Unit 2

THE CONCEPT OF WORLDVIEW

The term "worldview" refers to a mental framework within which individuals and groups interpret the nature of reality, the nature and purpose of human life, and the laws governing human relationships. Worldviews are shaped by our life experiences, and at the same time they reshape our approach to life. This unit discusses the development and transformation of worldview and explains why a systematic and conscious effort to cultivate a peace-based worldview among the peoples and nations of the world is needed. The Worldview Unit provides an opportunity for students and teachers to think critically about their own worldviews at both the individual and collective levels.

Context

Everyone has a worldview, whether or not they are aware of it. Our worldviews shape how we perceive, interpret, understand, and respond to the realities around us. Worldviews shape all that we think, do, or consider to be normal or abnormal and acceptable or unacceptable. For example, a "conflict-oriented worldview" considers conflict to be normal and acceptable. Within a conflict-oriented worldview, our thoughts, feelings, and actions become characterized by conflict. We measure and express everything in terms of its degrees of conflict. If our goal is to create a culture of peace, then it is very important that we come to understand how worldviews are formed and changed. This knowledge helps us to better understand ourselves and others and to consciously foster a "peace-oriented worldview" in our individual lives, families, communities, and the world.

Learning Process

In this unit, participants should be assisted to:

1. Understand the concept of worldview; how worldviews are formed and changed; and how societies become conflicted and violent, or united and peaceful, depending upon their worldview.
2. Identify the three types of worldview, as formulated in the EFP curriculum; illustrate these types with examples from everyday life; and compare and contrast the impact of these worldviews on the vision and character of a society.
3. Reflect, through critical questioning, upon their own worldview: where it comes from, and whether it is oriented towards conflict or towards peace.
4. Search, in conflict situations, for ways to shift worldview assumptions in order to bring peaceful resolutions to the problem.

Points for Understanding

Teachers can guide their students to understand and remember these main points:

- Each person, community, and group has a worldview shaped by such things as life experiences, cultural norms, education, family dynamics, belief systems;
- Worldviews influence how people consider themselves, what kind of relationships they have with others, what they consider to be the main purpose of life, and how a person is supposed to think and act;
- Worldviews shape the types of communities we create;
- Throughout human history, the Survival- and Identity-based worldviews have been the most prevalent, causing societies to rely on conflict and violence in order to achieve their objectives;
- Today, the inability of the world community to create a civilization of peace is due to the persistence of these conflict-oriented worldviews among people, groups, organizations, and leaders;
- The beginning of a civilization of peace rests on the conscious development of a peace-oriented worldview;
- Each person can benefit from becoming conscious of and reflecting on his or her own worldviews;
- Through questioning those assumptions or attitudes in our worldviews that take conflict for granted, we can decide to consciously develop our understanding of the prerequisites of peace and begin to implement them in our lives, our relationships, our studies, and our work.

Worldview: What Is It, and Where Does It Come From?

Definition

*A **worldview** is a mental framework through which individuals and groups view the nature of reality, the nature and purpose of human life, and the laws governing human relationships.*

On both a personal and societal level, worldview represents the way we view ourselves, others, and the world at large; and most importantly, how we turn that vision into reality.

Every human being has a worldview. Worldviews develop over the course of a lifetime and are transmitted from generation to generation through such means as education, family tradition, religious belief, political orientation, and the mass media. Worldviews evolve in direct response to the development of our **consciousness,** which in turn is shaped by the sum of our unique individual life experiences and collective cultural histories. Usually, we are only partially conscious of the worldviews we hold. For the most part, worldviews are taken for granted and remain just below the surface of our conscious awareness:
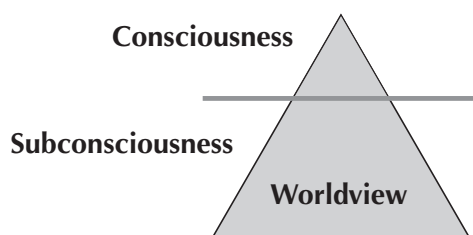
Consciousness

Subconsciousness

Worldview

Diagram 1: Worldview Awareness

Yet, through the powerful medium of our worldview, we define our understanding of the nature of reality, the purpose of acquiring knowledge, and the purpose of human life both individually and collectively. Depending on which view of the world we eventually adopt, the way we live our lives will be dramatically different. Our worldviews do not just affect our perception of the world around us; our worldviews also determine the nature of our relationships, the type of societies we create, the ways we approach science and religion, and the manner in which we deal with opportunities and challenges that we encounter in our lives. Our worldviews affect every aspect of our lives and everything we do.

Conflict-Based Worldviews

In the contemporary world, life is experienced and understood by most of us from a conflict-centered perspective. This is so because the predominant worldviews in societies today are informed by philosophies, concepts, and scientific/pseudoscientific theories that consider conflict to be an inherent, even necessary, aspect of human nature and the life process itself. Conflict-based worldviews are characteristic of earlier stages of our individual and collective maturation process.

The following are a few prominent examples of scientific and philosophical theories that have contributed to the wide acceptance of conflict-centered worldviews.

Charles Darwin and the Theory of Natural Selection[1]

According to this theory, all life takes place in the arena of struggle, competition, and conflict; and evolution results from a process of "survival-of-the-fittest." Social Darwinism, a theory that relied on Darwin's findings to legitimize colonialism,

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1. "Darwin observed… that although all organisms tend to reproduce in a geometrically increasing ratio, the numbers of a given species remain more or less constant.

Key Vocabulary

Development: a process of growing, evolving, unfolding, or differentiating in a specialized manner towards a more advanced state of being; positive, qualitative change signifying—in human life and culture particularly—advancement toward maturity. Development refers to positive, qualitative, and/or quantitative changes on the axis of consciousness.

Dichotomous: opposing or contradictory concepts, qualities, or groups; divided into two mutually exclusive entities.

Identity: the distinguishing character or personality of an individual,[2] equated with individuality, as in the total character peculiar to and distinguishing an individual from others.[3] The sense of uniqueness, individuality, or distinguishing characteristics that a person or group regards as definitive about themselves and the basis on which differentiation from other individuals or groups is made.

Individualism: a doctrine that the interests of the individual are or ought to be ethically paramount, and that all values, rights, and duties originate in individuals.

Inherent: belonging to the constitution or essential character of a thing.

Objectivity: the capacity of judgment based on observable phenomena and uninfluenced by emotions or personal prejudices.

Pseudoscientific: a system of theories, assumptions, and methods erroneously regarded as scientific. A pseudoscientific concept is not based on either the evidential or rational methods required to qualify as "scientific."

Relativism: a theory that all points of view are equally valid; the view that the value of any one thing is relative to the particular framework or standpoint from which its assessment is being made; the view that there are no universal values.

Subjectivity: a perceived reality that may be modified or affected by personal views, experience, or background.

Transformation: a process of profound or significant change that leads to a new and higher level of consciousness, resulting in greater insight and integrity in one's character, choices, and behavior.

Worldview: A mental framework through which individuals and groups view the nature of reality, the nature and purpose of human life, and the laws governing human relationships—the overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world;[4] a collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group;[5] a dynamic, reflexive lens through which human beings construct, interpret, and interact with all aspects of their reality.[6]

From this he deduced that there is a continuing struggle for existence, for survival. He pointed out the existence of variations—differences among members of the same species—and suggested that the variations that prove helpful to a plant or an animal in its struggle for existence better enable it to survive and reproduce. These favorable variations are thus transmitted to the offspring of the survivors and spread to the entire species over successive generations. This process he called the principle of natural selection (the expression "survival of the fittest" was later coined by Herbert Spencer)" (*The Columbia Encyclopedia,* 6th ed.). For

more on evolution, see http://www.bartleby.com/65/ev/evolutio.html. For more on Social Darwinism, see Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopaedia http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Darwinism.

2. *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.*

3. *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.*

4. H.B. Danesh, "Towards an Integrative Theory of Peace Education," *Journal of Peace Education* 3.1(2006): 55–78.

5. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language,* 4th ed., 2000.

6. H.B. Danesh and R. Danesh,"Has Conflict

laissez-faire capitalism, and even Fascism,[7] views human interaction as a struggle for each human to live and thrive, often at the expense of others.

Karl Marx and the Theory of Class Struggle[8]

According to this theory, history is driven by the continuous and inevitable struggle of two rigid classes: the owners of the means of production and those who work for the owners. The cycle of conflict that continuously propels history can only end when, through legislated peace, the capital-owning class is eradicated

Sigmund Freud and the Tri-Partite Psyche[9]

According to this theory, life is ruled by two (mostly unconscious) instincts: sexuality (eros) and aggression (thanatos or death-instinct). Individuals always experience conflict due to these two instincts and the inner conflict that occurs between the psyche's "id," "ego," and "superego." Freud's writings have influenced Western society for close to a century, as generation after generation has used his theories of personality development to extrapolate the meaning of life.[10]

Adam Smith and the Free-Market System[11]

According to Adam Smith's theory, competition is the basis of a healthy economic life, as it motivates individuals to strive for success. A robust economy will be characterized by competition and survival-of-the-fittest. Increasingly, the principle of competition has been used to manage all types of relationships ranging from interpersonal to international.

Grown Up? Toward a New Model of Decision Making and Conflict Resolution," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 7(1) (2002): 59–76.

7. "The doctrine of survival of the fittest and the necessity of struggle for life is applied by fascists to the life of a nation-state. Peaceful, complacent nations are seen as doomed to fall before more dynamic ones, making struggle and aggressive militarism a leading characteristic of the fascist state" (The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed). For a discussion on this point, see http://www.bartleby.com/65/fa/fascism.html.

8. Marx's theory of "dialectical materialism presumes the primacy of economic determinants in history. Through dialectical materialism, the fundamental Marxist premise that the history of society is the inexorable "history of class struggle" was developed. According to this premise, a specific class could rule only so long as it best represented the economically productive forces of society; when it became outmoded it would be destroyed and replaced. From this continuing dynamic process a classless society would eventually emerge….Once the bourgeoisie had been defeated, there would be no more class divisions, since the means of production would not be owned by any group. The coercive state, formerly a weapon of class oppression, would be replaced by a rational structure of economic and social cooperation and integration" (*The Columbia Encyclopedia,* 6th ed.).

9. "Sigmund Freud asserted that the human mind could

be divided into three significant components—the id, the ego, and the superego—which work together (or come into conflict) to shape personality. Psychoanalysis emphasizes unconscious motivations and the conflicts between primal urges and learned social mores, stressing the importance of early childhood experiences in determining mature personality" (The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed.) Recent trends in developmental psychology continue to place a high degree of emphasis on conflict, as I.B. Dusek and W.J. Meyer state: "Development will occur only when a conflict is present" ("A Dialectial Analysis of Learning Theory: Contributions to Understanding Human Development," *Human Development* 23(1980): 382–88). See also Hans Thomae and Ursula Lehr, "Stages, Crises, Conflicts and Life Span Development," *Human Development and the Life Course: Multidisciplinary Perspectives,* ed. Social Science Research Council (US). et al. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1986.429–43.

10. For a concise comparative review of the theories of Plato, Marx, Freud, Sartre, Skinner, and Lorenz, as well as Christianity, see Leslie Stevenson, *Seven Theories of Human Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).

11. Within the philosophy of laissez-faire economy, Adam Smith, father of classical economics, "believed that individual welfare rather than national power was

Historically, these theories provided powerful impetuses for social and political change. In contrast to the arguments of creationism, the theory of evolution provided a substantive explanation for the development of life on earth that could be further explored and tested. The free-market model opened earning profit to ordinary merchants, formerly impossible under the feudal and colonial economic structures. The theory of class struggle contributed to public consciousness about the need for greater equality and justice in economic, social, and political affairs. And Freud's theories demystified human psychological characteristics that, until then, were categorized as demonic and subject to harsh superstitious treatment.

In can be seen that, although focusing on rather different subjects, these and similar theories share certain assumptions that:

- Human life, society, psychology, and economy are all based on conflict;
- The purpose of life is to gain maximum power, to ensure one's survival, and to obtain pleasure;
- It is necessary to be competitive and to look out for one's own interests;
- Life is the arena of the survival of the fittest, resulting in winners and losers.

Due in part to the broad influence of these theories, two distinct categories of conflict-centered worldviews continue to predominate in the world today. These worldviews are present, to varying degrees, in all human societies. They reflect the characteristics of two distinct phases in the development of every individual and society, known respectively as the "survival" phase and the "identity" phase. In the following section, the "Survival-Based" worldview and "Identity-Based" worldview are discussed as discrete categories, though it should be noted that very few individuals or societies are strictly one or the other worldview; more often, a blend of the two worldviews can be observed.

The Survival-Based Worldview

The survival-based worldview is most common in conditions of power imbalance and where perceptions of vulnerability and danger are present.[12] The survival-based worldview usually corresponds to the first decade and a half of individual life and to the agrarian or pre-industrial periods of collective organization. It can also develop under conditions of poverty, injustice, anarchy, physical threat, or war at any time and in any cultural setting.

During the survival phase, human beings, both individually and collectively, fear for their survival and thus seek power in order to achieve security. In a world full of dangers, order and protection are highly valued. Thus, in conditions of survival, it is typical for one or a small number of people to gain power through demonstrations of might and force, and for others to follow them in order to ensure their own safety and protection. Thus, human relationships during this phase are characterized by the unequal distribution of power and rely primarily upon the use of force to achieve desired objectives. In the survival-based worldview, the

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the correct goal; he thus advocated that trade should be free of government restrictions. When individuals were free to pursue self-interest, the "invisible hand" of rivalry or competition would become more effective than the state as a regulator of economic life….In the hands of Jeremy Bentham the doctrine of laissez-faire became a philosophy of individualism and of utilitarian ethics, and John Stuart Mill brought it to what was probably its highest point" (*The Columbia Encyclopedia,* 6th ed.).

12. Vulnerability and danger are at once objective and subjective conditions. A live poisonous snake, for example, represents an objective danger if we find ourselves close to one; whereas, a photograph of a snake represents a subjective danger if the mere depiction itself causes us to feel fear. Not everyone experiences danger and vulnerability in the same way. Furthermore, people also respond to dangers differently, based on their subjective experience of the situation.

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use of force is justified by belief in the notion that "might is right."

Essentially, the survival phase of thinking is prone to a considerable degree of violence because people in such a stage (individually or collectively) view the world as dangerous, operate on principles of force and control, and assume that the ultimate purpose of life is to secure safety for oneself and one's group.

Societies that operate according to the survival-based worldview tend to be authoritarian in their power orientation, and as such are not conducive to the creation of lasting peace in the context of unity in diversity. Though the survival-based worldview has enabled human groups and societies to use their powers and resources to meet basic survival needs, the authoritarian use of power demands conformity, blind obedience, and passive resignation by the powerless. Authoritarian institutions and societies systematically place women, children, minorities, foreigners, and those devoid of power and wealth in conditions of disadvantage, neglect, and abuse. Under these conditions, individuals cannot fully develop their inherent talents and capabilities; consequently, the society itself cannot advance since it has deprived itself of the creative contributions of the majority of its people. As such, the peace and order that an authoritarian system creates are illusory. The system lasts only as long as the imbalance of power precariously enables the rulers and the ruling class to impose order on the people who have been subjected to the will of those authoritarian rulers.

The Identity-Based Worldview

The identity-based worldview emerges out of the survival phase and corresponds to the gradual coming-of-age of human individuals and societies. Identity development, although a life-long process, attains its highest level of expression in adolescence and early adulthood. Once we have gained sufficient power and capacity to safeguard our basic survival, our attention is directed at the strengthening of our individual and group identities.

Definition

Identity refers to the sense of uniqueness, individuality, or distinguishing characteristics that a person or group regards as definitive about themselves and the basis on which differentiation from other individuals or groups is made.

Important Terms to Know for Discussing Worldview

Perspective: The point of view one takes on the nature or character of the world at large—how it is and how it ought to be.

Operating Principle: The general philosophy or values to which one adheres regarding how to function successfully in the world.

Ultimate Purpose: The end-result that one believes to be best, or the goal toward which one strives in varied life activities.

Mode of Decision-Making: The decision-making process used by an individual or group.

Mode of Relationship: The characteristics and patterns of relationship that one establishes.

On an individual level, when we reach adolescence, we become interested in exploring our emerging powers and establishing our unique identities. It is very common for adolescents to test the limits of (and even discard) established authorities in order to experiment with and develop a stronger sense of selfhood, as they redefine for themselves the "limits" they will adopt. In pursuing selfhood, this phase is characterized by the development of new ideas and practices on the one hand, and extremes of competition and rivalry on the other.[13]

On a societal level, the identity phase corresponds with the period of scientific and technological advancement and to the democratization of government processes within a "competitive power structure." When the personal aspect of identity-formation is emphasized, the society takes on a highly individualistic character. Likewise, when the group aspect of identity-formation is emphasized, it leads to the development of a "collectivistic" approach to the organization of the society. The intense competition and power-struggle that often characterize the identity phase of human development promotes the "law of the jungle," with each person and/or group focusing on differentiating and advancing their own way of life. Competition and "survival of the fittest" become the main operating principles in the identity phase.

The ultimate purpose of life for people or societies in this phase of development is to get ahead of others and to win. In its most extreme form, this phase results in anarchy; but most often, groups and societies establish certain parameters around the exercise of personal freedom in order to prevent extremes of individualistic behavior.

Table 1 on the following page summarizes the main characteristics of the survival- and identity-based worldviews.

The historical importance of humanity moving into the Identity Phase is best recognized when compared with the limitations of the Survival Phase. Under the authoritarian mode of the survival phase, opportunities for individuals and societies to develop creatively and to employ their various capabilities were greatly limited. As societies emerge from the shackles of blind obedience, the identity phase of their development begins fostering a vigorous increase in intellectual inquiry, human and material development, and experimentation with new modes of governance. In the final stages of the identity phase, which the majority of nations are now experiencing, two issues are taking central stage in global public discourse: (1) the need for balance between unique national identities in the context of peaceful, cooperative international relations; and (2) the need for pursuit of personal and group excellence—instead of extreme and destructive competition—within the parameters of ethical principles.

The Character of Our Times

While the survival-based worldview has dominated world political and socioeconomic trends throughout most recorded history, the identity-based worldview has been dominant for the past two centuries. In the contemporary world, both these worldviews are still present and shape the political, social, religious, and economic conditions of our times. In psychological terms, the survival-based worldview corresponds to

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13. During adolescence, physical, emotional, and mental powers begin to blossom and bring both a new level of dynamism and extremism to the life of the individual and society alike (see E.H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis,* New York: Norton, 1968; M. Hogg, D. Terry, and K. White, "A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 58(1995): 255–69; and Jay Rothman, *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict in Nations, Organizations, and Communities,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).

	Survival-Based Worldview	Identity-Based Worldview	
Perception	World is Dangerous	World is a Jungle	
Operating Principle	Might is Right	Survival of the Fittest	
Mode of Relationships	Dichotomous	Individualistic	
Ultimate Purpose	To Survive and Control	To Win	
Mode of Decision-Making	Authoritarian/ Absolutist	Adversarial/Relativistic	

Table 1: Worldview Types and Characteristics

the period of childhood, and the identity-based worldview corresponds to the period of adolescence.[14]

Despite certain benefits these worldviews have historically brought, it has become apparent that they are no longer adequate to advance humanity's condition further, inasmuch as progress today depends upon overcoming the conflicts and injustice that persistently divide human individuals, communities, and institutions. The survival-based and identity-based worldviews are demonstrably ineffective in solving environmental problems, economic disparities, and widespread preventable diseases—all of which transcend limited boundaries and require a global perspective. Thus, while recognizing that the basic elements of security and individual expression are indispensable to a healthy society, neither the survival- nor the identity-based worldview can create peace because both lead to limited perspectives, separation of peoples from each other, and extremes of power-struggle and competition.

14. Though sequential in theory, the development experience reflects a gradual movement between these stages, and it is thus not unusual to witness a blend of worldview traits in different aspects of a person's or institution's character.

As humanity moves beyond the phases of childhood and adolescence, a new level of consciousness, characterized by a new worldview, is gradually emerging that will be uniquely capable of meeting the challenges and opportunities of collective maturity.

Peace-Centered Worldviews

Having fully explored the potential and limits of the survival- and identity-based worldviews, humanity is now searching for an alternative approach to life and society that can better enable global peace and prosperity. We are at last beginning to recognize that it *is* within human capabilities to undertake such a new approach. A process—only partially conscious—has begun, in which all peoples and nations are thoughtfully examining the foundation of their worldviews and reorienting their basic principles towards a more inclusive concept of peace. The emergence of a third metacategory of worldview, representative of human maturity, is gradually gaining momentum.

A civilization of peace has unique political, social, ethical, and spiritual dimensions—all founded on the principle of unity. Political and

social dimensions of peace have always received considerable attention, and in recent decades, moral and ethical aspects of peace have also been acknowledged and incorporated into the agenda of humanity. The ethical aspects of peace that constitute the main components of such important documents as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* adopted by the United Nations in 1948, are increasingly exerting influence and contributing considerably to the slow, painful, and costly move of humanity towards creation of a civilization of peace.[15] However, even the combined political, social, legal, and ethical efforts of leaders and peoples cannot by themselves alone yield the ultimate desired result, namely, an enduring, worldwide condition of peace. Peace is a *spiritual* state with political, social, and ethical expressions. The

15. Among the most notable of these declarations are: The adoption of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Adopted by UN General Assembly 1985, Optional Protocol adopted in 1993), The Declaration and Integrated Framework on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Democracy (Adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1994), The UNESCO Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence (1999) and United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (Ref. A/RES/53/243), The Dakar Framework for Action – Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments (World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26–28 April 2000), and Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (UN General Assembly, 1993).

human spirit itself must be civilized before we can create a progressive material, social, and political civilization. Peace must first take place in human consciousness—in our thoughts, sentiments, and personal objectives. The process of spiritualization is akin to the dynamics of acculturation and takes place within the framework of formulation of our worldviews. Peace is an expression of a certain kind of worldview.

The Unity-Based Worldview

The unity-based worldview characterizes the age of maturity of humanity and is based on the fundamental issue of the consciousness of the oneness of humanity. Within the parameters of this worldview, society operates according to the principle of unity in diversity and holds as its ultimate objective the creation of a civilization of peace—equal, just, progressive, moral, diverse, and united.

The unity-based worldview entails the equal participation of women with men in the administration of human society. It rejects all forms of prejudice and segregation. It requires the application of universal ethical principles at all levels of government. It ensures that the fundamental human needs for safety, freedom, prosperity, and peace are met within the framework of the rule of law and that fundamental human rights, at both the individual and collective levels, are fully safeguarded. Finally, it is organized around a consultative and cooperative power structure that enables the legitimate exercise of

Childhood	Adolescence	Maturity	
Early Human History	**18th–20th Centuries**	**21st Century +**	**?**
Survival-Based Worldview	**Identity-Based Worldview**	**?**	

Diagram 2: Humanity's Transition Towards Maturity

power within a framework of unified and caring interpersonal and group relationships.

The benefits of a unity-based worldview cannot be overestimated. Simply stated, conflict always requires an enormous expenditure of energy and resources. Because both the survival- and identity-based worldviews are conflict prone, enormous waste takes place in all aspects of human life. In addition to energy and resource waste, the conflict-based worldviews also waste inestimable potential assets as citizens, institutions, and industries are deprived of opportunities to develop. Unity enables human resources to be nurtured and used more fully, creatively, and effectively. Even a unity-based society faces challenges, but these can be met in the spirit of collective cooperation and pursuit of excellence, rather than in the spirit of extreme competition and survival.

The unity-based worldview is directly related to the concept of unity that we studied previously in Unit 1. Within a unity-based worldview or paradigm, certain key principles may be derived that become the framework for our relationships and modes of organization. These include the recognition that:

- The world is one;
- Humanity is one;
- Humanity's oneness is expressed through infinite diversity (of talents, thoughts, tastes, physical characteristics, and life experiences);
- The central challenge of life is to create unity in the context of diversity;
- To successfully meet this challenge, we need to learn how to resolve conflicts in a peaceful and just manner.

We already know these principles to be true, based on scientific facts and human experience. As we become peacemakers, recognition and celebration of the oneness of humanity becomes part of our daily thoughts, feelings, and actions.

In a unity-based worldview, we recognize that the greatest challenge facing humanity is to establish its unity worldwide, while maintaining its diversity. Many societies have attempted and failed to meet this challenge. To be successful, new modes of social organization and conflict resolution are needed.

In the unity-based worldview:

- Institutions aim to achieve justice through participatory, consultative processes;
- Individuals and groups seek opportunities for growth and development;
- Human relationships are based on truthfulness, equality, and service;
- The essential oneness and wholeness of the human race is recognized, and all forms of prejudice and segregation are rejected;
- Women and men participate equally in the administration of human affairs;
- Human development and prosperity are achieved through application of universal ethical principles and processes of consultative decision-making and governance.

Table 2 summarizes the main points of each type of worldview.

Consciousness and the Process of Worldview Change

Human beings are conscious beings. This consciousness gives us the capacity to make choices and to act with freedom. This freedom is our greatest challenge, and also our greatest opportunity. The opportunity for choice comes when we begin to question our worldviews in order to evaluate our assumptions about reality, human nature, and the dynamics and purpose of life. Many people begin the process of reflection on worldview as a result of crisis and turmoil, conscious soul-searching, or intellectual curiosity.

Once we have begun to question our worldviews, we have excellent opportunities to discover, understand, and choose modes of thinking and action that are conducive to the creation of unity and to a lasting civilization of peace—a process that has considerable potential to impact the course of our personal and collective history positively.

In these early years of the 21st century, it is clear that the process of unity is accelerating. We observe expressions of ever widening circles of unity in all areas of human life. The economic and financial integration of the world economy is increasingly visible. Nations are increasingly uniting their political agendas and practices. The European Union and the more recent African Unity movements are two significant examples of movement towards creation of international unities. Environmental and health crises are constant reminders that national boundaries and racial/ethnic prejudices are arbitrary distinctions. The international efforts of the World Health Organization and other international and national

agencies to deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) provide good examples of unity of effort in dealing with these serious diseases. Other examples of humanity's movement toward unity are found in information technologies that have obliterated national boundaries, and in transportation systems that have reduced distances and brought people from all parts of the world face-to-face. Everything points to the fact that humanity is one and all countries are inseparable parts of one planet.[16] The gradual emergence of the unity-based worldview demonstrates that human life, society, modes of governance, ethics, and economy all flourish in the context of unity-in-diversity. The unity-based worldview maintains that the ultimate purpose of life is to establish a peaceful and prosperous world civilization based on justice and equality for all, and that this aspiration is indeed within our reach.

This vision carries forward positive elements from the survival- and identity-based worldviews, while adding new dimensions to how we view

	Survival-Based Worldview	**Identity-Based Worldview**	**Unity-Based Worldview**
Perception	World is Dangerous	World is a Jungle	World is One
Operating Principle	Might is Right	Survival of the Fittest	Unity in Diversity
Mode of Relationships	Dichotomous	Individualistic	Just and Truthful
Ultimate Purpose	To Survive and Control	To Win	To Create Unity and Peace
Mode of Decision-Making	Authoritarian/ Absolutist	Libertarian/Relativistic	Consultative/ Integrative

Table 2: Worldview Types and Characteristics [17]

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16. These concepts are further discussed by H.B. Danesh in "Education for Peace: The Pedagogy of Civilization," a chapter in a book, *Sustained Peace Education for Social Cohesion in International Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies,* edited by Professors Zvi Beckerman and Claire McGlynn, scheduled for publication in 2007.

17. H.B. Danesh and R.P. Danesh, "Has Conflict Resolution Grown Up? Toward a New Model of Decision Making and Conflict Resolution," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 7.1 (2002): 59–76.

our relationships, our societies, and ourselves. Specifically, the safeguards necessary for ensuring basic human security and survival are maintained, and the boundaries needed for guiding the healthy development of individual and collective identity are protected; but the authoritarianism of the survival phase and the competitive practices of the identity phase are replaced by more mature, cooperative, and just processes of social organization and governance.

The primary challenge before individuals and communities now is to dedicate their resources, talents, and energies to the creation of ever wider circles of unity within the family, community, and society at large.

Summary

In this unit, we have learned that:

Everyone Has a Worldview

- Each person, community, and group has a worldview shaped by culture, education, family, life experiences, beliefs, media, etc.;

Worldviews Influence All Our Decisions and Actions

- Worldviews influence how people view themselves, the kind of relationships they have with others, what they consider the purpose of life to be, and what types of communities they create;

Conflict-Based Worldviews Have Predominated Throughout History

- A civilization of peace has been beyond the grasp of the global community because of the persistence of these **conflict-oriented** worldviews among individuals, groups, organizations, and leaders;
- To date, the **Survival-** and **Identity-based** worldviews have been the most prevalent, causing our societies to rely on excessive competition, conflict, and violence in order to achieve their objectives;

Peace Will Be Possible When the World Adopts a Unity-Based Worldview

- A civilization of peace is only possible when a **peace-oriented** worldview is consciously adopted and implemented;
- By developing a **Unity-Based Worldview**, we can dedicate our resources, talents, and energies to the creation of peace.

Key Questions for the Classroom

The following questions can be used to review and explore the concepts of Unit 2 with your students:

1. What is worldview?

2. Do we have control over our worldview?

3. How do we know a worldview of peace is possible?

4. Looking at the three categories of worldview, some individuals and societies appear to have a blend of worldviews. Why does this happen? What causes it?

5. Are all worldviews based on reality? How do we know? Is there a way to test the objectivity of a worldview?

6. How can we be sure that "universal" principles are truly universal? What is a measure for universality?

7. How can young people develop a unity-based worldview when adults and community leaders do not hold that worldview?

8. The media are supposed to convey news and information in a "neutral" way. We know that this is often not the case. Is it possible to have "neutral" media? Would "neutral" media constitute "peace" media? Why, or why not?

Personal Reflection

Reflection is a very powerful learning tool. It helps us to make sense of the things we are studying and the experiences we are going through. The more we reflect on ourselves, our relationships, and the world around us, the better prepared we are to discern, prioritize, and act upon issues of importance.

Becoming a peacemaker is a very important and challenging task. By reflecting on the principles of peace, we are better equipped to make decisions about our own development that will help us to confidently undertake the goal of peace building.

As we go through each of the EFP curriculum units, try to set aside some time for the process of reflection.

The following questions are provided to help you begin this process.

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Reflections on Self

1. What is my worldview?
2. Has my worldview ever changed?
3. Where did my worldview come from?
4. Could I change my worldview if I wanted to?
5. What would I need to do?

Focus Questions

Think of something about yourself that you feel brings people together.

1. In what ways do you think you can develop this part of yourself and use it more often?
2. What other aspects of yourself would you like to develop? How could you do this?

2. Reflections on Family, Workplace, and Friendships

1. What do my mother and father tell me is the purpose of life?
2. What have been the strongest influences on my family's identity and values? (e.g., history, culture, education, religion)
3. What do I learn at school about different peoples and cultures?
4. Is my classroom a place of peace and unity? Why, or why not?

Focus Questions

Think of a disagreement that you were involved in or observed. Reflect on the different perspectives and behaviors of each person involved, and try to identify which worldview(s) shaped and influenced the disagreement most.

1. What was the result of the disagreement?
2. If the individuals involved had held a unity-based worldview, how could the situation have gone differently?
3. What solution to the disagreement do you think would have created the most unity?

3. Reflections on Society

1. What is the worldview held by the majority of my society?
2. To what extent do I agree with it?
3. Is my society oriented towards building peace?
4. Who are the individuals who hold alternative worldviews?
5. To what extent do I agree with those alternatives?

Focus Questions

The world is currently in a phase of rapid development and change. Every society is undergoing crisis or change of some kind.

1. Are there signs that my society is experiencing a change in worldview?
2. What important events have occurred in my country before, during, and/or after this period of transition?
3. Has this transition led my society closer to peace? Describe your observations.

4. Reflections on the World at Large

1. What type of worldviews do I see to be dominant in international politics, economy, culture, and media?
2. What do I see as the essential causes of conflict that are currently taking place around the world?
3. If the principles of truth and justice were to be applied to international issues, what would have to change?

Focus Question

Reflect on an aspect of an international situation you have read about, seen on TV, or heard on the radio that you think could be better dealt with using a peace-worldview.

1. What ideas could you come up with using a peace-oriented worldview to help resolve the situation?

Classroom Tools

As a teacher in the Education for Peace Program, it is now your task to introduce the discussion of worldview to your class and to assist your students in exploring the meaning of worldview and its application in their own lives and the world at large.

The more our students understand the meaning of worldview and how our worldviews can develop and transform, the more capable they will be in building an authentic and lasting culture of peace. Your role as their teacher and mentor in this process is tremendously important.

To help you get started, a number of tools that you may find useful are included in this section. These tools are only guides, and you are encouraged to develop your own ideas on how to best explore these topics with your students.

In addition to the examples here, please also refer to the Educational Methodology Unit, where you will find practical guidelines on how to make your classroom a creative and effective learning environment, as well as other great ideas from fellow teachers who are integrating Education for Peace into their various subject areas.

As you work with the Education for Peace concepts, you will surely develop new ideas for lessons, activities, and assessment approaches. We encourage you to pass along your thoughts, ideas, or resource links to Education for Peace so they can be added to our EFP Resource Bank for other teachers to use. Please send us an email at <info@efpinternational.org>, or mail your ideas to our address:

International Education for Peace Institute (Canada)
101, 1001 W. Broadway, Suite 900
Vancouver, BC V6H 4E4
Canada

We look forward to hearing from you!

Activity Ideas for Secondary Schools

Social Studies
You are a delegate to a Global Forum on the Role of Youth in Creating a Culture of Peace. There are 2,000 other delegates from every country of the world. You attend working sessions, strategy consultations, and cultural celebrations. Write a journal entry describing your impressions of the gathering, what you gained from it, and what actions you plan to take when you return home.

Art
Have students make a pair of colored glasses using construction paper and colored cellophane. Ask students to discuss how looking through colored glasses makes them feel, and how different the world looks. Students can then try on glasses made by others with different colors to compare experiences. Initiate a discussion about how we all see the world in slightly different ways, depending upon culture, beliefs and life experiences. Older students can write a story explaining how two people, who shared the same experience, actually took away different impressions from it. Younger students can draw a story or create a drama about "Magic Glasses" which change the way people interact depending upon whether or not the glasses are being worn. This could be particularly good for problem-solving scenarios in which students must find ways to create justice and unity.

Political Science
Many attribute the political motivation behind the Cold War to a clash in worldviews. Research the Reagan/Gorbachev Cold War negotiations. What worldview(s) were the two sides representing in their talks? What interests did each consider most important? Take one side and rewrite the negotiations using a unity-based worldview. Ask your teacher if you can perform this as a class skit.

Economics
A variety of approaches to economic development in poorer countries have been experimented with in the past few decades. The recent success of micro-credit schemes has begun to revolutionize what giant funding agencies like the International Monetary Fund consider "good development practice." Investigate a project in micro-credit financing and describe how this approach contributes to a shift in economic worldview.

Language Arts/ Literature
Find a short story or novel that is concerned with international or interpersonal conflict. Analyze the motivations of the main characters and compare them with the principles introduced in this unit. Suggest solutions that characters might employ to reach a different, more positive outcome.

Activity Ideas for Primary Schools

Arts   Have students make a pair of colored glasses using construction paper and colored cellophane. Ask students to discuss how looking through colored glasses makes them feel, and how different the world looks. Students can then try on glasses made by others with different colors to compare experiences. Initiate a discussion about how we all see the world in slightly different ways, depending upon culture, beliefs and life experiences. Older students can write a story explaining how two people, who shared the same experience, actually took away different impressions from it. Younger students can draw a story or create a drama about "Magic Glasses" which change the way people interact depending upon whether or not the glasses are being worn. This could be particularly good for problem-solving scenarios in which students must find ways to create justice and unity.

Drama   Using a 3-part skit format, help students to re-interpret a popular story or nursery rhyme through the perspectives of the three types of worldview described in this unit. After viewing the 3-part presentation, open a discussion with the students on the effect that worldview played in each segment.

Unit 2, Sample Lesson 1: WORLDVIEW

Focus: My Personal Worldview

Context

Every person's worldview shapes his or her thoughts, behavior, and interaction with others. Understanding the tenets of your own worldview is key to understanding where you can begin to strengthen your role as a peacemaker.

Points for Understanding

- Each person has a worldview shaped by culture, education, family, experiences, beliefs, etc. While mostly subconscious, our worldviews influence how we view both the world and ourselves, how we think and act, what kind of relationships we make with different people, and what we consider to be the purpose of our life and other people's lives.
- Many people believe that conflict is a natural, inevitable and even beneficial part of life. They do not question whether this is really a fact or simply an outcome of their choices based on their worldviews. It is not surprising then that, quite often, the information we receive or the opinions that we hear reflect a conflict-based perspective or worldview.
- If we want to foster a culture of peace in ourselves, our families, our classroom, our community and our world, we need to become conscious of our own worldviews and question any assumptions that take conflict for granted. We also need to understand and consciously practice the peace principles in our lives, relationships, studies and work.

Key Questions

1. Do we have control over our worldviews?
2. How do we know a worldview of peace is possible?
3. Looking at the three categories of worldview, some individuals and societies appear to be a blend. Why does this happen? What causes it?
4. Are all worldviews based on reality? How can we know that? Is there a way to test the objectivity of a worldview?

Learning Process

1. Write the term "Worldview" on the board and ask your students to provide words they associate with the term "worldview." Then initiate a discussion by asking students such questions as: Where do you get your worldview? Are worldviews different from person to person and at different times in your life? What comprises your worldview today?

2. Shift the conversation to the nature of worldview, first in developmental terms. Review with students some of the main types of worldview, and ask them to cite examples that they have seen in society, family, movies, etc.

3. Divide the class into small groups, ask them to identify what components they think comprise a unity-based worldview; present the components to the whole class; and foster discussion among students about peace principles in relation to examples from their daily lives and from international affairs.

Activities and Assignments

Teachers can choose from among the following sample assignments or create their own:

1. **Classwork:** Write down some of your thoughts using the following questions as a guide:
   - What is my worldview?
   - Where did it come from?
   - Has my worldview ever changed?
   - Could I change it if I wanted to?
   - What is my purpose in life?

2. **Written Assignment:** Refer to the set of quotations included at the end of this unit. Write a 1–2 page discussion of one of these quotations, in light of the concepts introduced in Units 1 and 2.

3. **Drama:** Break students into groups of 4 or 5, and ask them to create a short play that depicts the three types of worldview. Have the students perform their plays in front of the class. Use the attitudes and scenarios in the performances to hold a classroom discussion on the concept of worldview and worldview change.

4. **Journal:** Think of something about yourself that you feel brings people together. In what ways do you think you can develop this part of yourself to bring it out more often? What other aspects of yourself would you like to develop?

Additional Resources

Activity Reading 1 – Quotations

Unit 2, Sample Lesson 2: WORLDVIEW

Focus: Worldviews Around Me

Context

Cultivating in participants an understanding of their own worldviews, combined with an appreciation for other worldviews, provides a framework for the participants to better understand themselves and the messages they receive daily from leaders and the media. It also helps them to interact with family and peers and the surrounding world with a greater degree of understanding and insight.

Points for Understanding

- Each person, community, and group has a worldview;
- The inability of the world community to create a civilization of peace now is, in part, due to the persistence of conflict-oriented worldviews among people, groups, organizations, and leaders;
- The beginning of a civilization of peace is the conscious development of a peace-based worldview.

Key questions

1. How can young people develop a unity-based worldview when adults and community leaders do not hold one?
2. Why should we strive for a common "worldview of peace" at all? Why not leave people to think and act as they choose?
3. The media is supposed to convey news and information in a "neutral" way. We know that this is often not the case. Is it possible to have "neutral" media? What would this look like? Would "neutral" media constitute "peace" media?

Learning Process

1. Building on Lesson 1, encourage students to start considering worldviews expressed in sources around them.
2. Stimulate class discussion by distributing preselected newspaper or magazine articles and having students discuss them in terms of the worldviews these materials express. Samples may include:
    - A piece of literature
    - Lyrics of a popular song
    - An article on social or political affairs

- An excerpt of historical theory
- An editorial on economic or biomedical ethics, etc.

Activities and Assignments

Teachers can choose from among the following sample assignments, or create their own:

1. **Class activity:** Write down or discuss some of your thoughts using the following questions as a guide:
   a. Generally speaking, what type of worldviews do I see demonstrated in our classrooms, communities, families, international politics, economy, culture, and/or media?
   b. What do I see as the essential causes of conflicts that are currently taking place around the world?
   c. If the principles of truth and justice were to be applied to personal, interpersonal, community, and international issues, what would have to change?

2. **Written Assignment:** Read "John Rawls and the Politics of Social Justice" for homework. At the next class, discuss the nature of John Rawls's worldview. What are the tenets of his worldview? What are the implications of such a worldview? How does this compare with the views of the students in the class?

3. **Group Project:** Have a group of students develop a proposal for a "peace media" news agency. What would be its guiding principles? What would be its professional mandate? How could it cover both "good" and "bad" news in ways that foster peace instead of conflict? In a follow-up assignment, students could be asked to investigate and report on a piece of news through the perspective of a peace-worldview.

4. **Journal:** Reflect on a personal, interpersonal, or international situation you have read about, seen on TV, or heard on the radio that you think could be better dealt with using a peace-worldview. What ideas could you come up with using a unity-based worldview to effect a change in the situation?

Additional Resources

Activity Reading 2 – "Reflections on a Mote of Dust"
Activity Reading 3 – "Wealth of Nations"

Unit 2, Activity Reading 1

Choose one of the following quotations and discuss:

"Humankind has understood history as a series of battles because, to this day, it regards conflict as the central facet of life."
—Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860–1904), Russian author, playwright
Complete Works and Letters in Thirty Volumes, Works, Notebook I, vol. 17, p. 7, "Nauka" (1980)

"Every man is in a state of conflict, owing to his attempt to reconcile himself and his relationship with life to his conception of harmony. This conflict makes his soul a battlefield, where the forces that wish this reconciliation fight those that do not and reject the alternative solutions they offer."
—Rebecca West (1892–1983), British author
The Strange Necessity, ch. 6 (1928)

"I am in politics because of the conflict between good and evil, and I believe that in the end good will triumph."
—Margaret Thatcher (b. 1925), British Conservative politician, former prime minister
Quoted in the *Guardian* (London, October 23, 1990)

"Struggle is the father of all things…. It is not by the principles of humanity that man lives or is able to preserve himself above the animal world, but solely by means of the most brutal struggle."
—Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), German dictator
speech, Feb. 5, 1928, Kulmbach, Germany
Quoted in Alan Bullock, *Hitler, A Study in Tyranny,* ch. 1, sec. 3 (1962)

"America is a country that seems forever to be toddler or teenager, at those two stages of human development characterized by conflict between autonomy and security."
—Anna Quindlen (b. 1952), U.S. journalist, columnist, author
Thinking Out Loud, p. 55, Random House (1993)

"Our attitude toward our own culture has recently been characterized by two qualities, braggadocio and petulance. Braggadocio—empty boasting of American power, American virtue, American know-how—has dominated our foreign relations now for some decades….Here at home—within the family, so to speak—our attitude to our culture expresses a superficially different spirit, the spirit of petulance. Never before, perhaps, has a culture been so fragmented into groups, each full of its own virtue, each annoyed and irritated at the others."
—Daniel J. Boorstin (b. 1914), U.S. historian
America and the Image of Europe, foreword (1960)

"A private should preserve a respectful attitude toward his superiors, and should seldom or never proceed so far as to offer suggestions to his general in the field."
—Mark Twain [Samuel Langhorne Clemens] (1835–1910), U.S. author. 1881
"The Benefit of Judicious Training," p. 774, *Mark Twain: Collected Tales, Sketches, Speeches, & Essays, 1852–1890,* Library of America (1992)

"From the point of view of their sameness, all things are One. He who regards things in this light does not even trouble about what reaches him through the senses of hearing and sight, but lets his mind wander in the moral harmony of things. He beholds the unity in things, and does not notice the loss of particular objects."
—Chuangtse (275 BC), Chinese mystic and humourist
Tao, p. 23

Unit 2, Activity Reading 2

"Reflections on a Mote of Dust"

by Carl Sagan

We succeeded in taking that picture [from deep space], and, if you look at it, you see a dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever lived, lived out their lives. The aggregate of all our joys and sufferings, thousands of confident religions, ideologies and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilizations, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every hopeful child, every mother and father, every inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every superstar, every supreme leader, every saint and sinner in the history of our species, lived there on a mote of dust, suspended in a sunbeam.

The earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that in glory and in triumph they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of the dot on scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner of the dot. How frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds. Our posturing, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the universe, are challenged by this point of pale light.

Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity in all this vastness—there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves. It is up to us. It's been said that astronomy is a humbling, and I might add, a character-building experience. To my mind, there is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly and compassionately with one another and to preserve and cherish that pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known.

<div align="right">—Excerpted from a commencement address delivered May 11, 1996</div>

Unit 2, Activity Reading 3

D.C. Dispatch, *The Atlantic* (magazine) | December 10, 2002

Wealth of Nations
John Rawls and the Politics of Social Justice

Social reformers such as Rawls are in a tradition that emphasizes the best over the possible

by Clive Crook

Rawls was a radical egalitarian—more radical than he seemed to realize. In *A Theory of Justice,* his most celebrated book, he famously proposes a way to crystallize our underlying ideas about justice. Imagine that you are asked to choose the basic rules by which society will be run, but without knowing anything about your personal circumstances—how intelligent you are, what talents you have, how rich your parents are, and so on. Rawls argues that from behind this "veil of ignorance" you would choose two key principles.

   First is the liberty principle: You would insist on certain basic political and civil liberties to protect your autonomy as a person. Second is the so-called difference principle: You would want to live in a society that made improving the lot of the poor its highest priority. Why? Because the person at the bottom might turn out to be you. More precisely, Rawls argues that people stripped of self-knowledge would choose a system that, so long as it did not infringe basic political liberties, would strive to reduce inequality until cutting it any further would do such harm to the economy that the position of the poorest person would actually be worsened.

Unit 2 – Further Reading

Talking Peace but Thinking Conflict
The Challenge of Worldview in Peace Education

by Sara Clarke

Worldview shapes the way an individual or group perceives itself, others, and the world around them, and how s/he defines the principles by which relationships between the self and the world are to be conducted. As Danesh and Danesh (2002) state, "the foundation of every culture is its collective worldview." The perspectives that constitute a worldview are usually learned in the context of the family, school, culture, religious community, and the historical and political views prevalent in a given society—what Moscovici (1993) calls "social representations," and Hägglund (1999) describes as "cultural fabric":

> Normative rules for human relationships, such as trust and social concern, and qualities in societal structures, such as distribution of power and social justice, constitute elements of the cultural fabric into which a child is born. Any child in any society learns what is socially expected and accepted when interacting with others. Children also reach insights about social, political, and economic hierarchies and their meaning in relation to their own and the group's position.

Worldviews "constitute discursive complexes of norms, values, beliefs, and knowledge, adhered to various phenomena in human beings' lives" (Hägglund, 1999). For the most part, we are only partially conscious of the worldviews we hold. Zanna and Rempel (1988) note, "for some attitudes, the initiation may be early in development and may therefore be unknown (unconscious) to the individual" (Van Slyck, Stern, Elbedour, 1999; see also Guerra et al., 1997).

Yet, through this powerful medium, we define our understanding of the nature of reality, the purpose of acquiring knowledge, and the purpose of human experience both individually and collectively. As Hägglund (1999) explains, "…social representations are constructed, transmitted, confirmed, and reconstructed in social interactions, and they mediate social action." For example, within a conflict-oriented worldview one will be inclined to interpret reality as an arena of endless conflicts, and the purpose of knowledge as a means for gaining advantage over others, and the purpose of life as competing for survival. Bjorkqvist and Fry (1997) recognize this phenomenon and explain that in examining the causes of conflict "awareness of the impact of culture is clearly important because it allows for consideration of how individuals may be limited in their approach to conflict by culture-based beliefs and norms. Indeed, it has been argued that societies may in fact establish 'cultures of conflict', consisting of a network of

scripts or schemata which provide models for dealing with conflict situations."

According to Van Slyck, Stern, and Elbedour (1999), most of the peoples of the world live with conflict-oriented worldviews, whether ethnically, religiously, or environmentally based. Tragically, as long as conflict-oriented worldviews persist, the individuals and communities that constitute our global society will continue to be burdened by conflicts resulting from choices and behaviours that stem from these worldviews. Though seeming tautological, the argument is nonetheless true, inasmuch as worldviews shape our attitudes and behaviours. Worldview, like vision, determines where we see ourselves going, what we understand to be the processes taking place around us, and how we view what our role in these processes can and should be. If our vision condemns humanity to endless cycles of violence and injustice, what opportunity do we have to act otherwise?

Creating a culture of peace is essentially the process of transforming worldviews. Transformation of worldview is a lengthy process, primarily because change requires a heightened motivation to alter one's mode of operation in life. At minimum, this process requires the following elements: (1) new knowledge—i.e., familiarization with a conceptual framework that is capable of re-ordering knowledge and experience within a unity-centered paradigm; (2) self-reflection—i.e., critical examination of one's attitudes about one's self, others, and the world—including a willingness to keep, modify, or discard accepted attitudes according to their value in relation to the standard of peace; (3) new experience—i.e., testing the reality of the principles of peace by putting them into practice.

Worldview signifies a society's understanding of the nature of civilization and the manner in which that understanding is both translated into reality and transmitted to the next generation. It is thus of critical importance that programs of peace education center, first and foremost, upon an examination of prevailing conflict-inducing worldviews and on the development of a new worldview that is capable of creating and sustaining inner, interpersonal, intergroup, and international peace. As Danesh and Danesh state: "At the core of a *culture* of peace, therefore, is the education of every succeeding generation in the nature, principles, and practices of peace."

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Extended Exploration

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Web Links

"Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) TeacherSource—for K–12 lesson samples and resources for all subjects." <http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/>.

General Online Resources

The Columbia Encyclopedia Online. <http://www.bartleby.com/65>.

The Columbia World of Quotations. <http://www.bartleby.com/quotations>.

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/>.

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com>.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <http://plato.stanford.edu>.

Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. <http://www.wikipedia.org>

Art History Timeline: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/splash.htm>.