Toolkit for action

Engaging with conflict and challenging hate

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

— Anne Frank, Diarist.

QUAKERS

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About this guide

This guide was written by Lisa Cumming, Turning the Tide Programme Manager, with contributions from Suki Ferguson & Tariq Bashir. Edited by Suki Ferguson. Published by Quaker Peace & Social Witness.

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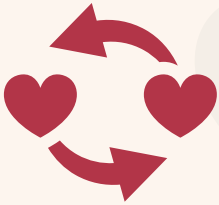
Why engaging with conflict and challenging hate matters

The Quaker commitment to nonviolence means that a thoughtful approach to conflict has an important place in Quaker spiritual practice.



Engaging with conflict nonviolently can help us to speak truth to power whilst remaining in a constructive relationship with whoever holds that power. Whether we are mediators, advocates or directly in conflict with another person or group, there is something to be said for doing the work of engaging with conflict courageously, creatively, sensitively, and without apology.

In writing this foreword we are conscious of live political, cultural and social conflicts. Within this toolkit you will find examples and guidance from conflict resolution practitioners that refer to specific divisions and hatreds, in particular around the far right. We hope that these cases studies can help Quakers and community organisers of all stripes reflect on how we grapple with and respond to conflict and hate.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness staff hope that this toolkit can serve as a primer in a rich and complex field of practice, supporting you on your path of engaging with conflict and resisting hate in all forms.

The two hands of nonviolence

‘With one hand we say to one who is angry, or to an oppressor, or to an unjust system, “Stop what you are doing. I refuse to honor the role you are choosing to play. I refuse to obey you. I refuse to cooperate with your demands. I refuse to build the walls and the bombs. I refuse to pay for the guns. With this hand I will even interfere with the wrong you are doing. I want to disrupt the easy pattern of your life…”

‘But then the advocate of nonviolence raises the other hand. It is raised out-stretched – maybe with love and sympathy, maybe not – but always outstretched. With this hand we say, “I won’t let go of you or cast you out of the human race. I have faith that you can make a better choice than you are making now, and I’ll be here when you are ready. Like it or not, we are part of one another.”’

Barbara Deming, US nonviolence advocate

How do we find ways to prevent harm with one hand, whilst stretching out the other in friendship? When do we choose one hand over the other, knowing both hands matter?

Nonviolence means many things, including imagining the world as we'd like it to be. At its simplest level, when we say nonviolence in this guide, we mean undermining violence through nonviolent means.

What follows are some ideas about engaging with conflict within and between ourselves using the two hands of nonviolence.

The difference between conflict and violence

Conflict and violence are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same thing.

So what is conflict? The scholar Ho-Won Jeong suggests that the possibility of conflict exists when opposing interests, values, or needs affect our relationships with others. We are in conflict when our interests are threatened by someone else's actions and intentions.

Another way to think about conflict is to picture a flame. When we strike a match, the flame we create can be used to create warmth and light, or to

destroy goods and life. Similarly, conflict can be both destructive and creative. There are countless examples throughout history where conflict has been essential to resisting and transforming violence. And, crucially, conflict is also an inevitable and often transformative part of life.

In contrast, violence is any behaviour, attitude, policy or condition that diminishes, dominates or destroys ourselves, other people and/or other living things. And violence can be physical, emotional, verbal, institutional, structural or spiritual.

Violence is not inevitable nor, many would argue, necessary. The two hands of nonviolence give us an alternative to violence, and an active way of engaging with conflict. As argued in *A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals*, peacemaking isn't about being meek or passive – instead, it means finding ways to interrupt injustice without mirroring it.

Part one: Conflict within

'The peace testimony is about deeds not creeds; not a form of words but a way of living. It is the cumulative lived witness of generations of Quakers… The peace testimony is not about being nice to people and living so that everyone likes us. It will remain a stumbling block and will itself cause conflict and disagreement.

'The peace testimony is a tough demand that we should not automatically accept the categories, definitions and priorities of the world… The peace testimony, today, is seen in what we do, severally and together, with our lives. We pray for the involvement of the Spirit with us, that we may work for a more just world. We need to train to wage peace.'

London Yearly Meeting, 1993
Quaker Faith & Practice 24.11

It can be easy to think about conflict or violence as outside ourselves. To grapple with these things, it serves us to look at the conflicts that happen within us first.

Spend some time reflecting on the following questions:

- What does the word conflict mean to you? What images come to mind? What personal conflict experiences pop into your head?
- Think of a specific conflict experience – how did you feel at the time? How do you feel about it now?
- Throughout your life, who and what has shaped how you personally feel about, understand and react to conflict?
- Is there anything you would like to change about how you to tend to handle conflict?

Although we react differently in different situations, we may lean towards a certain 'conflict style', as described in the Thomas-Kilmann model. It may be more helpful to think of these as tendencies than 'styles', because our responses to conflict are always contextual and contingent. With that in mind, have a look and see what sort of 'conflict tendency' you might sometimes lean towards:

Compete – your goal is to win and to get what you want. "I win, you lose."

Accommodate – you set aside your personal needs to keep the peace. "I lose, you win."

Avoid – you ignore or withdraw from a conflict rather than engage with it. "I don't want to get involved."

Compromise – you give up some of your goals and persuade others to give up some of theirs. "I win some, you win some"/"I lose some, you lose some" or, depending on the issue, this could be "win/win" or "lose/lose".

Collaborate – you view conflicts as problems to be solved and take time to find creative solutions that satisfy everyone concerned. "I win, you win."

Take some time to reflect on the following questions:

- What are the potential advantages and disadvantages to each of the above conflict approaches? Is there anything missing?
- Have a think about your conflict approach in relation to different contexts you have experienced or can imagine experiencing. Picture a family argument; an online disagreement; witnessing someone being racially abused in public; a workplace disagreement with a manager.
- What conflict tendency – *compete, compromise, avoid, accommodate, collaborate* – would you like to try out more of in your own life?

Each way to approach conflict has advantages and disadvantages. So much depends on context and your relationship to those you are in conflict with. But being aware of conflict tendencies can be useful to remember when you find yourself in conflict. You can then make a choice about what approach feels most appropriate in that time and place.

'The places to begin acquiring the skills and maturity and generosity to avoid or to resolve conflicts are in our own homes, our personal relationships, our schools, our workplaces, and wherever decisions are made.'

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/New Zealand, 1987
Quaker faith & practice 24.10

Power and privilege

'As I have tried, over the past years, to grapple with the problems of violence and injustice, I have realized increasingly, how little I can do as I am. Without an inner evolution I cannot act wisely.'

Adam Curle, Quaker and peace scholar

When engaging with conflict it is really important to reflect on who we are and who we are in relation to others. Some describe this in terms of power and privilege.

At the most basic level, power means the ability or capacity to do something and/or to influence things.

Having power means being able to do things on your terms. But our ability to act on our own terms is not distributed equally in an unjust world. Our power is influenced by our access to resources and opportunities and the context we are shaped by.

Power is often categorised into the following expressions: *power-over*, *power-to*, *power-with* and *power-within*. Power-over is about controlling others, like a dominating parent or boss. Power-to is being able to act, the potential we all have to make a difference. Power-with is being able to change a situation by acting with others – think of the climate strike action being led by young people across the world for climate justice. And power-within is our internal awareness that change is possible.

Crucially, we need to be aware of our power in relation to others, and the context we find ourselves in, when we engage in conflict.

Built-in advantage

'People of faith are called to ask deep questions. This challenge may feel overwhelming, but it is necessary and presents opportunities for growth. We need to unlearn behaviours and assumptions we have as part of a group with privilege. We need to discover seeking racial justice as a spiritual practice.'

Quaker Council for European Affairs
Race and privilege

Privilege is a term that some activists and others use to describe 'built-in advantage'. People experience privilege – and the lack of it – in all kinds of ways.

For example, perhaps you fit a socially accepted standard of beauty. This might mean you don't always notice or can't understand the struggles of others who are treated differently because they do not 'meet' this standard. If you learn of these struggles, but are then unaware or dismissive of them, you are less likely to be trusted by the person who lacks this advantage.

Conversely, identifying with a person who experiences a different privilege to you can be tough, if they do not acknowledge that privilege gap. Perhaps you are talking to someone wealthier, or better educated than you. If they act like anyone can achieve what they have, if they only try harder, it will be difficult to connect with them.

The term 'white privilege' is one that raises strong feelings and reactions in some. It's a way of describing the built-in advantages that people who are perceived to be white may receive, often without even realising it. The author Reni Eddo-Lodge describes white privilege as 'an absence of the consequences of racism'. She also clearly states this doesn't mean that white people haven't struggled, or don't face poverty and other hardships.

Even so, it is worth thinking about when this term may be useful and when it may be counterproductive. If you are a middle class white person volunteering at a foodbank, telling a white foodbank user about their white privilege is unlikely to be helpful.

Yet developing our own awareness of the in-built advantages that we may experience is way of engaging with different lived experiences and deepening our understanding that we don't all have the same starting point, opportunities or rights.

Reflecting on privilege can touch on tender parts of our identities that feel important to protect and defend. The challenge is to move beyond that initial defensiveness – because when we start defending, we stop listening.

And perhaps this also relates to the tradition within some Quakers for plain speaking. Teresa Parker of

Hertford & Hitchin Quakers describes this as:

> Plain speaking sits within simplicity. It's about speaking simply, without vanity or artifice. It was also about recognising the effects of privilege and in so doing not elevating the upper classes with the 'royal we'. And not using titles, which were thought to confer unequal worth on some as opposed to others.
>
> Plain speaking doesn't support the use of rude or passive-aggressive language. A modern take on plain speaking might add speaking from one's centre, one's experience, and without jargon.

A key but necessary challenge for a person who seeks to resolve a conflict is to have a plainly-spoken conversation with themselves about the in-built advantages they might experience, and how this might affect their relationship to others.

Part two: Responding to conflict

Conflict happens, and will continue to happen, even in the most peaceful of worlds... Through conflict handled creatively we can change and grow; and I am not sure real change – either political or personal – can happen without it. We'll each handle conflict differently and find healing and reconciliation by different paths.'

Mary Lou Leavitt, 1986
Quaker faith & practice 20.70

While there is no magic conflict resolution recipe that works in every context, we can try to choose to handle conflict. With that in mind, here are some ideas to think about and practice.

1. Take time to consider your next step

First up, a simple 'conflict check' for when we find ourselves in heated moments:

Stop and take a deep, slow breath to help you gather yourself, so you can behave as you want to feel.
Look at the context. What's happening? Are you safe? Who's involved?
Listen to what is being said. Listen within yourself to what you are hearing, and how you feel about it.
Think about whether you want or need to respond,

and if so, how. What is your relationship to the person you are in conflict with?

In any conflict situation, if we pause we can make choices about how to respond.

We can choose to *challenge*, *listen* or *avoid*. At times, we may need to try a combination of all three.

2. Honour your boundaries

We all have lines that can't be crossed. Perhaps someone is expressing a view that you feel you must challenge, or you see someone in need of an act of solidarity. These moments are when you might choose to raise a hand of nonviolence in order to prevent harm.

After the EU referendum results, for example, the UK saw a rise in hate crime. Xenophobic and racist views gained ground in mainstream discussions around sovereignty. In such times, it's worth finding ways to counter xenophobic or racist abuse.

Penny Wangari-Jones of the Racial Justice Network suggests various ways to disrupt racism. These include not ignoring incidents as they occur, filming (if safe to do so) and/or reporting the act, and being there for the person facing the abuse.

Stepping in to make a challenge might also feel necessary. Again, think about what type of arguments you come across. And be aware that we all have different responses to disagreement at different times.

Think about some different examples where you might experience disagreement and how you might respond.

Examples could include: an argument about street parking between neighbours; a family discussion about the best way to respond to climate breakdown; an online disagreement about gender identity; or hearing hate speech on the bus.

Thinking about the sensitive subjects that might crop up in our daily lives can help us to disagree better – whether that's on Brexit or who does the washing up.

The practice of nonviolent communication (nvc) can be useful as it encourages us both to listen and express our needs. The basic sentence construction of nvc is:

- "When …
- "I feel …
- "Because I need …
- "Would you be willing to …?"

The important consideration with nonviolent communication is finding a way to share your needs that is right for you. Nonviolent communication isn't

about a terribly polite way of 'doing conflict'. It's about finding a way to say what really matters, and what needs to change.

Like any conflict approach, nonviolent communication needs to be used with an understanding of context and risk. Consider the consequences of honestly sharing feelings and needs, particularly in a situation like a workplace conflict, where someone may have power over you.

3. Become a radical listener

> **'The most important thing is that we need to be understood. We need someone to be able to listen to us and to understand us. Then we will suffer less.'**
>
> Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist monk and peace activist

Listening – really listening – is a transformative thing to do. It is a key component in building trust. It's also one of the hardest things to do well.

Listening to someone doesn't mean we are agreeing with them. By listening, we can check our own assumptions, see the extent of the disagreement and perhaps find unexpected treasures of shared understanding.

The Quaker wisdom in Advices and queries 17 is incredibly valuable in this regard:

> **'Listen patiently and see the truth which other people's opinions may contain for you. Avoid hurtful criticism and provocative language… Think it possible that you may be mistaken.'**
>
> *Quaker faith & practice*, Advices and queries 17

4. Step back when you need to

Avoidance can lead to simmering tensions, sulking or passive-aggressive behaviour. So when is avoiding conflict the right thing to do?

Avoiding conflict might be right when you've tried different approaches and patterns keep repeating; when the relationship matters more than expressing your opinion; when the situation feels (or is) unsafe; and when you're tired.

All of these are valid reasons to avoid conflict.

5. Draw on your own wisdom

We can all draw on our own wisdom about what helps in a conflict situation and what doesn't. You might have experienced conflict in a family, workplace, place of worship and/or in activist spaces.

We know how it feels to be listened to and what happens when we aren't heard. We know how it feels when our lived experiences are not understood. We know what it feels like when something angers or hurts us too much to hear. We know what it feels like to be told we're wrong. And we know what it feels like to be anxious, confused, fearful or in danger.

Spend some time reflecting on the following questions:

- Think of a time when you observed a conflict situation. What was happening?
- What qualities or skills do you feel might have helped resolve the conflict?
- What qualities or skills do you think you could have offered (or did offer)?
- What qualities or skills might you need to develop?

Part three: Conflict choices and adventurous ideas

‘Conflicts are inevitable and must not be repressed or ignored but worked through painfully and carefully. We must develop the skills of being sensitive to oppression and grievances, sharing power in decision-making, creating consensus, and making reparation.’

Public statement of the
Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/New Zealand, 1987.
Quaker faith & practice 24.10

In the current context of disagreement in the UK we all have choices to make about how to respond. We need both hands of nonviolence at the ready. One hand to challenge hurt and harm, and the other hand ready to reach into those moments where we feel able to listen.

Beneath the very troubling and well-documented hate crime statistics are real stories of hurt and harm.

So, how are people working with and through these divisions? Below are some inspiring and adventurous ideas.

Case study: Bradford Women for Peace

In 2010, the English Defence League (EDL) decided to hold a big demonstration in Bradford. A group of local women responded by forming Bradford Women for Peace. They chose not to organise against the EDL but instead to organise for peace, using green ribbons as a symbol of peace and solidarity.
Wahida Shaffi, one of the founders and organisers, describes what they did:

As women from across Bradford's diverse communities, we came together in solidarity to spread the message of peace and unity. We invited women to stand alongside one another to create a giant web made from green ribbons to show that the lives of women in Bradford are woven together. People sang songs, handed out green ribbons and wrote messages of peace, which they tied to a peace tree. All these small acts of resilience and peace set the tone for what lay ahead.

Anger, fear and hate were met with a sea of green ribbons. Taxi drivers put them on their cars and people wore them around their wrists, hair and hijabs.

Case study: Tea and Tolerance

Inspired by York Mosque, who invited EDL members in for a cup of tea, a group of artists in Leeds set up Tea and Tolerance. It's a project which hopes to "get people talking, thinking and doing imaginative things with each other."

Drawing from methods such as 'the art of hosting' they facilitate creative spaces for conversations. This has included deploying a roaming tea trolley with questions to be discovered down the spouts of teapots. Tea and Tolerance describe their conversation spaces as places where "nothing is compulsory and everything is recommended."

A good question that Tea and Tolerance ask is: "if we really took time to listen, what would happen?"

Case study: Who is Your Neighbour?

A decade ago, a group of people from community and faith groups in South Yorkshire were concerned about the rise in support for the British National Party (BNP).

With the support of local multifaith groups and churches, they decided to set up a project called Who Is Your Neighbour (WIYN).

WIYN facilitates listening conversations in the region, quietly bringing people together to listen and understand diverse experiences and needs.

Tensions, grievances, fears, perceptions, experiences and disagreements are aired, explored, and (often) transformed in the process.

Case study: Brexit break-up cafés

Artworks Creative Communities invited people to explore their disagreement about Brexit in a conversation café process called EU Bah Gum.

The project trained community facilitators to host Brexit Break-Up cafés across Yorkshire, bringing people together to explore different views.

Project coordinator Estelle Cooper describes the sessions as "an opportunity for positive engagement between those who have different views on Brexit – broadly between those who support a Remain point of view and those who back the Leave argument – to see if there is any scope for reconciliation."

Case study: Active solidarity

There are times when active solidarity is needed. When we may need to directly raise one of the hands of nonviolence to say 'no'.

One such example is of a woman and her child who were racially abused on a train.

The perpetrator was found guilty but the woman's child no longer feels safe to travel on trains. The woman described how lonely it felt when most fellow train passengers didn't support her.

She needed people to act in solidarity, to speak out and disrupt the racist abuse. Like Asma Shuweikh, a Muslim woman travelling on the London Underground. When she saw a man directing anti-semitic abuse at a Jewish father and his children, she defended the family by confronting the instigator.

People who aren't directly affected can still take a more active solidarity role. Reach out to migrant-led and racial justice organisations and listen to what sort of solidarity might be useful.

Quakers can also get involved in the Sanctuary Meetings programme to organise a faith response to our unjust immigration system in their community.

Part four: Responding to deep disagreement

I am as much concerned with the human condition in general as with specific conflicts, which often represent only the tip of a pyramid of violence and anguish… I am concerned with all the pain and confusion that impede our unfolding and fulfilment.

Adam Curle, 1981
Quaker faith & practice 24.35

Disagreement is everywhere. Within ourselves, within our families, workplaces communities, activist spaces, meeting houses and on the street.

How do we balance the two hands of nonviolence? When and how should we listen with outstretched hands, and when and how should we say 'no more'?

When and how to challenge someone

The *Owning Power and Privilege* toolkit for action has some really helpful pointers on when to call-out (e.g. challenge someone directly and publicly) and when to 'call-in'.

Calling-in means speaking with someone to explain why you feel the way you do about what was said or done, perhaps on a one-to-one basis. Maisha Z. Johnson (writer, editor, and digital strategist) notes that

it is important to address harmful behaviour. She adds that everyone is at a different point on their own path to do so. We must remember, then, that everyone makes mistakes.

Some practical advice on 'calling-in' includes the importance of communicating in a way that minimises defensiveness. The writer and coach Mel Mariposa Cassidy, reminds us to focus on actions and impacts rather than making assumptions about intent of motivation to help the person understand the effects of their behaviour, as opposed to feeling attacked.

As with everything, there will be a time and place to publicly challenge and a time and place to take a more restorative approach.

How do I respond to views I find hostile?

Tariq Bashir from the community dialogue project Who Is Your Neighbour (WIYN) has shared some wisdom on participating in and facilitating difficult conversations.

In exploring possible responses to hearing views that people find hostile or threatening, WIYN often begin by offering three possible responses:

1. Challenge
2. Keep quiet
3. Enquire/be curious

There will, of course, be responses that are somewhere between these three, or that overlap. These in-between positions can emerge when exploring responses to particular circumstances.

Possible reasons for adopting a particular response can include the following:

Challenge; Protect others from being scared or physically and/or emotionally hurt

Keep quiet/avoid; Protect others or yourself from physical and/or emotional hurt

Enquire/be curious; Open a conversation that can lead to understanding between the person expressing the hostility, the person responding, and potentially the person or people on the receiving end of the hostility.

Some expressions that might relate to the 'how to challenge' response:

- "You're being nasty and upsetting people"
- "What, are you serious?"
- "I'm not having it"
- "That's just racist".

Sometimes the right approach might be to say nothing. Instead, you can stand or sit in a way that shows you're with the person on the receiving end of hostility. Our body language matters, particularly in high-conflict situations.

In relation to the 'how to enquire' response, WIYN recommend trying out the following (again, only if it feels safe to do so):

- Seek to understand what is being said. Ask the speaker for additional information. Not all questions will be effective, and that's OK. An effective question is nonthreatening and flows with what has previously been said.
- Ask open-ended questions, such as "what happened next? How did you feel? When did that change?"
- Avoid challenging questions like "why did you do that?" which tend to provoke defensive reactions.

WIYN also recommend trying these tips.

Acknowledge your own reaction:

- "I feel really affected by what I'm hearing."
- "When you said… I felt…"

Ask clarifying questions:

- "Did I understand you when you said…?"
- "What's another way you might put it?"
- "Did I hear you right, did you say…?"

Ask probing questions:

- "What is your experience?"
- "I'm interested in how you got to feel this way."
- "What are you most concerned about?"

- "How does it make you feel?"
- "What sort of impact does this have on you?"
- "How might others feel if they heard your views?"
- "These are highly emotive views, are you aware that other people may not share your views and may find what you are saying very upsetting?"

Defer the discussion, for example:

- "What you are saying is powerful stuff and feelings are running high. Could we arrange to discuss things further in the future, giving it proper time?"

However one responds to conflict, it is important to make a judgement about one's own safety – and that of others.

How to facilitate high-conflict conversations

When conflict practitioners think about intervening in conflict or not, they always take time to understand the situation. This can include mapping who is involved in a conflict and all the different relationships and perspectives. Think about the root causes, not just the symptoms. Map out what you know about the history, trends and what phase the conflict is in: are things simmering gently or at boiling point? Ask yourself what your role is in the conflict: are you the right person to intervene?

Who is Your Neighbour has years of experience in facilitating community conversations in contexts of disagreement and conflict. Their wisdom might be useful if you are ever thinking about facilitating a conversation in your meeting or elsewhere.

Here are some key principles of the dialogue spaces that their diverse and experienced team of facilitators create:

1. Encourage curiosity. Don't try and change minds.
2. Value people and their experience.
3. Acknowledge that people's emotions, feelings and experience about the topic are important. Facts can be useful – but when, where, and how they're used matters.
4. Make sure that diversity is heard. Ensure people who don't chime with the majority or consensus can express themselves and their voice can be heard. That's often where change in a group happens.
5. Let participants know that facilitated conversations provide a space for uncertainty and working things out. People don't have to be sure about everything and can express their uncertainty.
6. Safe space [in this context of community dialogue] means both feeling safe to express yourself and feeling safe from being harmed by what is said.

Facts and feelings

Facts and feelings might not easily separate into neat and tidy boxes, but it can be helpful to be aware of the distinction when engaging with conflict.

Notice whether you tend to prefer referencing facts or exploring feelings in disagreements. If you were having a disagreement about the arms trade, for example, would you quote statistics, or share a story about someone who had been injured? Or might you do both?

Either approach can be effective, but think about your goal first. What is this conversation for? Are you seeking to persuade, or to understand?

When seeking to persuade, some stories or metaphors can be more helpful than facts. And if someone shares a personal story, hitting back with hard facts might be counterproductive. We can all practice listening to lived experience, and seeking to understand before seeking to be understood.

As an example, imagine you are talking with someone about knife crime and you each have a different understanding of the root causes. Imagine you have lots of facts to share. Whereas the person you are talking with has lots of feelings to share. Now imagine that you have always lived in a well-off rural area with low rates

of knife crime. Imagine the person you are talking with grew up in a low-income city area with high rates of knife crime.

Reflect on the following:

- What is the purpose of this conversation (for both parties) e.g. is it to inform, to be heard, or something else?
- How might you feel when hearing from someone who has more direct experience of the issue?
- How might your identity and your experience shape the conversation? How might theirs?
- What experiences do you have of conversations that include facts and feelings? Is there anything you'd like to do differently?

Whatever the issue, it is always worth reflecting on our own identity, values and lived experience in relation to any particular conflict or disagreement. This can be particularly important when thinking about issues of power and privilege (in-built advantage). Conflicts that involve our sense of self and/or our values invariably give rise to a much deeper form of disagreement, and demand more from us.

The thinker and writer Theodore Zeldin invites us to think about conversations as adventures. Thinking this way can help remind us that we are on a journey of understanding that evolves over time, rather than stuck in an arena, slugging things out 'once and for all'.

Framing

Language is very powerful.
Language does not just describe reality.
Language creates the reality it describes.

Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace laureate

There's lots of useful thinking and practical guidance about 'framing' ideas so that they communicate our values.

One example of an existing frame is the idea of the UK being 'full' and unable to accommodate migrants. Try framing freedom of movement as a natural right, that is necessary and inevitable, like the migration of birds or butterflies. This helps people think about it in a more positive way.

Think about the contentious issue you are working on. What metaphors, or frames, are currently being used in the media? Write these down.

What new and more positive frames make sense to you – and the people who disagree with you?

How to use framing to communicate your values is something that organisations like the Frameworks Institute and the Public Interest Research Institute (PIRC) have done groundbreaking work on. Find out

more about their work in the references section at the end of this toolkit.

The next frontier: leave your bubble

You might feel familiar with the disagreements in your local or area meeting, in your family, your workplace, or in activist spaces. It is easy to live in an echo chamber, where most people we know express broadly predictable views, in broadly similar ways.

If you are curious about leaving your echo chamber, seek out places and spaces where you can meet with people who look at things very differently to you. These can be online spaces (for example, Facebook pages and groups) or in person.

Prepare to listen. Prepare to have strong feelings, and resist the urge to express these in the moment. You have been absent from these spaces until now – your first unfiltered reaction will not change anyone's mind.

Instead, build trust with people in the group by noting common ground, and not shying away from questions. Trust is essential – otherwise you risk being dismissed (or, if online, blocked) when you then offer a different perspective with a widely-held view. Ask open-ended questions, and be curious and attentive to the answers. Treat it as a learning experience, rather than an opportunity to 'save' or correct people.

Equally, look after your own wellbeing, and that of others – if you are online, you can report actual hate speech to the social media platform; in person, you can remove yourself from a situation without feeling guilty about doing so.

Be empathetic with yourself as well as with others – ignoring your own feelings can lead to burn out.

Part five: Responding to violent hate

Because of their personal experience and convictions, [early] Friends did not deny the reality of evil and of conflict. Nor did they equate conflict with evil. They were well aware of the suffering which a non-violent witness could bring in an imperfect world.

This is in contrast to those who identify peace with the absence of conflict and value that above all things. It is the latter who have given modern pacifism its bad name and have led their critics to refer to them contemptuously as 'passivists'. The failure to take evil and conflict into account as elements in our human condition and an obsession with the need for peace and harmony have led pacifists badly astray… Christian pacifists [are] not exempt from the temptation to sacrifice others for the sake of peace.

Wolf Mendl, 1974
Quaker faith & practice 24.22

Troublingly, hate crime is becoming more common in Britain. Incidents of hate crime spiked after the EU referendum. According to polling by Opinium, more than 70% of the people surveyed from ethnic minorities now report experiencing racial discrimination, compared to just over half before the referendum vote.

The problem isn't going away either: the Home Office recorded 103,379 hate crimes in England and Wales in 2018-19, with increases in all categories. The Home Office consider recent spikes to represent 'a real rise' beyond improved reporting.

Recent times have also seen a rise of far right rhetoric in the UK and elsewhere. Far right extremism and thinking presents a particular dilemma when thinking about the two hands of nonviolence – the outstretched hand, and the hand that says 'no more harm'.

It might be helpful to first clarify what we mean by far right extremism.

The antiracist and antifascist advocacy group Hope not Hate use far right extremism as an umbrella term. They define it to include people and movements ranging from the democratic, populist, radical right through to the extreme authoritarian far right. Hope Not Hate clarify that the individuals involved in far right extremism have a political outlook that is more hard-line that the centre right, particularly regarding race, immigration and identity. This usually manifests in a belief in nationalism and often exceptionalism about a race or country. It often goes hand in hand with a belief that a nation is in decline, or even 'decay', and radical action is required to reverse this.

In *The nature of fascism*, the academic Roger Griffin defines fascism as "a revolutionary form of nationalism, one that sets out to be a political, social and ethical revolution, welding the 'people' into a dynamic national community under new elites infused with heroic values."

Jason Stanley (Yale Philosopher and author of *How fascism works*) thinks the key thing is that, "fascist politics is about identifying enemies, appealing to the in-group (usually the majority group) and smashing truth and replacing it with power."

Paxton's *Five stages of fascism* is also useful for thinking about recognising potential trends:

1. Intellectual exploration where disillusionment with popular democracy manifests itself in discussions of lost national vigor;
2. Rooting, where a fascist movement, aided by political deadlock and polarization, becomes a player on the national stage;
3. Arrival to power, where conservatives seeking to control rising leftist opposition invite the movement to share power;
4. Exercise of power, where the movement and its charismatic leader control the state in balance with state institutions such as the police and traditional elites such as the clergy and business magnates; and
5. Radicalization or entropy, where the state either

becomes increasingly radical, as did Nazi Germany, or slips into traditional authoritarian rule, as did Fascist Italy.

So what is the current threat from far right movements in the UK?

Researcher Cristina Ariza, reported in Open Democracy (Feb 2020), that since National Action was the first radical right group in the UK to be proscribed as a terrorist organisation in December 2016, there have been 14 trials involving more than 30 individuals formerly involved in the group. Trials include hate crimes and terror plots. As such, Arzia argues that 'neo-Nazism is far from dormant' in the UK.

In Hope not Hate's *The People vs the Elite: State of hate* report they state, "the far right is successfully tapping into the political rage and discontent that is prevalent in society." The report also predicts that "divisions within Britain are likely to increase and this will further split communities and boost the far right's populist anti-politics message." And many would point to the British Government's 'hostile environment' strategy as a potential driver of far right populism and an example in and of itself of racist policy making. The ex-civil service chief, Bob Kerslake (in a Newsnight interview, 2018) said that even some ministers within Government felt the application of the strategy regarding the Windrush generation was 'reminiscent of Nazi Germany'.

Likewise, Hope Not Hate's *State of hate: far right terror goes global* 2020 report warns far right messaging is getting stronger. Despite the traditional far right (such as the BNP) being organisationally weak, their language and messaging is now increasingly being adopted into the political mainstream.

The report cites examples such as anti-Muslim prejudice and demeaning rhetoric about people who are forced to seek refuge or people who flee poverty. And it asks the question, "Who really needs far-right propagandists when you have more mainstream commentators… all weighing into the fray?"

How do we turn the tide against hate?

Understand the drivers

Reading and reflecting on the drivers of far right movements is enlightening and worthwhile. There is a wealth of different academic, activist and community perspectives on this.

- What can you find out about the drivers of far right movements and narratives?
- What explanations do you find most compelling?
- What conclusions might you draw?
- What are the implications for how you might choose to respond?

Consider possible responses
Depending on your conclusions about the drivers of far right movements and narratives, you might want to focus on resilience and/or resistance.

Ideas about resilience:

- Contribute to what the peacemaker John Paul Lederach calls a 'web of connections' that can hold strong during difficult times.
- Contribute to reducing the sense of 'them and us' within communities and helping foster good relations. This might include disrupting harmful media narratives. It might also mean finding creative ways to engage with difficult and divisive issues.
- Spend energy on creating the world as you'd like it to be through connecting with initiatives like the QPSW Sanctuary Meetings project, and connecting with other racial justice and migrant rights groups.

Hope Not Hate have produced a guide, *14 ways you can challenge hate*, that contains far more detailed ideas including: identifying allies; working with targeted communities (both those that are the victims of hate and those communities perceived as vulnerable to divisive ideas); reaching out to faith communities; avoiding overreacting to a perceived threat; addressing not avoiding difficult issues within communities that are open to being used by those seeking to divide;

countering hate with hope; and thinking about what is communicated by whom.

And there are lots of inspiring resilience related ideas in 'Conflict choices and adventurous ideas' (Part three, above).

In terms of resistance, it is worth looking at some of the creative nonviolent ways people have resisted the far right.

All forms of non-violent resistance are certainly much better than appeasement, which has come to mean the avoidance of violence by a surrender to injustice at the expense of the sufferings of others and not of one's self, by the giving away of something that is not ours to give.

Kathleen Lonsdale, 1953
Quaker Faith & Practice 24.33

Examples of resistance: Banana Bloc

In 2019 when fascists held a march in Portland, they were met with Unpresidented Brass Band's banana-themed dance party to counter hate with what the band leader described as "fierce joy".

Examples of resistance: English Disco Lovers

When the EDL (English Defence League), a far right, Islamophobic social movement were engaged in street protests up and down the country – art student and Quaker, Chris Alton, decided to occupy the acronym EDL.

This meant that English Disco Lovers would appear at the top of online search results for EDL and the three letters would, over time, be associated with "tolerance, multiculturalism and equality" (and presumably, disco).

Chris describes how this idea further developed into physically and joyfully countering EDL protests through the means of disco:

In 2012, I founded English Disco Lovers (EDL), a multifaceted protest movement, which aimed to reclaim the EDL acronym of the English Defence League. Drawing upon the history and etymology of disco, as a site of musical resistance, I redeployed the genre in opposition to a contemporary iteration of fascism.

English Disco Lovers (EDL) found form in online occupations (e.g. Googlebombing the EDL acronym), street-level protests, club nights, talks and exhibitions.

Examples of resistance: Rechts gegen Rechts (Right against Right)

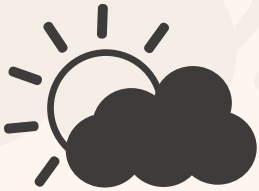
When 250 neo-nazis marched in a Bavarian town, local residents and businesses who were against the march organised to 'sponsor' their steps. For every metre the neo-Nazis walked, €10 went to a programme which helped people escape extremist groups. Unknowingly, the neo-Nazis raised €10,000 for an anti-extremist organisation. This action has since been replicated in towns across Germany and beyond.

Examples of resistance: White flour

Clowning has long been used as a method of counter protest. For example, in 2007, a group known as Anti Racist Action countered a neo-Nazi rally in Knoxville, Tennessee with clowns. Chants of "white power" were countered with "white flour?" In Finland, the Loldiers of Odin formed to counter a far right street patrol called the Soldiers of Odin. The clowns danced around the streets on the same nights the far right patrolled.

See the examples in part three of this booklet for practical ideas that relate to both resilience and resistance.

"There are always signs"



The Quaker and peace scholar, Adam Curle described two dimensions to peacemaking. The first is to transform unpeaceful relations into peaceful ones. The second is to work for conditions conducive to peace, and unfavourable to violence.

How then are we contributing towards nurturing relations that will stand strong against hate and for hope? And what are the conditions which might allow division and hatred to grow, and what can Quakers (and others) do in the short, medium and longer term to mitigate against this?

And whilst there are different views about how divided we are as a country, it feels necessary to remain alert to the rise of the far right and avoid complacency about the dangers that may lie ahead.

As Susan Neiman, moral philosopher and author of Learning from the Germans, says in answer to the question, 'what can we learn from the Holocaust', **…what it seems to me we can learn is, be aware of the beginnings. Be aware of racism, be aware of nationalism. The Nazis went very slowly and carefully to see what the population would accept.**

The poet and novelist Michael Rosen had relatives who died in Auschwitz. In the poem *Fascism: I sometimes fear*, he warns of the fear that fascism doesn't arrive in fancy dress talking about militias and mass imprisonment. Instead it arrives as "your friend" reminding you how great you once were, promising to make you feel proud and offering to clean up the neighbourhood.

Likewise, nonviolent trainers with Turning the Tide Rwanda know all too well about the need to be aware of beginnings. At the Kigali Genocide Memorial, amidst testimonies from the genocide, is a simple warning: "there are always signs".

Afterword

People matter. In the end human rights are about people being treated and feeling like people who matter. We are reminded graphically of violations of human rights far away and near at hand. In ignorance or knowingly we all violate human rights. We are all involved in the exercise of power and the abuse of power.

The multitude and complexity of the problems of oppression and injustice often seem to overwhelm us. We can do something. Friends are already working in a variety of ways: through international bodies, through voluntary organisations and by personal witness.

Those who can give something of their lives to human rights require our support and we can look for opportunities to help those in need around us… Above all we must take risks for God: look around us to the people who need help; listen to those who experience oppression; engage in the mutual process of liberation.

London Yearly Meeting, 1986
Quaker faith & practice 24.49

These are unsettling times. We constantly contend with national divisions, the current and future harms from ecological catastrophe, militarism and inequality, and the challenges of everyday life. So the simple reminder that "people matter" and "we can do something" feels like a good place to end.

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About Quakers

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Our unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship, where we seek a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly, within ourselves and in our relationships with others and the world around us. We meet for worship in local meetings, which are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power. The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal. This leads Quakers to put faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause and perpetuate injustice and violent conflict.

Contact

Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ
Registered charity number 1127633

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