looked increasingly like friendship. (p. 150).

This friendship became vitally important in setting the stage for a monumental shift in

US-Soviet relations less than a year later.

As a direct act of reciprocity for the fun and productive time had in Jackson Hole,

Shevardnadze invited Baker to go on a fishing trip in Irkutsk in the end of July 1990. On

August 2, Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait. On the following day, Baker and Shevardnadze

held negotiations about the Gulf crisis and, in the lobby of an airport outside of Moscow,

issued to the world a joint US-Soviet statement condemning Iraq for its actions. Given

the fact that Iraq was technically an ally of the Soviet Union at the time, Shevardnadze

described agreeing to the pronouncement as "one of the most difficult decisions [he] had

ever had to make" given how "moral imperatives collided with political considerations"

(1991, p. 101).

During the following days and weeks, the Soviets joined the other permanent

members of the UN Security Council to build international consensus around a response

to Saddam Hussein. Shevardnadze believed that the Soviet Union's "cooperation with

the United States was unprecedented" (p. 102). To Baker and others, not only did the

joint statement and subsequent collaboration represent unprecedented cooperation, it

represented no less than an end of the Cold War:

> As we finished [crafting the statement], I wanted to remind Shevardnadze of just
>
> how far we had come. "You know, Eduard, if this was five years ago, maybe even
>
> three years ago, this whole crisis would have been put in the context of an East-
>
> West competition and confrontation. Then this would have been far more
>
> dangerous. That's a measure of what we've accomplished.". . . There was no
>
> mistaking the fact that we had just journeyed light-years [from President Regan's
>
> inauguration]. Ten years later, what he had termed the Evil Empire had joined
>
> with its most implacable adversary in a remarkable alliance against what
>
> Shevardnadze and I jointly denounced as [a] "blatant transgression of basic norms
>
> of civilized conduct" by a Soviet client state. . . . That August night, a half-
>
> century after it began in mutual suspicion and ideological fervor, the Cold War

breathed its last at an airport terminal on the outskirts of Moscow. (Baker, 1995,

p. 16)

ABCR Discussion. Fishing diplomacy; now there is an idea! Seriously, what is it

about the Baker-Shevardnadze vignette that gets our attention? What exactly was *it* that,

in the case of the Jackson Hole fishing trip, ostensibly worked to transform a conflict-

laden relationship into a trusting, committed partnership for peace? Despite an extensive

investigation of the principals' stated views, as well as considering the situation from the

viewpoints of their fly-on-the-wall interpreters, one cannot say for sure what it was about

Jackson Hole that created a shift in the US-Soviet relationship. Nevertheless, taking a

closer look at the circumstances through the lens of the ABCR model might suggest at

least three significant features of the experience that might be attributable to the

transformed human relationship (the key outcome of the model in this situation) and

subsequent prevention of potentially-serious problems associated with arms control

issues. Based on the above investigation, the following elements appeared to

significantly contribute to the experience: wilderness, shared novel experience, and trust.

In terms of the environmental setting, the wilderness retreat surely played a part in

promoting a calming and open atmosphere for dialogue. As is apparent from the

quotations above, the entire delegation in Wyoming, including the press corps, was

moved and relaxed in some way by the natural beauty of the wilderness surroundings.

The setting also served as a stage for further venturing away from the box of typical

diplomatic relations by allowing for a shared kinesthetic experience by fishing.

Based on the fact that Shevardnadze invited Baker to go fishing in the Soviet Union, one can assume that the primary shared activity—fishing—was perhaps equally important as the wilderness setting. Shevardnadze could have simply invited Baker to a mountain retreat to enjoy the outdoors, but instead he replicated the kinesthetic experience that the pair had originally shared in Jackson Hole. The fact that they both enjoyed the chosen activity suggests there may have been positively charged kinesthetic encoding going on; the element of *fun* surely played a part as well.

Both negotiators reported an elevated sense of mutual trust as a result of the Jackson Hole trip. Perhaps the most salient source of the trust derived from the symbolic gesture by Baker to "allow" the Soviets to visit a place previously off-limits. The interpersonal time they shared also, presumably, led to increased levels of trust by virtue of the fact that to act outside the norms of official diplomatic intercourse makes one vulnerable, and to voluntarily enter into a vulnerable situation suggests a higher level of trust than might otherwise be expected.

The Baker-Shevardnadze example illustrates how a fishing trip might have served to build mutual trust and understanding between two parties who could have instigated international conflict of tragic proportions had such relations not been established early on. Using adventure to *resolve* conflict might be a little trickier, however.

Resolution: International NGO Teambuilding

Perhaps the greatest value of ABCR can be realized in helping to uncover and identify *latent* conflict. The following case clearly illustrates this.

As a pilot study for this thesis, I surveyed a group of international NGO leaders regarding their perceptions of a teambuilding activity that I facilitated at a workshop for international conflict resolution NGO's in 2002, near Washington, DC. The short, confidential survey (Appendix A), administered via email, aimed to record ordinal and open-ended responses from participants and observers of the initiative in order to gain some feedback regarding the perceived implications of teambuilding activities, such as the one they participated in, on the potential for developing ABCR intervention techniques. However, even though I intended for the exercise to merely serve as an experience from which to hold a conversation about potential implications, it actually turned out to uncover and address latent conflict within the group.

On the third evening of the NGO retreat, volunteers were asked to participate in the "leaky pipe" problem-solving initiative (See Appendix B for detailed description of activity). Ten people participated; about twenty observed. The task required the group to fill a 2-inch-diameter pipe with water in order to float a sealed 35mm film canister to the top of the pipe. Inside the canister was a voucher for free drinks in the nearby pub for all the initiative participants. The only catch, however, was that the pipe was full of holes! Extra holes were taped over in such a way that 40 remained: 4 per person (two per hand).

While the solution simply required each person to pinch a set of holes with each hand, their approach to the challenge was anything but coordinated. Instead of any common discussion or planning, they all tried various techniques for covering the holes, which resulted in a lot of water leaking. Amazingly, the group continued for over thirty minutes without any real progress. Frustrations grew and patience lessened, and the

water level remained at the bottom of the pipe. After a few breaks, regroupings, and

facilitated discussion, the participants ultimately realized the need to share their ideas and

try common approaches instead of everyone trying their own techniques without any

coordination. They eventually succeeded after nearly an hour of struggle!

The survey was distributed to approximately 25 attendees from the NGO

workshop who either participated in or watched the leaky pipe exercise. At the time of

this analysis, six people had completed the surveys: four participants and two observers.

In terms of the nominal questions, the results are as follows:

(SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree)							
		participant 1	participant 2	participant 3	participant 4	observer 1	observer 2
1	Challenging?	A	SA	SA	A	SA	SA
2	Fun?	A	A	A	SA	U	SA
3	Frustrating?	SA	A	A	SA	SA	A
4	Required Collaboration?	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA
5	Taught me Collaboration?	SA	U	SA	SA	D	A
6	Taught me Communication?	SA	A	SA	SA	D	A
7	Could be Used to Prevent Conflict?	A	U	U	A	A	U
8	Could be Used to Resolve Conflict?	SA	U	U	SA	U	U
9	Could be Used for Reconciliation?	SA	U	A	SA	U	A
1	Could Build Healthy Relationship?	SA	A	A	A	A	A
1	CR Training?	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
1	Adv Training?	N	N	N	Y	N	N

Table 1

The open-ended questions elicited much more useful information, however, in

terms of understanding how the leaky pipe activity was perceived vis-à-vis implications

for conflict intervention. In response to the question of whether "initiative activities such

as the leaky pipe have relevance to understanding conflict," all six respondents indicated

various reasons for why they indeed thought so. One respondent wrote, "it [helped]

people see the importance of relationship in conflict…and could be a positive factor in reconciliation and building bonds between conflicting parties." Another indicated, "The [leaky pipe] activity demonstrates the important role played by misperception and miscommunication in escalation of tension and frustration." Another suggested that such activities help to demonstrate the "importance of recognizing the problem, listening to others describe their perspectives on the problem, and agreeing to unite in a common effort." One respondent felt that trust was a major aspect of such an activity, "You must make yourself vulnerable to the responses of your teammates. This takes trust in each other."

Though fewer respondents (three) responded directly to the question of relevance to conflict *resolution* efforts, their answers were telling as well. One participant wrote, "By building the relationships and giving people a forum to interact in, the leaky pipe [initiative] could open new opportunities for the creating of positive conflict repertoires." Another indicated that initiative activities "may help the individual to be more sensitive to the needs, actions, and ideas of others."

In terms doing activities such as the leaky pipe with foreign diplomats, the responses were guarded, yet encouraging. One participant indicated, "I could really see how diplomats would benefit by coming down to a practical level and finding a solution in which the parties win, and finding failure if there is no cooperation." Another simply wrote, "Sounds like a great idea." On the cautionary side, another participant suggested, "If you could get them to do it, I think it would be positive, but I think that you would

have to do other, less interactive things first." Elaborating on the latter sentiment, one participant responded,

> If you could persuade the diplomats to regard the activity as a meaningful exercise rather than as a childish joke, it would open their minds to new methods and initiatives. A good facilitator would be crucial here, to convince the diplomats of the utility of an exercise that departs so radically from established procedure.

In terms of general comments, one respondent who has experience as a conflict mediator wrote:

> I strongly support novel and creative approaches to conflict resolution, given the limited success of many conventional approaches. Leaky pipe taps into some very simple and basic human reactions, and provides an authentic learning experience, which every player—regardless of background or experience—can understand on a gut level.

The most interesting outcome of all, however, manifested itself during the debrief immediately following the activity. The group's high degree of struggle fortunately allowed an opportunity for gaining some very insightful lessons. During the debrief, instead of just talking about filling up a pipe with water, the discussion focused around the real-life challenges of infrastructure development in war-torn Afghanistan, where many of their organizations were working. They identified the pipe as a metaphor, where the experience of filling it was painfully similar, according to the group members, to the challenges they were facing in the NGO community in Afghanistan.

Namely, everyone, they explained, was presumed to be in Afghanistan with great intentions, and they were all working relentlessly to address the needs of the population, but they apparently lacked effective coordination. In essence, they were experiencing conflict over scarce resources, including infrastructure needs, access to leaders, and opportunities for unique intervention. The *leaky pi*pe helped them articulate how they were all so caught up in doing their own tasks that they had not taken the time to come together in the spirit of collaboration. In the *leaky pipe* exercise, there were plenty of fingers available to cover the holes, but until the brains attached to those fingers coordinated how and where to place them, chaos was the order of the evening. The enacted metaphor appeared to deeply resonate with many of the group members, and they even began to talk about how their respective NGOs could find times and places to meet in Afghanistan in an effort to collaborate and better coordinate their work there.

While the same dynamics could have easily been discussed in a conversation independent of the adventure experience, nobody in the group had articulated the challenge they were facing in the real world previous to working on the *leaky pipe*. Were they in conflict without knowing it? Perhaps—or maybe they just had not discussed it yet or, more likely, they did not have a common language to discuss it. Either way, the level of enthusiasm in the reflective discourse steadily rose as everyone, including the observers, pitched in to add pieces of perspective to the collective narrative of their situation. While their challenges in the "real world" may have already been on everyone's mind, they had not been openly discussed until the leaky pipe triggered an understanding of what they perceived was actually going on in the real world.

ABCR Discussion. To sum it up in terms of the ABCR model, at least three key features seemed to play a part in the leaky pipe teambuilding experience: metaphor, novelty, and training.

Clearly, as is discussed above, the active use of metaphor helped to create a shared language for the group, and it presumably helped to serve as a lens through which the group could consider their skills for collaborating in the future. The novelty of the event helped to bring the individuals closer together on a personal level, which may have led to a greater ease of discussing the tense real-world situation in which they seemed to be competing in Afghanistan. And the trial-and-error training approach used during the initiative helped to identify the specific skills necessary for future collaborations (including fundamental tactics for coordinating and communicating).

Reconciliation: Israeli-Palestinian Antarctic Expedition

In the violent conflict that continues to rage between Israelis and Palestinians, competing needs for security, identity, and dignity, among other interests expressed in disputes over land and sovereignty, continue to fuel passion. And despite many attempt in recent years to seek solutions and reconcile the differences, from Oslo, to Camp David II, to the latest "Road Map" or to the Geneva Accord, all have been upstaged by ongoing assertions of force, either by suicide bombings or by more sophisticated military strikes and incursions. Despite the grim outlook in the region, however, an unlikely team of individuals recently set out to demonstrate to themselves, their region, and the world, that peaceful reconciliation between apparent enemies might be possible.

On January 1ˢᵗ, 2004, an eight-member Israeli-Palestinian expedition team set sail from Patagonia, Chile on a "peace mission" to Antarctica. They intended to climb and name an unexplored mountain in the hopes of demonstrating the potential for Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation. Departing on the 35-day mission, they navigated the treacherous Drake Passage on a fragile sailboat, depending on each other for cooking, cleaning, and watching out for dangers on the seas. According to the expedition organizer, Heskel Nathaniel, the voyage required a passage through the "largest ships graveyard in the world", including 50-foot waves and 80 mph winds (Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles, 4/9/04). Upon reaching Antarctica, they established a base camp and soon headed off in a rope team for the summit. Despite intermittent whiteout conditions caused by 180-200km winds (Jerusalem Post, 3/19/04), the team successfully scaled the summit of the 2000-meter mountain and jointly proclaimed it "The Mountain of Israeli-Palestinian Friendship."

After returning home, members of the expedition, dubbed "Breaking the Ice," were honored in Washington, DC by the international conflict resolution NGO, Search for Common Ground, for their unique approach towards inspiring others to "be their best in the face of violent conflict and war" (Search for Common Ground, 2004). Many articles and reports of the expedition were published around the Middle East and the world, and Breaking the Ice continues to receive recognition for their journey.

The implications for conflict resolution and reconciliation seem quite apparent with such an undertaking, but how can skeptical observers be sure that this was not a stunt performed by pacifists from both sides? Surely, if such was the case, their

expedition, while noble and inspiring, might not be taken too seriously and would not adequately exemplify reconciliation. As it turned out, however, pacifists were nowhere to be seen on this trip. Indeed, one of the Palestinians had previously been imprisoned for firebombing Israeli troops; another, for stabbing an Israeli soldier. One of the Israelis, by the same token, had previously served as an elite army commando, and another was a right-wing activist and also an elite commando. In fact, "soldiers" from both sides of an ongoing "war" spent 35 days exploring the wilderness and trusting each other with their lives on this incredible journey.

ABCR Discussion. While it is much too soon to know what effect will come of this brave attempt to demonstrate the potential for reconciliation, much can be gained from reviewing their efforts. In terms of the ABCR model, two outcomes of the expedition are apparent—if only for the team itself—based on comments made by expedition members: relationship building and potential realization. The salient adventure features that may have led to these outcomes appear to be: *wilderness, challenge, novelty,* and *risk.*

Following are some excerpts from a post-expedition interview published on March 19, 2004 by the Jerusalem Post. The Palestinian who had been imprisoned for (among other charges) stabbing an Israeli soldier, reflected on how the power of the wilderness helped to transform the relationship, if only for the immediate time, between the members from one of conflicting political ideologies and ethnic differences to one of a common humanity:

You feel so small and weak before nature, and like you are on a different planet or a star, where there are no Jews or Arabs. Before nature I didn't see differences between Jews and Arabs… political and religious differences are there, but you suddenly didn't feel it.

Despite her initial anxiety about the expedition, one of the Israelis reflected on how the shared experience and unique time together helped to change her attitudes:

I never thought I'd sit with former convicts from the territories. But I discovered that they are simply amazing, full of love…. My attitude changed about [them]: you can talk and respect each other even if you are different; even be friends with someone who is extreme. Convicts are first of all human. What a discovery! I was afraid they'd kill us, but they were so normal. The Palestinians told me it affected them a lot, too, to see that we can live together, even though the big things didn't change.

And if that is not convincing enough, another Palestinian (who has an Israeli passport) recalled:

There were arguments and fights politically, but on the personal side we treated each other as human beings. [One of the Israelis] and I fought a lot – he's right-wing and his opinions don't suit me. But as a human being, he's a good person. When I got hurt he helped and was always by my side. He didn't treat me the way he speaks of Arabs – but as a person…. I have lived with Israelis and know their side, but what touched me was hearing about the Palestinian problems. I

always hear the news, but this is the first time I met two Palestinians who had been to jail.

Despite the fact that, of the eight members of the expedition, one Palestinian and one Israeli continued to speak harshly of the other side, the greater implications for potential realization were still apparent. As one example of an immediate effect, Nathaniel spoke of the expedition's impact on local Jewish and Palestinian communities in Chile: "I thought the whole journey was worthwhile when we saw the leaders of the Jewish and Palestinian communities of Chile together. They lived next to each other and never exchanged a word [before]" According to the Jerusalem Post (3/19/04), the leaders of those communities published stories in their local Jewish and Arabic papers and remain in contact.

The most profound statement of potential realization manifested upon reaching the summit of the mountain when the team read the following proclamation:

By reaching its summit we have proven that Palestinians and Israelis can cooperate with one another with mutual respect and trust. Despite the deep differences that exist between us, we have shown that we can carry on a sincere and meaningful dialogue. We join together in rejecting the use of violence in the solution of our problems and hereby declare that our peoples can and deserve to live together in peace and friendship. (Jerusalem Post, 1/18/04)

One of the Israelis summed it up best, "…everyone should know what we, as Israelis and Palestinians, are capable of doing when we set our mind to it" (Jerusalem Post, 1/18/04).

While the three cases above share much in common, they are also quite different from one another, which is precisely the point of the ABCR model: adventure can be implemented in many different ways. There surely are limitations, however, and the following sections will highlight a few important considerations regarding type, level, and nature of a given conflict vis-à-vis the appropriateness of an ABCR approach.

Caveats: Type of Conflict

Based on the exemplars above, it seems that adventure-based approaches could potentially be used to address a wide variety of conflicts. The Breaking The Ice team escaped from a society immersed in violent conflict into a liminal space where relationships were built and greater human potential was realized, demonstrating that even people who have once hated each other—even attempted to kill each other—may indeed benefit from an adventure experience.

When it comes to more esoteric data/information types of conflict, a training/skills-based adventure approach could readily be understood to be useful. Pairing a training-oriented process with novel experiences could make the process more fun and memorable than the types of flip-chart-focused problem-solving workshops so often utilized for finding solutions.

An important key to remember when designing an ABCR process is to first understand the desired outcome for the intervention and then be flexible and creative in terms of what type of adventure-based activity would be appropriate for a given group.

Caveats: Level of Escalation

Clearly, and ABCR approach would intuitively seem more appropriate for low levels of conflict—certainly not violent scenarios. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the foregoing case studies depicted ABCR in the context of some very serious conflicts. Perhaps a key to their success was realized in how the parties interacted in the confines of their isolated adventure experience. According to theories on escalation (e.g. Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994), parties can become more psychologically opposed to each other and dehumanize the other to greater degrees as a conflict spirals out of control. Based on such an understanding of conflict escalation, it might seem ludicrous to bring parties together at all.

At the end of the day, however, parties *are* human, and adventure experiences are especially geared towards highlighting that. When Baker and Shevardnadze met in Jackson Hole to go fly fishing *and* discuss serious arms control issues, many of their constituents (US and Soviet populations) were simultaneously dehumanizing the other side. Yet the two men were able to become friends.

Caveats: Nature of Relationship

Important questions arise about how to make sense of the overlap between adventure-based experiential approaches and conflict resolution in a way that maximizes potential gains and minimizes unintended outcomes. What works for children/youth might not be appropriate for adults (especially older adults!). On the most basic level, it would be important for ABCR designers to consider obvious obstacles to certain

adventure approaches, such as physical limitations or cultural incompatibilities. Moreover, further considerations should be made with regard to type of relationship, itself.

Adventure has an advantage in that it can be implemented in many different ways. For an interpersonal setting, a novel shared experience could be facilitated in as many ways as one could imagine. Depending on the personal interests of the parties, doing something together (e.g., fishing, hiking, etc.) that they independently enjoy could in fact serve to bring them closer together. Small-group experiences could be conducted in a similar fashion and can also begin to include problem-solving initiatives that require more than just two or three people to make sense.

When it comes to larger groups of principles, such as communities, other structures become relevant. I find in working with large corporate groups (of 200-300 people at a time), that one way to facilitate an adventure experience that the entire group "shares" is to have them split into interdependent teams working towards the same goal. Theoretically, there is no limit to how many "teams" could simultaneously be involved in a given experience.

Another point to consider, in terms of nature of relationship, is the temporal nature of the relationship. I would suggest that, while ABCR approaches could theoretically be implemented any time parties are convened, they would be more appropriate where a lasting relationship (e.g. personal, business, political, etc.) is already in place or has the potential for being developed.

Limitations and Strengths

Clearly, there is a lot that the ABCR model does not do. First of all, it does not prove—or even strongly support—anything. Given the facts that the descriptive and explanatory body of literature that relates to adventure-based experiential learning does not do an adequate job of isolating the individual features relative to such outcomes, I cannot therefore justifiably plot the features myself without being perfectly clear that the arrangement is based on my own intuitive conception—though is it most definitely consistent, in a broader sense, with what the literature does say. Building a causal case would require a lifetime of research, so I hope others will pitch in and test some of the hypotheses by more scientific methods.

The model, and the underlying rational in support of ABCR also leaves a lot to be questioned regarding questions about culture. On the downside, it is probably fair to say that this entire study was guided and informed by a predominately Euro-American orientation.

Conversely, however, the novelty feature of the model may actually be a benefit when it comes to conflicts involving multiple cultural orientations. Some would argue that if an experience were novel for everyone who participates, regardless of their cultural lenses or predispositions, then that experience may have the potential to "trump" all of the other differences within the group. In other words, a new experience for everyone is a similar experience for all.

Then there is the question of re-entry. While some organizations such as Seeds of Peace have used an ABCR-type of approach to build mutual understanding (relationship

& skills), the real challenge arises when those who have been sensitized to the other side then have to go back "home" to their family and peers who cannot conceive how it is that such mutual understanding was achieved. Before long, the single person who can empathize with the "other side" is re-indoctrinated by his/her family and peers.

Looking on the positive side, however, there is no reason why the concepts of ABCR could not work with pop-culture, itself. If the challenge with re-entry is grounded in a lack of empathy (for how someone could come to respect the other side), then the solution lies in finding a way to help the entire population gain empathy at the same time. Since an ABCR approach could also be exciting to watch (certainly more exciting than watching an 8-hour mediation session), then perhaps one solution might come in the form of an adventure-based reality television show within a region of conflict such as, for instance, the Middle East. Sound crazy? What have we got to lose?

The real limitations and strengths of this model and this study will most likely have to be discovered through testing. I hope this provides a decent starting point.

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

Starting from the problem of the unexamined nature of learning within conflict interventions, I departed on a journey in an attempt to offer one possible approach to enhancing such learning. Perhaps the biggest challenge for me was that I already had an idea of what such an approach might look like, but I did not necessarily know *why* it might be a good idea—or for that matter, if it was at all sound to begin with. The investigation asked the question: *Why* does a kinesthetic approach make sense? After framing adventure as ritual and exploring deeper into the realm of liminality, it became apparent that there may be something unique about ABCR after all.

Nevertheless, if I were to read through this manuscript and highlight every phrase that—by even my own standards—was in need of empirical justification to even enter the radar screen of many scholars, I might run out of ink by Chapter 3. However, the real purpose of this attempt was not to prove anything at all, but rather to suggest what might be possible. In order to do so, I had to cover a lot of ground and make new connections between a variety of ideas and theories. I consider this process to have been one gigantic brainstorm around the potential for ABCR, and I hope that it has at least served to inspire further lines of inquiry.

Given the theoretical complexity of the concept of ABCR, it might not even be possible to prove it or disprove it all, but one thing is certain: the field of conflict analysis

and resolution has not reached its maturity and has certainly not worked itself out of business. Any attempt to enhance the search for and creation of effective means by which to address conflict (especially violent conflict!) should be considered valuable, and sometimes the only way to find out if an idea works is to try it.

One opportunity to institutionalize and test ABCR methods could be incorporated with the creation of a new retreat center being built by George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. The purpose of the center will be to essentially serve as a "public Camp David", administered and supported by the expertise of conflict resolution practitioners and scholars (as opposed to politicians). Perhaps one day "Point of View" (the name of the center) will convene leaders and other parties from conflict situations in order to support a process for addressing their challenges and seeking solutions. One could imagine an ABCR component to such a place.

Imagine that two leaders from conflicting regions or states plan to "hold talks" at Point of View. Now, imagine that before they arrive, they respond to a detailed questionnaire regarding their interests, likes/dislikes, hobbies, favorite foods, etc. Perhaps, like Baker and Shevardnadze, they both have an interest in fishing. Knowing this ahead of time, Point of View could prepare an opportunity for them to go fishing together. Depending on the nature of their relationship, they may even be open to enacting metaphors through initiatives or even sharing physical challenges together in the midst of their important talks.

Without examples like the Baker-Shevardnadze meeting, or the NGO retreat, or the Israeli-Palestinian expedition, such an idea might seem crazy. But if foreign

ministers, NGO leaders, and militant extremists have been able to utilize adventure in the

name of conflict resolution, what are we waiting for?

APPENDIX A

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete this survey regarding your recollection of the "Leaky Pipe" activity that took place by the swimming pool at ████████████████████████████████. *Whether you were a participant or an observer, your perspectives are important.* Please be as honest as possible with your responses. Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Thank again for participating in this valuable research!

Were you a participant or an observer in the Leaky Pipe activity? _____

Based on your experience participating in or observing the "Leaky Pipe" activity,
please respond to the following statements according to the following scale:

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

o
From my perspective, the leaky pipe activity:

1) Was Challenging: _____ comments:

2) Was Fun: _____ comments:

3) Was Frustrating: _____ comments:

4) Required Collaboration For Group To Succeed: _____ comments:

5) Taught Me Something About Collaboration: _____ comments:

6) Taught Me Something About Communication: _____ comments:

7) Could Be Used To Help Prevent Group Conflict: _____ comments:

8) Could Be Used To Help Resolve Group Conflict: _____ comments:

9) Could Be Used In Efforts Towards Reconciliation: _____ comments:

10) Could Be Used To Build Healthy Relationship: _____comments:

11) Please describe how you see initiative activities such as the Leaky Pipe having relevance (or not) to understanding conflict:

12) Please describe how you see initiative activities such as the Leaky Pipe having relevance (or not) to conflict resolution efforts:

13) What are your thoughts about foreign diplomats partaking in initiative activities such as the Leaky Pipe?

14) Any other comments?

Regarding your background:

15) Do you have training in conflict mediation and/or resolution skills? (yes/no) _____**.**
    If yes, please describe your level of training and experience:
    If no, please describe what you know about conflict resolution:

16) Do you have training or experience with facilitating experiential education or "adventure" activities used for teambuilding, such as the "human knot," "spider web," "leaky pipe," etc.? (yes/no) _____**.**
    If yes, please describe your level of training and experience:
    If no, please describe what you know about these types of activities:

APPENDIX B

"LEAKY PIPE"

Note: This overview is not intended as a guide for inexperienced facilitators.
Make sure to attain proper training or enlist the help of a professional facilitator in leading this activity.

PURPOSE: The LEAKY PIPE group initiative activity may be used to challenge a group in one or many areas of *teamwork, cooperation, and communication.* It is an especially appropriate activity for a hot day, as the participants will most likely get rather wet. (Works best with 7 to 12 participants).

SUPPLIES: one section of 2" PVC pipe about 3-4 feet long with 50 1/8" holes drilled in it (25 sets of holes) and capped at the bottom; bucket, or nearby body of water; plastic cup; and athletic tape or electrical tape.

PROCEDURE: Prepare the pipe by taping any holes that exceed 4 per person (i.e. leave 40 holes for a group of ten people), and fill bucket with water. Explain to the group that the following activity is impossible without the full cooperation of every single group member. Describe the situation -- there is a pipe (or maybe a nuclear reactor cooling tank) that has multiple leaks in it. The challenge for the group is to seal all the leaks adequate enough to fill the whole pipe with water. The goal may seem more tangible if a floating object, or vial (film canister) with a message is in the pipe (so it must be "floated" to the top). No items may be used other than the pipe, cup, and bucket. Advise them that they might want to plan out their strategy, and then let them at it!

STRATEGIES: This activity inherently requires a trial-and-error approach. While the task may appear rather simple at first, the process of coordinating every person in the group to approach the challenge with the same strategy can prove more difficult than anticipated and success is almost always a result of a cyclic process of discovering what is working and what is not working, and planning/modifying strategies accordingly. Most groups will usually take at least a few tries before they figure out what works. If time allowance or ability levels become an issue, here are some clues that may help:

FINGER POSITION: A good way to seal the holes is by using the thumb and opposing
       forefinger of one hand in a "pinching" position to cover two holes; the other hand
       covers two more (totaling 4 holes per person).
BODY ARRANGEMENT: Body "packing efficiency" works well when the people
       responsible for the lower holes are laying down, then the next "layer" of people
       can fit above them (straddling, and standing).
VOLUME LEVEL: As with any situation where many people have to coordinate with
       each other to accomplish a specific task, the noise level of the atmosphere directly
       affects the productivity. For instance, if three holes from three different people
       are leaking, and three other people notice the leaks, there need to be three separate
       brief conversations occurring at the same time in order to notify the "leakers". If

voices are calm and quiet, then success is very likely; however, if one person is panicking and yelling, nobody will hear what needs to be done. This is one of the many lessons that may be realized during the debrief.

HOLE RESPONSIBILITY: Usually, groups will figure out an organized way to account for all the holes. It may help if people are numbered off, and then fall into place with their respective holes.

VARIATIONS: The LEAKY PIPE can be used with just about any group, regardless of age or ability, as long as the participants have enough coordination to keep their fingers over the holes. Nevertheless, in order to challenge the group to it's full potential, many variables may be adjusted, such as the amount of water available, number of holes per person, diameter and length of pipe, not using a cap at the bottom of the pipe, talking restrictions, and individual handicaps for "unique individuals". If extreme challenges are desired, part of or the entire group could be blindfolded for part or all of the process.

FACILITATING CONSIDERATIONS: While this exercise tends to yield a wide variety of profound experiential lessons, care must be taken in the manner in which the initiative is led. Learning is directly proportional to struggle and failure, but the lessons are often unrealized without contrasting success. Therefore, the facilitator must pay close attention to the level of frustration in the group and suggest breaks to discuss strategy when appropriate. Ideally, the group will do this spontaneously. A few leading questions from the facilitator may speed things up, but they should be kept to a minimum. Finding the right balance between allowing struggle and facilitating the group's progress is a fine line, indeed, and will always depend on the particular group.

DEBRIEF: The amount of valuable learning associated with this activity may be directly proportional to the amount of post-activity discussion. The discussion should be specific to the success/failure of the group. It is important to let everyone talk about what did and did not work. Most of all, use the debrief time to make sense out of what happened and really help people understand how the group dynamics of the LEAKY PIPE game exist in almost any group problem-solving situation anywhere. Draw out analogies and metaphors. Remember, as a facilitator, you should avoid making direct statements or observations. Rather, is best for such comments to come from the participants. Make sure to ask OPEN-ENDED questions; every group will be different, and there are a wide variety of lessons that may be learned by different groups.

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