



General

- Johan Galtung is a Norwegian sociologist often considered to be one of the founders of the discipline known as Peace and Conflict studies.
- Understanding the continuum of peace helps us recognize that stopping the conflict isn't enough. Without engaging and addressing systemic roots – like colonization, relational power imbalance, economic injustice, or historical trauma – peace is fragile at best.

Conflict

- Conflict does not exist in any productive or effective way in a violent environment.
- Conflict is not able to be managed in an environment where negative peace is present.
- Conflict can be effective and even seen as an opportunity in an environment where positive peace is present.
- An article from Psychology Today. **Transforming conflict through a restorative framework.**
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/transcending-the-past/202012/transforming-conflict-through-a-restorative-framework>

Negative and Positive Peace

- Negative peace is technically the absence of all types of violence; however, it does not include an atmosphere or conditions where people feel safe leaning into conflict in order to discover differences and navigate opposing views and feelings. *Sometimes staying in negative peace is necessary in order to maintain one's safety.* Negative peace exists when a dominant framework is the guiding worldview and value system.
- Some examples of a what an environment of negative peace can look like are: the absence of violence - a ceasefire; tolerance; bias; assumptions; a defensive/guarded state; words against others (gossip); incongruency (asking people to do things one does not do themselves or “nit picking” someone for the same things they do themselves); holding others to higher standards than they hold themselves; a sense of competition for who has been “more harmed”; the people who hold the most power can offer explanations for behaviors whereas they perceive others’ explanations to be excuses; a deeply held belief there is one “truth” and it is whatever their perspective is; an unrealistic precedent that harm and negative impact should not occur and when it does, the person who has “offended” is cast out and does not get a chance to share their perspective, context, and intention; an environment where people hold in their feelings, beliefs, and opinions because they are afraid to “rock the boat”, be told they are wrong, or say something for which they get shamed or shut down; saying “you triggered me” vs. “I am feeling triggered” (“and here is how I can attend to my feelings”); and “call out/cancel” culture. One aspect of call-out culture is that it creates conditions where people often experience fear and anxiety for speaking up because if they offend someone, rather than getting a chance to share their context and intentions and also acknowledge how they may have negatively impacted others, they get cast in the “offender” position. Here, they are often villainized, shunned, shamed, or canceled, and must **earn** their way back into community without clarity on what this “looks like.” Negative peace centers a dominant/individualist worldview and value system where only the needs of those with the most power matter. Negative peace compromises our identity and sense of self.
- Some characteristics of a positive peace worldview and value system are: optimism, acceptance, resilience, gratitude, mindfulness, and integrity (Aug 9, 2020.) Positive peace has the presence of social justice and equity, and there is an absence of all types of violence. Positive peace is grounded in a restorative, collectivist, kinship framework and contains the concept that “my needs and your needs are of equal worth and value.” The “I” exists within the “We.” Because individuals and their needs *do* exist within a collective, one of the guiding principles of positive peace is *normalizing* the that we impact one another in positive and negative ways all the time and that this is part of a being in any relationship. Letting someone know how they negatively impacted you is NOT blaming them as long as you do not make them responsible for how you feel. In positive peace, we are able to both take accountability for this impact, explain our intentions, *and* learn what we can do to begin to reconnect, repair the harm, and rebuild the relationship. In positive peace, explanations are not excuses. Hypocrisy is minimal. There are a set of clear processes and common language used to build community, safety, and trust as well as to respond to harm, conflict, violence, grief, loss, and change. Peacemaking Circles are an example of a clear process that can be used. In an environment where there is positive peace, there is a clear pathway back to community that considers the intentions *as well as* the impact of the individual’s harmful actions. This pathway and these processes support reconciling differences, making decisions, and interacting without violence, silence, or shame. Positive peace centers a restorative/collectivist worldview and value system. Positive peace nurtures our identity and sense of self.