Name: Conflict line

Time: Minimum 15 minutes

Goal or purpose of the exercise:

To have an experience on how we deal with conflict or how we often think about violence as a solution to solve a problem. An exercise to begin to question our militaristic mindset and challenge ourselves to find nonviolent and win-win solutions.

How it's done/facilitator's notes:

The facilitator asks people to form two rows of an equal number of people facing one another. Then ask them to reach out to the person across from them to make sure they know who they will be relating to. Tell them that there is an invisible line between them. Ask the pairs to reach across the line, shake hands and hold. The only instruction is: 'Get the other person over to your side.' Then: 'Now!'

Debriefing

- what happened?

- What was the automatic response to the instruction and 'now!'?

NOTICE: many of us have a tendency to react with violence, to struggle with physical force, that suggest violence as the first, perhaps only, option.

- Do we have militaristic mindset?

- Who 'won'?

- Did anyone talk about alternative solutions?

- Was there any pair where both won?

- How might that happen? How could they both follow the instructions?

Possible win-win solutions: the pairs exchange places or they go first to one side and then the other

- What if pairs were men and women?

- Who would 'win' in such a set-up? In same-sex pairs, there is significant doubt in advance of who will 'win' if the option is physical force; in male-female set-up, less doubt, some degree of certainty as to who will win if force is the solution

- This is the situation in which you will likely find yourself; the 'female' up against the armed military or security 'male'; violence is not a logical tool to use

- What solutions might be attempted?

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