

# EDUCATING

*for a Culture  
of Peace*

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*to our children and grandchildren*

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## EDUCATION FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

RIANE EISLER

I was seven when the Gestapo came to drag my father away. My parents and I miraculously escaped the Nazis. But only by a hair's breadth were we spared the violence that cost millions their lives.

Today violence threatens not millions but billions—indeed, all of our lives. In our age of nuclear and bacteriological weaponry, nothing less than human survival may be at stake.

In recognition of the gravity of our situation, the United Nations declared the years 2001 to 2010 the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, and has highlighted the importance of educating for a culture of peace.<sup>1</sup> Even before this, peace researchers and educators recognized that a fundamental cultural shift is urgently needed.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of nongovernmental organizations working for a more peaceful and equitable world also reflect the growing consciousness that we stand at an evolutionary turning point. Some schools have introduced nonviolent conflict resolution programs. Some universities offer peace studies. Some teachers and a few schools, particularly those following Montessori, Waldorf, and other progressive, holistic, or social justice approaches, have teaching nonviolent and caring behaviors as core goals.<sup>3</sup> A variety of programs—from Teaching Tolerance to the Lion and Lamb Project—offer hands-on resources for teaching caring and reducing the marketing of violence through toys and the mass media.<sup>4</sup> A few programs enlist families, schools, and community agencies in violence prevention and peace promotion strategies.<sup>5</sup> On a more global level is UNESCO's "Declaration on a Culture of Peace" and its "Education for a Culture of Peace" program.<sup>6</sup>

These are all encouraging developments. But at the same time, violence and the terrible suffering it wreaks continue to afflict

our globe. Terrorism and warfare are on the rise. Violence against women and children is endemic. And rather than countering this violence, both informal and formal education often exacerbate it. The mass media unleash a daily barrage of violent “entertainment.” The news highlights violence, as in the journalism motto “if it bleeds, it leads.” Boys are systematically taught violent habits through toys, games, and stories of “manly” violence. In some world regions, children are taught that killing, even deliberately killing civilians, will be rewarded by God. And almost everywhere, the educational canon—from grammar school to graduate school—still idealizes “heroic” violence.

Why is this? And what can we do to change it?

This chapter addresses these urgent questions drawing from a cross-cultural and historical study of many cultures. It identifies the configurations of beliefs, behaviors, relations, and institutions that, regardless of other differences, support a peaceable or violent culture. It also shows how education can help develop and maintain a culture of peace—or rather, the core configuration of such a culture in a wide variety of cultural contexts.

## HUMAN POSSIBILITIES

We are often told that violence is in our genes, that it's just human nature. Certainly the human capacity for violence is genetically based; otherwise we would not be capable of violence. But our capacity for caring and peaceableness is also genetically based. This too is human nature.

All these capacities are part of our genetic repertoire. But genetic capacities are not automatically expressed. Even genetic predispositions are not automatically expressed. For example, Jean-Louis Gariépy and his colleagues bred mice to be aggressive. They then reared the mice in isolation, which tended to reinforce aggressive tendencies. But when the high-aggression mice were brought out of isolation upon reaching puberty (about forty-five days old) and placed in groups between forty-five and sixty-nine days, many of the mice genetically bred for aggression became nonaggressive (Gariépy et al. 1996, 1998).

These kinds of experiments verify what we know from psychology and sociology: Gene expression or inhibition is a function

of the interaction of genes with experience (Eisler and Levine 2002). Human behavior is of course much more flexible than that of mice. Humans rely far more on learning than mice. Hence, for humans, experience is even more important. And since for humans experience is primarily shaped by culture, to understand what genetic possibilities will be expressed or inhibited we have to move to an examination of what kinds of cultures produce experiences that facilitate or inhibit our genetic potential for caring and creativity or for cruelty and destructiveness.

We all know that some cultures and subcultures are more warlike and others are more peaceful. For example, in the samurai culture of medieval Japan—as in many societies today—“real” masculinity meant being a “heroic” warrior. By contrast, the Hopi Indians of North America—like an increasing number of men today—did not define manliness in terms of a warrior ethos. Here men were honored for being peaceful and nonaggressive.<sup>7</sup>

Every culture will have some violence. But, as the above examples illustrate, the real issue is whether a culture institutionalizes, systematically teaches, and even idealizes, violence.

This raises the question of why some cultures institutionalize, systematically teach, and idealize violence, and others do not. Conventional cultural classifications do not address this crucial question. To answer it, we need new cultural categories.

## A NEW SYSTEM OF CULTURAL CLASSIFICATION

We are taught to classify cultures as ancient or modern, technologically developed or undeveloped, Eastern or Western, religious or secular, capitalist or communist. But these categories only describe particular features of a social system rather than its underlying character. They do not tell us how key institutions such as the family and education are structured. They do not deal with the primary human relations without which there would be no human societies: the relations between parents or other caretakers and children, and between women and men.

Most critically, conventional categories fail to describe an essential feature of all societies: the kinds of relations—from intimate to international—its institutions and systems of belief support or inhibit. Are they relations based on mutual respect or on

domination and submission? Even more specifically, do they in reality, rather than rhetoric, tend to inhibit the human capacity for violence or do they actually support its expression?

Based on a multidisciplinary study of human societies over the long span of both history and prehistory, my research introduced a new system of cultural classification that addresses these questions. Focusing on patterns or interactions between the key components of societies, this system of classification identifies two underlying possibilities for structuring relations, institutions, and systems of beliefs: the *partnership* model and the *domination* model (Eisler 1987/1995).

No society orients completely to one or the other of these models. It is always a matter of degree. But where a society falls on the *partnership-dominance continuum* affects every social institution—from the family and education to politics and economics. It also affects the society's guiding system of values. And it particularly affects whether or not violence is socially supported, indeed required.

### The Domination Model

Cultures orienting to the domination model first arose in marginal world regions where resources were scarce, while cultures orienting more to the partnership model arose in the more hospitable regions of the globe. For example, in the technologically developed Minoan civilization that sprang up on the fertile Mediterranean island of Crete, we find no images idealizing violence or signs of destruction through warfare. By contrast, the Indo-Europeans or Aryans who overran Europe and India in successive waves were chronically at war, as reflected in European and Indian mythologies where fierce deities constantly fight one another.

On the surface, cultures orienting to the domination model may seem completely different. But they all share the same core configuration. The first component of this configuration is rigid top-down physical, emotional, and economic control in both the family and the state or tribe. The second core component is the ranking of the male half of humanity over the female half. The third is institutionalized, socially idealized violence. (See Tables 1 and 2 on pages 15–16.)

We see this core configuration in stark relief if we look at theocracies such as the Taliban of Afghanistan. Here personal, economic,

**Table 1** Blueprints for the Domination/Control and the Partnership/Respect Models

Component	Domination Model	Partnership Model
<i>One: Social Structure</i>	Authoritarian structure of rigid ranking and hierarchies of domination.*	Egalitarian social structure of linking and hierarchies of actualization.*
<i>Two: Gender Relations</i>	Ranking male half of humanity over female half. High valuing of traits and activities such as control and conquest of people and nature associated with so-called masculinity,** with negative consequences for men and women.	Equal valuing of female and male halves of humanity. Values and activities that promote human development and welfare, such as empathy, nonviolence, and caregiving, are highly valued in women, men, and social policy.
<i>Three: Violence and Fear</i>	High degree of fear and socially accepted violence and abuse—from wife and child beating, rape, and warfare, to emotional abuse by “superiors” in family, workplace, and society at large.	Mutual trust and low degree of fear and social violence, since these are not required to maintain rigid rankings of domination.
<i>Four: Belief System and Education</i>	Relations of control/ domination presented as normal, desirable, and moral in all relations—from families to the family of nations	Relations of partnership/ respect presented as normal, desirable, and moral in all relations—from families to the family of nations.

From Riane Eisler, *The Power of Partnership* (New World Library, 2002)

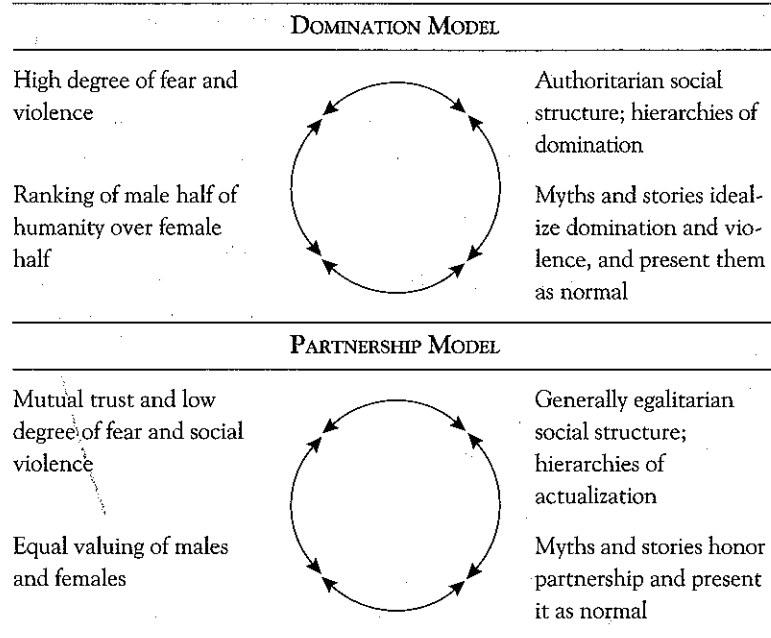
\* What I have called a *domination* hierarchy is the type of hierarchy based on fear of pain and/or force. This kind of hierarchy is different from the hierarchy I have called an *actualization* hierarchy, where leadership and management are empowering rather than disempowering, and the goal is higher levels of functioning.

\*\* “Masculinity” and “femininity” in this context correspond to gender stereotypes appropriate for a dominator society and *not* to any innate female or male traits.

and political top-down control, rigid male dominance, family violence, holy wars and brutal public killings of so-called criminals, such as women accused of sexual transgressions, are considered normal and moral. We find the same configuration in the European

**Table 2 Interactive Dynamics**

As the diagrams that follow indicate, the relationship between four major systems components is interactive, with all four mutually reinforcing one another.



From Riane Eisler, *The Power of Partnership* (New World Library, 2002)

Middle Ages. Here again we see personal, economic, and political top-down control, rigid male dominance, and legally condoned violence—be it against children and women in families, against religious or political dissent, or against disempowered out-groups such as Jews. We also find incessant feuds and wars, including the holy wars of the Crusades, as well as the medieval Church's Inquisition and witch burnings, where by conservative estimates 100,000 women were killed—a slaughter of major proportions considering the small European population of the time.

These are both religious examples. But the cultural configuration characteristic of the domination model can also be found in secular societies. For example, Nazi Germany was a sharp regres-

sion to the domination model in its rigid top-down control, its call to return women to their "traditional" place, and its brutal, institutionalized, socially idealized violence.

We can see the same pattern in a leftist rather than rightist context. In the early days of the Soviet Union, in accordance with the Marxist ideal, some progress was made toward a more equitable distribution of economic resources and more equality between women and men. But the rise to power of Stalin brought a brutal dominator regression: strong-man rule, a return to the "traditional" family, and massive violence, including the killing of millions of Russian small-farm owners.

All cultures and subcultures that orient closely to the domination model require violence or fear of violence to maintain rigid rankings of domination—whether man over woman, man over man, or nation over nation. Hence, in these cultures we find a high degree of culturally accepted violence, from child and wife beating to violent scapegoating of out-groups and chronic warfare. Violence is customarily used by rulers to control their subjects and by men to control women. Childrearing is heavily based on the use of fear and force by both mothers and fathers. Teachers often use physical punishments, such as the canings common in European schools a few hundred years ago, and still lawful in some U.S. states today.

Dominator childrearing and education habituate children to the psychological and often physical abuse required to function in the rigid hierarchies of domination they are taught is "reality." Children chronically subjected to threats and aggression tend to become more vigilant and defensive-aggressive and to numb themselves so as to not feel pain. In addition, as happened to their caretakers, these children are also taught to suppress or at least compartmentalize feelings of empathy for others (Perry et al. 1996).

All these are ways of surviving in a hostile environment, and could thus be said to be adaptive in rigid dominator contexts. Not everyone adapts this way, of course. But those who do then tend to unconsciously replicate, from generation to generation, precisely the kinds of behaviors that make us feel bad, hold back our development, and perpetuate uncaring, unempathic, and violent behaviors across the board. Moreover, people with this kind of background often find it extremely hard to believe there is an

alternative to either dominating or being dominated (Eisler 1995/1996 [Chs. 9 and 10], 2003; Eisler and Levine 2002).

### Education for Violence

Some degree of empathy and caring are needed for human survival. So in societies that orient primarily to the dominator model there still has to be some empathy and caring. Moreover, in dominator-oriented societies violence is only intermittent, since this is all that is needed to maintain rankings of domination and submission backed up by fear and force.

However, to maintain their basic character, cultures and subcultures that orient to the domination model have to systematically teach violence to boys and men. In these cultures and subcultures, "soft" traits and behaviors such as empathy, nonviolence, and caring are considered appropriate only for women and "effeminate" men—that is, for those who are barred from power. "Real" masculinity is equated with domination and violence. Women are considered inferior to men, and male control over women, if "necessary" through violence, is considered normal.

Of course, these are dominator gender stereotypes rather than traits and behaviors inherent in men. There are obviously differences between women and men. But women are capable of violent behaviors, and men are capable of caring, as evidenced by the many men today redefining fathering to include "feminine" tenderness and caregiving. Girls in domination-oriented cultures and subcultures generally are not taught violent behaviors through toys or role models in stories. But there is one role model they too often have for violence: mothers who have learned that to use violence against children is part of the parenting role.

The socially accepted use of violence in intimate relations has been a training ground for habits of violence across the board. Until recently, even wife beating was dismissed as a personal rather than criminal matter. And still today, force-based childrearing is advocated as moral, integral to education "God's way."<sup>8</sup>

It is generally accepted that male education for violence is needed for defense. And it is true that in a world that still orients heavily to the domination model, self-defense is an important issue. However, the socialization of men for violence—indeed the equation of "real" masculinity with "heroic" and "manly" vio-

lence—sets up a self-fulfilling prophecy of violence, be it in intimate or international relations.

We are also often told that men are hormonally more predisposed to violent behaviors than women. But if this is the case, it is all the more reason not to systematically teach boys and men violent behaviors. Nonetheless, to this day male socialization still follows this pattern even in many cultures where peace and equity are normative ideals.

Boys are given swords, guns, and other violent artifacts to play with. Stories idealize "heroic" violence. Even peer group initiations tend to focus on violence, either submitting to pain inflicted by older boys and men or following orders to inflict pain on members of "inferior" out-groups.

All this is obviously not education for a culture of peace. But these values are still passed on from generation to generation through both informal and formal education in many cultures and subcultures, be they Western or Eastern, religious or secular, technologically developed or undeveloped.

Despite important educational reforms, little attention has been given to the gender-specific socialization that helps maintain dominator institutions, beliefs, and relationships in place. Even in cultures that have moved in a partnership direction, it is still unthinkingly replicated, particularly in periods of regression toward the domination model.

This socialization is inherent in the domination model, where the male half of humanity is to control the female half and where anything associated with men or "masculinity" is considered superior to women and anything considered "feminine." This lesson is learned not only by boys, but also girls, who are likewise socialized to value men and masculinity over women and femininity—as most starkly evidenced by the male preference that leads to female infanticide and/or nutritional and healthcare neglect by a child's own parents in cultures and subcultures that still orient closely to the domination model.<sup>9</sup>

### The Partnership Model

Education has also failed to give attention to an underlying theme of modern history: It has been characterized by a succession of organized challenges to traditions of domination—whether man

over woman, man over man, or nation over nation. These challenges have ranged from the challenge to the "divinely ordained" rule of kings over their subjects to the challenge to the "divinely ordained" rule of men over the women and children in the "castles" of their homes; from challenges to the once "normal" rule of race over race and religion over religion to challenges to economic and environmental exploitation.

As a result of these organized challenges, at least in some world regions, the cultural orientation to the domination model is not as severe. There have been major changes in consciousness in large segments of the population, as illustrated by the twentieth-century civil rights, anticolonial, human rights, women's rights, children's rights, peace, and environmental movements. These are all steps toward more partnership-oriented cultures worldwide.

Once again, societies orienting primarily to the partnership model can be very different from one another. For example, this orientation is found today in some tribal and agrarian societies as well as in the industrialized Nordic nations. We also see this orientation in some Western and Eastern prehistoric societies, as described in my work and in the work of scholars at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Eisler 1987/1995; Min 1995). Most important, there is grassroots movement in all world regions toward family and social structures that are closer to the partnership than domination model.

The core configuration of the partnership model is a democratic and egalitarian social structure, an equal partnership between women and men, and no institutionalization or idealization of violence. The guiding principle for partnership relations is linking based on mutual respect and caring. However, there are also hierarchies. Every organization, whether familial or social, requires lines of responsibility. There are still parents, teachers, managers, leaders. But rather than *hierarchies of domination* backed up by fear and force, we see *hierarchies of actualization*.

In hierarchies of domination, power is defined as power over: a means of imposing and maintaining top-down control. It is the power to give orders that must be unquestioningly obeyed. In hierarchies of actualization, power is defined as power to and power with. Parenting, teaching, and leading are designed to empower rather than disempower, to inspire others to realize their potenti-

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domination vs actualization

★

als. Accountability and respect not only flow from the bottom up; they also flow from the top down.

As we read in the contemporary organizational development literature, the normative ideal for management is moving toward hierarchies of actualization. The manager is no longer to be a "cop" or "controller" but someone who elicits from others their best capacities, treats them with respect, and encourages teamwork rather than rankings of control. Likewise, the normative ideal for leadership is beginning to shift from the "strong" leader who uses fear, threats, or force to resolve conflicts to a leader who inspires others and develops policies that can resolve conflicts nonviolently.

KEY =

I again want to emphasize that cultures and subcultures that orient closely to the partnership model are not completely violence-free. But the difference—and it is a critical difference—is that violence does not have to be institutionalized and idealized to impose and/or maintain rigid rankings of domination.

### Examples of Partnership-Oriented Cultures

The argument is sometimes made that the way order is maintained in some species is through rankings of domination in which the alpha male uses violence and the threat of violence, not only to maintain his position, but to ensure that there is not constant violence among other members of the group. This is still the "law and order" argument made by some people who believe that only "strong man" leaders can maintain order.

While this kind of approach is appropriate, indeed necessary, for a dominator society, a society that integrates into the socialization of both boys and girls the universal teaching of empathic and goal-oriented self-regulation skills can maintain order through different means, and thus avoid or at least drastically reduce violence, whether intimate or international.

Empathic and goal-oriented self-regulation

In the more partnership-oriented Teduray tribal culture of the Philippines, the anthropologist Stuart Schlegel found elaborate social mechanisms for the avoidance of violence as well as for the prevention of cycles of violence. The Teduray recognized that violence will occasionally erupt. But violence is not integral to male socialization. The Teduray do not rank men over women. Nor do



they have economic and political tribal hierarchies of domination. Instead, there are elders—both female and male—who are highly respected because of their wisdom and who play an important role in mediating disputes (Schlegel 1998).

The Minangkabau of East Sumatra, a population of more than four million people, are also a culture where mediation for violence prevention and nonescalation are important mechanisms for maintaining a peaceable way of life. Again, the Minangkabau do not rank men over women. On the contrary, women play a major social role (Sanday 2002): Here nurturance is also part of the male role. And, as among the Teduray, violence is not part of Minangkabau childrearing.

The anthropologist Peggy Reeves Sanday, who has studied this culture for many years, writes: "Childcare is not authoritarian or punitive. I have never seen any child hit or even slapped. . . . The socialization techniques fit what one would expect from the peacefulness of Minangkabau interpersonal relations: Children aren't hit, I never heard mothers screaming at their children, children get their way frequently and no one seems to mind much. The idea is that they will learn sooner or later to behave as proper Minangkabau. Shunning of naughty children may be practiced—all kids know when they have taken things beyond local expectations. Sooner or later they conform."<sup>10</sup>

The Teduray and Minangkabau are Eastern societies with an agrarian and/or gathering and hunting technological base. But the same partnership cultural templating can be seen in the highly technologically developed Western Nordic world.

Nordic countries such as Sweden, Norway, and Finland have created societies with both political and economic democracy. These nations have a mix of free enterprise and central planning that did not result in another domination system, as happened in the former Soviet Union. They were the first nations to move toward industrial democracy, pioneering teamwork by self-directed groups to replace assembly lines where workers are cogs in the industrial machine. And they succeeded in creating a generally good living standard for all.

It is sometimes argued that the secret of Nordic nations is that they are smaller and more homogeneous. But small is not always beautiful. Nor is large always ugly if partnership principles of organization are utilized.

Small, homogeneous nations, as well as small, homogeneous tribes, can be extremely inequitable and violent. We need only look at tribal societies where brutal chiefs control their people and the economic resources through fear and force, or at small homogeneous oil-rich nations where royal families that control enormous multinational resources still rule through fear and force, and where, as is characteristic of the domination model, women are rigidly controlled by men.

By contrast, in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland, women have held the highest political offices and a larger proportion of legislators (35 to 40 percent) are female than anywhere else in the world. And—as among the Teduray and Minangkabau—the higher status of women in the Nordic world has important consequences for how men define masculinity as well as for social and fiscal policies.

As the status of women rises, so also does the status of traits and activities such as nonviolence and caregiving that are in domination-oriented cultures unacceptable in men because they are stereotypically associated with "inferior" femininity. It is therefore not coincidental that these more partnership-oriented nations pioneered such caregiving social policies as government-supported childcare, universal health care, and paid parental leave. And it was these more "feminine" social policies that, as Hilka Pietila documents, helped make Nordic countries such as Norway (which had earlier suffered from terrible famines) prosperous (Pietila 2001).

Neither is it coincidental that laws prohibiting violence against children in families were pioneered by Nordic nations. Or that they have a strong men's movement against male violence toward women<sup>11</sup> and pioneered nonviolent conflict resolution, establishing the first peace academies when the rest of the world only had war academies.

These are not random, unconnected developments. They are all connected with the fact that the Nordic world orients more to the partnership rather than domination model—a way of structuring relations, social institutions, and systems of belief that, regardless of other cultural differences, supports peaceableness. (See Tables 1 and 2 on pages 15–16.)

The Nordic nations are not pure partnership societies. There is no such thing as a pure domination model or partnership model

in practice. Most families, organizations, and societies lie somewhere between these two poles. But these examples show how more partnership-oriented social structures, beliefs, and relations support more caring, less violent ways of living.

## EDUCATION FOR PARTNERSHIP OR DOMINATION

Cultures are not transmitted biologically. They are transmitted through both formal and informal education, starting in early childhood and continuing throughout life.

A basic question for our future is therefore what kind of culture is education transmitting today. Is it education for a culture of partnership and peace? Or is it education for a culture of domination and violence?

We need only look at the mass media to see how the message that dominator relations are normal, inevitable, and even fun is transmitted in program after program—from violent “action entertainment” and sitcoms where cruel and humiliating behaviors are modeled, to news where the infliction and suffering of pain are constantly emphasized. Formal education has an obligation to counter these messages. Yet much that is passed on from generation to generation as important knowledge and truth in schools and universities still bears a heavy dominator stamp from earlier times when education was designed to support authoritarian, inequitable, rigidly male-dominant, and chronically violent social structures.

Education for a violent or peaceable culture is very different. Just adding nonviolent conflict resolution to the existing curriculum is not enough.

We need to evaluate which elements of existing education offer the knowledge and skills to live peaceably and which elements reinforce beliefs, behaviors, and institutions that perpetuate violence. We also need to develop new curricula and pedagogies that can accelerate the movement from domination to partnership worldwide.

*Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint for Partnership Education in the 21st Century* outlines such a systemic approach (Eisler 2000/2001).<sup>12</sup> Although it focuses largely on U.S. education, its guidelines for

partnership education can be used worldwide. For example, *Tomorrow's Children* has been translated into Urdu for use in Pakistan and neighboring regions, as well as into Chinese.

Partnership education is composed of three interconnected elements: process, or how we teach and learn; content, or what we teach and learn; and structure, or where we teach and learn. \*

Many so-called traditional teaching methods stem from authoritarian, inequitable, male-dominated, and violent times. Like childrearing methods based on mottos such as “spare the rod and spoil the child,” these teaching methods were designed to prepare people to accept their place in rigid hierarchies of domination and unquestioningly obey orders from above, be it from teachers in school, supervisors at work, or rulers in government. These educational methods also often model uncaring behaviors, teaching children that abuse by those who hold power is normal and right.

By contrast, partnership process shows children that partnership relations are possible—and much more pleasurable. Partnership process makes it possible for children to experience relations where their voices are heard, their ideas are respected, and their emotional needs are understood. Child-centered education, holistic education, cooperative learning, education for nonviolent conflict-resolution, and other progressive educational movements have been laying the groundwork for partnership educational process.<sup>13</sup> They promote learning experiences where students learn to work together, where each child's unique capabilities are honored, where children are treated with empathy and caring (Goldstein 1997; Kessler 2000; Noddings 1992). \*

Experiencing this treatment is particularly important for children who have in their homes, peer groups, and/or neighborhoods learned only two alternatives: you either dominate or you are dominated. Through partnership process, they experience the third alternative: partnership relations based on mutual respect and caring (Anthony and Calder 1987; Higgins 1994). In these ways, partnership process not only promotes learning and personal growth but also the shift to a less violent, more equitable and caring society.

Closely related to educational process is educational structure: the learning environment. For young people to function in a truly democratic society they need to experience democracy in action

in both their families and schools. Yet worldwide families and schools are still generally top-down hierarchies in which young people have no voice and in which accountability flows only from the bottom up.

By contrast, in partnership structures there are interactive feedback loops. There are still hierarchies, but they are hierarchies of actualization where power is not used to disempower students but to empower them. Teachers facilitate learning rather than controlling and indoctrinating. Administrators consult with teachers, parents, other staff, and students. Students have a part in setting rules and standards and seeing that they are followed.

Schools that follow the partnership model are communities of learning rather than top-down, impersonal factories. This requires using the partnership model of smaller cooperative units combined with central planning to ensure that not only classrooms but schools are not so bureaucratized.

Partnership schools are resources not only for children but for adults. They offer counseling and educational opportunities for parents and other caregivers that will benefit children and further their development—for example, workshops for partnership parenting education where mothers and fathers can share challenges and explore appropriate solutions. They offer referrals to other community agencies to help children develop not only intellectually but emotionally and to ensure that basic needs such as good nutrition and healthcare are met.

But transforming *how* and *where* we teach in a partnership direction is not enough. We also need to address *what* we teach: the curriculum content. Transforming curriculum content is basic to transforming society in a partnership direction.

### Partnership Curricula

Whether overtly or covertly, every educational curriculum is values-laden (O'Sullivan 1999; Sleeter and Grant 1994). Curricula communicate the prevailing cultural-academic assumptions both explicitly and implicitly. To change assumptions that we have inherited from earlier, more domination-oriented cultures, we need a new conceptual framework that does not view chronic violence as "just the way things are."

The conceptual framework that informs partnership curricula offers a more complete, accurate, and hopeful perspective on our past, present, and possibilities for our future. It includes information about the domination model as a human possibility. But it also shows that the partnership model is a realistic possibility, and that throughout modern history there has been movement in this direction—albeit countered by enormous resistance and periodic regressions.

Partnership curricula are designed to provide the information and skills children need to become competent, self-realized, responsible adults. They prepare young people to effectively address environmental issues and use technology in responsible ways that take into account long-term consequences, not just quick fixes.

Partnership curricula also prepare young people for the new information and service-oriented postindustrial economy by emphasizing problem solving and flexibility and helping them recognize patterns and think in more holistic ways. Most critically, partnership curricula prepare young people to live and work together in peaceful and equitable ways.

The narratives we teach give young people the wherewithal to form their views of the world and their place in it. Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, and other founders of modern psychology showed that how we view ourselves and others is rooted in how we are taught to perceive ourselves and the world.<sup>14</sup> More recently, studies on the effects of television violence on both children and adults further show how cultural narratives mold attitudes and behaviors, including abusive and violent behaviors as well as insensitivity to the pain these behaviors cause (Gerbner et al. 1994; Loye, Horney, and Steele 1997). There is also a large body of literature on the power of cultural narratives from anthropology, sociology, social psychology, the study of myth, and other disciplines.<sup>15</sup> The work of the social psychologist Milton Rokeach is particularly instructive because it shows that values can be changed by introducing new narratives (Rokeach 1973).

Every culture has partnership elements. These elements can be strengthened and built upon through partnership narratives.

For example, partnership narratives about evolution focus not only on competition but also on cooperation. They inform children

that, contrary to prevailing beliefs, Darwin himself emphasized the importance of caring, cooperation, and what he called the moral sense when we come to the human level.<sup>16</sup>

Partnership curricula further show that images such as the familiar cartoon of the brutal caveman dragging a woman around by her hair are not found in early prehistoric art. They highlight that, on the contrary, images that honor the giving and nurturing, rather than the taking, of life play a central role in Stone Age art (Marshack 1991).

Partnership curricula also show that there is far more to history than wars, battles, and who won or lost in struggles for political control. Rather than asking children to memorize dates of wars, teachers focus on dates commemorating the efforts of women and men to construct a more equitable, democratic, gender-fair, environmentally sustainable, and peaceful world.

Partnership curricula highlight how nonviolent tactics have brought about social change. For example, in the United States women won the right to vote despite enormous opposition when courageous women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Alice Paul used demonstrations, hunger strikes, and extensive political lobbying. In India, Gandhi used these same methods in his successful struggle for independence from British colonial rule. The same nonviolent tactics were used in the struggle against racial segregation and for civil rights, for laws against sweatshops and child labor, and other gains most people in the West today take for granted.

Partnership curricula help young people see that these efforts are not disconnected, that they are part of the movement to shift from dominator to partnership societies worldwide. They see that, despite enormous resistance and periodic setbacks, progress toward partnership has been made over the last three hundred years. Most important, they see that they too can help move our world in a partnership direction.

## EDUCATION FOR VALUING DIFFERENCE

As we have seen, in the domination model people learn to automatically equate difference with dominating or being dominated. This learning starts early, with the ranking of the in-group of "man-kind" over the female "other."

This basic lesson for relations is inculcated before children's brains are fully developed, before they have the mental capacity for critical reflection and evaluation. It is constantly reiterated through both family and cultural models of "proper" masculine roles of control and feminine roles of submission. And since the domination model provides only two alternatives—dominating or being dominated—this division of humans into those who control and those who are to be controlled can then be generalized to other people who are different: people of other races, religions, and ethnicities.

In cultures such as fundamentalist Iran and the Taliban that still orient closely to the domination model, students are explicitly taught that women are not only inferior but dangerous—and hence must be rigidly, and if "necessary," violently controlled by men. Not coincidentally, in these cultures violence against different religions, and even different sects of the same religion, is endemic, as is support for terrorism against other "evil" out-groups.

These are extreme manifestations of the effects of education for domination and violence. But even in societies that have been moving toward the partnership model, education for in-group versus out-group thinking persists. Consider, for example, how little literature, art, history, and philosophy texts contain about and by women. This clearly communicates the message that the male half of humanity is entitled to be dominant over the female half, who, so it would seem, contribute little worth passing on as important knowledge and truth.

The fact that most of us see nothing strange about calling any issue that affects no less than half of humanity "just a women's issue"—even though we would think it peculiar to call issues that affect the male half of humanity "just a men's issue"—indicates how profoundly we have all been influenced by this type of education.

But the splitting of humanity into a male in-group and a female out-group not only adversely affects women. Whether the roles and relations of the two halves of humanity are culturally constructed in accordance with the domination or partnership model directly affects every social institution.

It affects whether families are egalitarian or authoritarian. It affects whether they are violent or nonviolent, since the basis for domestic violence against women is establishing and maintaining

Actual  
Aid  
Kropotkin

YES ✓

Exactly

male control. Although we are not taught this either, the social construction of gender roles and relations directly affects economics. If half of humanity is put on this Earth only to serve the other half, this provides a model for economic exploitation that can be easily generalized to other castes, races, or classes. And if the life-giving and supporting services of women are accorded no real economic value—as is the case in so-called traditional economic models—the same is true of the life-giving and supporting services of nature.

Moreover, if women's reproductive capacities are to be controlled by men—individually as heads of families and politically as heads of tribes or states—there is no hope of stemming the global population explosion. Indeed, as long as women are viewed as male-controlled technologies of production and reproduction, as they are in world regions that orient more closely to the domination model, women will continue to “choose” to breed as many children as possible—regardless of the damage to their health, their communities, or their planet.

The cultural construction of gender roles and relations also profoundly affects systems of values—and hence both domestic and foreign policies. As the Nordic nations illustrate, it impacts whether activities stereotypically associated with men, such as making and using weapons and fighting wars, or activities stereotypically associated with women, such as caring for children and maintaining a clean and healthy physical environment, are, or are not, valued (Eisler, Loye, and Norgaard 1995). It impacts whether unempathic and uncaring policies, such as the structural adjustment policies imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF)—requiring debtor nations to cut health, nutrition, and other caregiving social services—continue, causing enormous suffering worldwide.

We need to educate both boys and girls to value and adopt traits and activities in domination-oriented cultures relegated to women: nonviolence, empathy, and caregiving. This will profoundly affect policy priorities, funding, and our real chances for a world of peace.

Our curricula need to recognize what should have been obvious all along: Because women and men are the two halves of humanity,

lessons about proper masculine and feminine identity teach us what it means to be human. Masculinity and femininity are core components of identity for men and women. How boys and girls are brought up to view themselves and the world is central to the formation of habits of feeling, thinking, and acting. Therefore, what young people are taught about their respective roles and relations, and about the relative value of traits and activities assigned to either gender, is a fundamental issue for education—and for society.

Of course, even though it is foundational, the male-superior/dominant and female-inferior/subordinate model of gender relations is not the only obstacle to a more equitable society. Partnership curricula reveal how dominator economic and political structures profit from violence and exploitation, promoting war and environmental destruction. They point to the structural changes needed to create partnership institutions, from more democratic families to more truly democratic political structures. In these and other ways, partnership education addresses the interaction of social structures, cultural values, and individual relations and actions worldwide.

In addition to being gender-balanced, partnership curricula integrate materials on peoples of all races and many cultures. They also give visibility to people who are “different” in other respects, including people who are blind, deaf, or otherwise physically or developmentally challenged.

But by including and giving value and visibility to women and traits and activities such as nonviolence and caregiving stereotypically associated with femininity, partnership curricula help young people acquire values in which empathic relations and essential activities, such as caring for children and maintaining a clean and healthy environment, which are still stereotypically associated with women, are accorded the importance they merit. As Nel Noddings writes, “All children must learn to care for other human beings, and all must find an ultimate concern in some center of care: care for self, for intimate others, for associates and acquaintances, for distant others, for animals, for plants, and the physical environment, for objects and instruments, and for ideas” (Noddings 1995, 366).

## CARING FOR LIFE

Children and adults need the basic requirements for life: nutritious food, adequate shelter, and freedom from violence in both their homes and communities. They need to be valued and to feel valuable and loved. They need an education that at a minimum offers basic skills such as the three Rs of reading, writing, and arithmetic. They also need to learn a fourth R: relational skills appropriate for partnership rather than dominator relations. Partnership-oriented cultures and education meet these needs (Eisler 2000).

Partnership-oriented cultures invest heavily in good nutrition and healthcare for women so that the children they bear are not robbed of their birthright of full physical and mental development. They invest national resources in adequate childcare—both in education for partnership childcare and in policies that support this socially and economically essential work, whether it is performed by women or men, inside or outside families.

Partnership-oriented cultures offer partnership education through both schools and continuing education programs for adults. Integral to this education is learning relational skills, including caregiving skills.

I have proposed that a thread running through the entire curriculum from preschool to graduate school should be *caring for life*: caring for self, for others, and for our natural habitat (Eisler 2000).

A key component of teaching caring for life is education for partnership parenting: parenting that is authoritative rather than authoritarian, caring rather than coercive, respectful rather than repressive. We know from neuroscience that the kind of care—material, emotional, and mental—a child receives, particularly during the first years of life, affects nothing less than the neural pathways of the brain. Positive caregiving that relies on praise, caring touch, affection, and lack of violence or threats releases the chemicals dopamine and serotonin into particular areas of the brain, promoting emotional stability and mental health (Perry et al. 1996).<sup>17</sup> By contrast, if children are subjected to negative, uncaring, fear, shame, and threat-based treatment or other aversive experiences such as violence or sexual violation, they develop responses appropriate for dominator environments. They tend to become abusive and aggressive or withdrawn and chronically

depressed, defensive, hypervigilant, and numb to their own pain and to that of others.

These children often lack the capacity for aggressive impulse control. Neuroscientists such as Dr. Bruce Perry of Baylor College of Medicine and Dr. Linda Mayes of the Yale Child Study Center have found that regions of the brain's cortex and its limbic system (responsible for emotions, including attachment) are 20 to 30 percent smaller in abused children. These scientists have also found that children exposed to chronic and unpredictable stress will suffer deficits in their ability to learn (Perry et al. 1996). They often lack the capacity for long-term planning.

Yet education for partnership parenting is still generally ignored worldwide. Dominator parenting habits continue to be passed on from generation to generation, constricting not only individual development but economic development—not to speak of the real possibility for creating a global culture of peace.

Education for caring and mutually respectful relations between women and men is another key component of partnership education. Nordic nations already offer education for mutually fulfilling and responsible romantic relations in their educational systems. Links to resources for caring and nonviolent intimate relations, both between adults and between parents and children, are available from Internet sites such as the Spiritual Alliance to Stop Intimate Violence of the Center for Partnership Studies ([www.partnershipway.org](http://www.partnershipway.org)). *ADD TO S 116*

Introducing education for caring for life in curricula worldwide will help ensure that children learn habits of empathy and caring while they are still young and more receptive. These habits can then carry over into partnership childcare and parenting based on praise, caring touch, rewards, and lack of threat. They can also carry over into more equitable and empathic domestic and foreign policies.

Learning the skills for caring for life offers a positive rather than negative approach to violence prevention. If children are taught they should not hit other children because if they do they will be hit by a parent or teacher, they are taught that violence inflicted by a "superior" upon an "inferior" is acceptable—and that they need only grow up to get away with it. Not only is violence as a means of imposing one's will on others modeled; empathy is suppressed or

compartmentalized. These are prerequisites for the ability to deliberately cause pain.

Teaching caring for life is different from teaching children to do what they are told through fear that if they don't obey they will be punished. It shifts the learning emphasis from suppression and control to development and actualization; from extrinsic punishments to intrinsic rewards.

We know from neuroscience that by the grace of evolution humans are biochemically rewarded with sensations of great pleasure not only when we are cared for but also when we care for others—be it for a child, a friend, a lover, or a pet.<sup>18</sup> Most of us have experienced this pleasure, even though science and evolution classes do not teach us that it is biologically based—which they would through partnership curricula.

Helping young people learn skills and habits of caring for life is essential for a truly democratic rather than authoritarian society. It is also essential for building partnership cultures of peace.

## CONCLUSION

At our level of technological development, the domination model is not evolutionarily adaptive. Hence the urgent need for the fundamental changes envisioned by the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. In the language of chaos and nonlinear dynamics theory, we stand at a bifurcation: a turning point in human cultural evolution.

On one side lies the road of regression to even more rigid domination and control—familial, educational, religious, economic, and political. We see movement in this direction all around us: the increasing economic, political, and media control of giant multinationals, the widening gap between haves and have-nots, the growing threats to civil liberties, the push to return women to their “traditional” subservient place, the backlash of violence against women's rights and children's rights, the use of religion to justify rankings of “superiors” over “inferiors,” and the escalation of intertribal and international terrorism and war.

On the other side lies the road to a more equitable, less violent, more caring partnership future. This movement toward part-

nership has been escalating for several centuries, largely due to the destabilization of existing habits and institutions by the technological changes entailed in shifting from a primarily agrarian to industrial world. Today, the rapid shift from industrial to postindustrial technologies is still further destabilizing entrenched beliefs and institutions—opening up further opportunities for positive change.

As a mother and grandmother, I feel a passionate urgency to help accelerate the global shift toward partnership. I know from my research that in a world still orienting heavily to the domination model, peace can be no more than an interval between wars. In such a world, there is no realistic way of ending the glaring disparities between haves and have-nots—the over-consumption and wastefulness of the haves and the poverty, malnutrition, inadequate healthcare, and overpopulation that afflict the have-nots worldwide.<sup>19</sup> Nor is there any way of ending the intimate violence and abuse that is schooling for relations of domination and submission across the board.

Any realistic hope of peace requires that we join hands to accelerate the cultural shift from domination to partnership worldwide. But building more partnership-oriented cultures worldwide requires attention to matters that are not usually examined in connection with violence prevention. We certainly have to address political and economic institutions and practices that perpetuate dominator structures and beliefs. But we also have to give much more attention to the relations between children and parents or other caregivers and between women and men. Building a more peaceful and equitable world requires movement toward a new kind of economics where the life-sustaining work of caring and caregiving is no longer operationally devalued (Eisler 2003). It requires that peace initiatives address ending culturally entrenched traditions of intimate violence, as these are integrally connected with intranational and international violence. And it requires a fundamental reexamination and revision of educational systems worldwide.

I know from both my life and my research that making fundamental changes is not easy. But I also know it can be done. Indeed, it has been done, or we would all still be living in a world where every woman and most men knew “their place” in rigid

hierarchies of domination, a world where slavery was legal, extreme poverty was considered normal, and advocating children's rights would have been viewed as immoral, indeed, insane.

Cultures are human creations. They can and have been changed. Fundamental changes will not happen overnight. There will continue to be resistance. Shifting to partnership cultures will take ingenuity, courage, and persistence. But working together we can create cultures that support rather than inhibit the realization of our highest human potentials: our great capacities for caring, empathy, and creativity.<sup>20</sup> We can all help build these cultures through partnership education.

## NOTES

1. See [www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/declarations/2000.htm](http://www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/declarations/2000.htm). See also the website of David Adams, former Director of the UNESCO Unit for the International Year for the Culture of Peace at [www.culture-of-peace.info/](http://www.culture-of-peace.info/).
2. See, for example, Eva Nordland, Betty A. Reardon, and Robert Zuber (1994) and Linda Lantieri and Janet Patti (1996). See also [www.peaceed.org/what/whatbr.htm](http://www.peaceed.org/what/whatbr.htm) and Ingeborg Breines, Dorota Gierycz, and Betty Reardon (1999).
3. For information on Montessori, see Tim Seldin and Paul Epstein (2003) *The Montessori Way: Education for Life* ([www.montessori-foundation-books.org](http://www.montessori-foundation-books.org)) and the journal *Tomorrow's Child*; the Rudolf Steiner Foundation ([www.rsfoundation.org](http://www.rsfoundation.org)) offers information on Waldorf schools; *Rethinking Schools* ([www.rethinkingschools.org](http://www.rethinkingschools.org)), the Holistic Education Press ([www.great-ideas.org](http://www.great-ideas.org)), and journals such as *Encounter* and *Paths of Learning* are some sources on holistic/progressive/social justice education.
4. Teaching Tolerance ([www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org)) is a program of the Southern Poverty Law Center, and offers powerful teaching tools such as the CD "I Will Be Your Friend" and the magazine *Teaching Tolerance*. The Lion and Lamb Project ([www.lionlamb.org](http://www.lionlamb.org)) offers manuals such as "Toys for Peace: A How-to Guide for Organizing Violent Toy Trade-Ins."
5. An example is the Chicago-based Violence Prevention Peace Promotion Strategy ([www.vppps.org](http://www.vppps.org)).
6. See [www.unesco.org/education/ecp/index.htm](http://www.unesco.org/education/ecp/index.htm). The 1998 UNESCO "World Education Report" and the 1995 UNESCO "Our Creative Diversity Report" also pave the way for a broader report on education in terms of support for a culture of peace.
7. For a discussion of these differences, as well as the important role of the women's movement in democratizing society, see Riane Eisler (1995), published on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.
8. See, for example, Hanna Rosin (1999), for a harrowing account of the damage done to children and parents by this approach.
9. Despite the well-known fact that women as a group have longer life spans than men, there are in some countries fewer than ninety-five women for every one hundred men. In China and South and West Asia, there are only ninety-four females for every one hundred males. The Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen has estimated that more than one hundred million women across the globe are "missing." According to statistics released in 1995 (the year of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women), deaths per year per thousand in Bangladesh were 15.7 for girls age one to four versus 14.2 for boys. In Pakistan, the ratio was 9.6 for girls versus 8.6 for boys. In Guatemala, it was 11.3 for girls versus 10.6 for boys. In Egypt, it was 6.6 versus 5.6. And even in Singapore, which at that time had a strong economy, the ratio was 0.5 for girls versus 0.4 for boys (United Nations 1995, 35). This U.N. report, published for the year of the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, is unfortunately unique in its wealth of statistical data focusing on gender discrimination. For a study looking at the systemic effects of gender discrimination, see Riane Eisler, David Loye, and Kari Norgaard (1995).
10. Peggy Reeves Sanday, personal communication to author, January 30, 2002.
11. As two Nordic men, Jorgen Lorentzen and Per Are Lokke wrote in the paper they presented at the international meeting "Promoting Equality: A Common Issue for Men and Women," held in Strasbourg in June 1997, "Many men have come to believe that violence against a woman, child, or another man is an acceptable way to control another person. By remaining silent about the violence, we allow other men to poison our environments. We also allow the picture of men as dangerous to stay alive. . . . Domestic violence is a problem within existing masculinity and it is we, as men, who have to stop it" (Lorentzen and Lokke 1997, 4).
12. See also Dee Buccarelli and Sarah Pirtle (2001). The video and DVD "Tomorrow's Children" (Media Education Foundation 2001) is another good resource also available from the Center for Partnership Studies ([www.partnershipway.org](http://www.partnershipway.org)).
13. For a good overview of some of these approaches, see Ron Miller (1997). There are other excellent books on collaborative learning, including Vera John-Steiner (2000) and Jeanne Gibbs (1994).



14. A good source on the psychoanalytical literature is Calvin Hall and Gardner Lindzey (1978).
15. An early classic from anthropology is Ruth Benedict (1934); from sociology, Max Weber (1961); David Loye (1971/1998) shows the power of racially biased narratives. Feminist writings, including classics such as Dale Spender (1983), show the attempts by women over many centuries to contradict sexist cultural narratives. Joseph Campbell (1974) is well known in the area of myth.
16. For an account of this ignored side of Darwin's work, see David Loye (2002) and (2004).
17. Excellent videos on parenting are: "I Am Your Child: The First Years Last Forever," hosted by Rob Reiner and produced by the Reiner Foundation and "Begin with Love," narrated by Oprah Winfrey. See [www.iamyourchild.org](http://www.iamyourchild.org) and [www.civitasinitiative.com](http://www.civitasinitiative.com).
18. Emotions occur when molecules called *neuropeptides* (amino acids strung together like pearls in a necklace) make contact with receptors (complicated molecules found in almost every cell in the body, not just the brain). Although there is still much work to be done to identify the exact nature of these chemicals, it is clear that different emotions involve different neuropeptides, which are essentially information-carrying molecules. (For an accessible account of this, see Bill Moyers [1993, 177–193]. See also Riane Eisler and Daniel Levine [2002, 9–52].)
19. Two thirds of the earth's more than six billion people live in its very poorest regions. Ninety-seven percent of the nearly eighty million people added to the planet annually are born in these regions, condemning them to a daily struggle for survival. Three hundred and fifty million of the neediest women worldwide did not want more children. Yet family planning as well as other life options than breeding men's sons are still not available to these women, with U.S. support for United Nations family planning programs totally eliminated from President George W. Bush's 2002 budget (Fornos 2002, 2).
20. For a collection of articles on this issue, see David Loye (1971/1998) and Riane Eisler (1998).

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