

## Resources for Difficult Conversations and Situations

Offered by Rev. Peter Soli

- The Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University is unique in its blend of academic study and practice. On this site is information about: a Masters in Conflict Transformation, the Summer Peacebuilding Institute which brings 200+ people from hot spots worldwide every summer to learn skills and tools for peace practice, STAR workshops on trauma and recovery. <https://emu.edu/cjp/spi/>
- The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center offers many resources for church congregations in dealing with conflict. They are schooled both in classic mediation responses as well as family systems approaches taught by the late Rabbi Ed Friedman. LMPC offers a number of workshops that encourage congregational health and pastoral growth. LMPC works with individuals and religious institutions of all backgrounds. They are one of the leading resources for religious institutions in dealing with conflict. <http://www.lmpeacecenter.org/>
- “More Light, Less Heat: How Dialogue Can Transform Christian Conflicts into Growth” Hardcover – October 15, 1998 by Joseph Phelps  
*Phelps provides a guide to reasoned discussion of such volatile Christian issues as homosexuality and the ordination of women. He begins by describing the elements involved in productive dialog and how it can be beneficial for both sides. As a Baptist pastor and community leader, Phelps brings real experience of such church conflicts to his writing, and as a weekly columnist he knows how to deliver his message in readable, persuasive prose. Phelps understands that these issues are important to Christians and that both sides are worthy of consideration. He is most interested in facilitating articulate, civil discussion so that points of difference can become sources of growth. He demonstrates how dialog can be promoted through the use of non-threatening discussion techniques and gives examples of successful dialogs in various churches.*
- “The Journey Toward Reconciliation” – April 1, 1999  
by John Paul Lederach  
*We live in a diverse, but interdependent world. Even with modern technology, communications, and travel, we still need to build relationships leading to reconciliation. John Paul Lederach shares insights gained from years of work in international mediation and deep spiritual reflection on the task of reconciliation. From personal experiences and the Bible story, he finds God seeking reconciliation throughout history. Here is help for conflicted families, communities, and nations.*
- “Cool Tools for Hot Topics: Group Tools to Facilitate Meetings When Things Are Hot” – January 1, 2007  
by Ron Kraybill

*Some subjects seem too hot for a group to discuss sanely. Not necessarily. The Little Book of "Cool Tools for Hot Topics" -- Group Tools to Facilitate Meetings When Things Are Hot shows how to help people hear each other when they feel like shouting; how to focus on the issues at stake rather than having a war of personalities; how to employ actual practices for better understanding (interviews, small-group discussions, role-reversal presentations); and how to move a group toward making a decision that all can honestly support.*

- "The Art of Focused Conversation: 100 Ways to Access Group Wisdom in the Workplace" (ICA series)

by R. Brian Stanfield (Editor)

*This book explores the use of a particular conversation format in the workplace, but it is adaptable to any group. The purpose of such a conversation is to allow a group of people to process their experience (to experience their experience, so to speak) by asking a series of questions in four different levels: the objective, the reflective, the interpretive and the decisional. This conversation gives form to a natural process which 1) grounds us first in the reality of life, 2) acknowledges the reality of our feelings, 3) looks at meaning based on the first two steps, not on some abstract idea, and 4) moves us into the future from the wisdom just discovered.*

- When Stories Clash: Addressing Conflict with Narrative Mediation, October 2012

by Gerald Monk and John Winslade

*In the stories that people tell about conflict, the relationship narrative is commonly shaped to fit the conflict story. But there are always other relationship stories that can be told. This book shows how to find and grow a counter story to the conflict story and to help people make choices about which story they want to perform. Inviting people to shift from a fraught relationship story to one that is more just, peaceful or cooperative is at the heart of narrative mediation. The authors understand how dominant ideas of our culture exclude different ideas. How problems are not the people or inside the people but problems are the problems and people relate with problems (what is called externalization of the problem). How problems can obscure solutions, and make invisible things that are precious for people. Is a very hopeful book to deal with problems that seem to be very strong when you think is difficult to find a solution. It brings out the values, preferences, ideas, wishes, hopes of the way of living of people.*