



A Confession and a Hope

by

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I have to confess something. I am not the person who can embrace the wisdom of the Bible when it says in Matthew 5:38-48 *"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also."*

As a psychotherapist for more than 40 years one of the overwriting principles I have seen reinforced over and over again is this simple truism: *when you accept the unacceptable you reinforce it.* This simple principle applies to us all from cradle-to-grave.

Over the years I have seen many people try to explain away the insanity of another by saying things like, "They didn't mean it" or "You have to put their behavior in a context." Some people even go as far as to suggest, "You might do the same thing, if you lived in that situation." There are myriad of these remarks.

People rationalize in an attempt to explain away incomprehensible and irrational acts by others. In the 60s and 70s, I must confess, that I often quoted that great philosopher Willie Nelson when he said, "He ain't wrong he's just different."

Fuzzy thinking or an even fuzzier philosophy that suggests everything is a matter of perception or perspective misses the mark when we consider certain kinds of behavior.

I cannot imagine ever finding a global perspective that would allow me to forgive or forget anyone who would physically abuse or sexually molested a child. I have no forgiveness for some, whom I read about in the newspaper, that prey upon the weakness of others for their benefit as we saw depicted in the film *the Wolf of Wall Street*.

There are some things that are just simply wrong and moreover unacceptable! It's not that they are "just different", they are wrong.

As a therapist I've had the terrible situation of having to tell a child that he was going to die soon. Or trying to console a man facing years in prison for a crime, for which I believe, he was innocent.

I tried to imagine what I would have said if I had to console Anwar Kasasbeh, the wife of the 26 year old F16 Pilot Ft. Lieutenant Al-Kasasbeh, who was taken hostage in December 2014 when he crashed in ISIS territory.

Moreover, what do you say to the family of the other hostage, Japan's Kenji Goto, who was beheaded last week. ISIS has publicly beheaded seven hostages to date. But would anyone doubt these were just the most publicize, and do not reflect the systematic barbarism that occurs on a daily basis? There is a cancer growing in our world body. The diagnosis is clear, the prognosis is problematic unless direct action is taken. The question then becomes, how do you stop accepting this unacceptable behavior? Like many things I've seen over the years, here is another example of the answer being in the question. Stop accepting unacceptable behavior!

Jihadist threats have been tangible realities since they crawled out of the millennia of biblical times. They surface in shocking headlines too gruesome to be believed by a civilized society.

I am an American, and as such, I do not want to be dragged into a battle between two parts of the Muslim faith warring against each other in a fight that's been going on for more than 1000 years.

ISIS slickly produced presentations of barbaric acts, worthy of a Hollywood award, does not make their insanity more understandable or rational.

I simply want them to go away and stop this behavior. I would encourage them to meet with those, with whom they have a difference, sit down and discuss those differences. And come to an amicable resolution without violence or irrational action.

I am convinced that this approach to conflict resolution is reasonable, rational, and unrealistic. I have negotiated situations when there were guns on the table or knives in people's hands. I am not afraid of these situations. In all cases I was able to draw upon some level of rationality and even goodwill, which was often buried very deep.

Unfortunately, I am convinced that no such approach exists in a possible scenario that would stop the violence or end terrorism being inflicted upon us today.

The question is then, what is the answer to this spreading cancer? I must return to my truism learned over the years, *When you accept the unacceptable you reinforce it*. I believe that it is time that we take the crisis and turn it into a creative solution.

Let me make myself perfectly clear here. The ISIS organization must be stamped out completely, totally and forever! To be more specific, it is foolhardy to believe that you can negotiate, communicate or do anything other than to capitulate or fight these savages!

Locking them up in mass or using any form of incarceration will only exacerbate the situation. It makes them the targets of those who would rescue them by additional ruthless means.

It must be seen as treating the cancer that is in the world body. The sooner we understand this and accept this terrible challenge, the fewer lives will be lost. The less those, like Anwar Kasasbeh and her family, will struggle with trying to understand how one human being can behave like that towards another.

Here is what we need to do. A formal declaration of war needs to be stated. In that declaration the civilized countries of this world must, as they did in previous wars, denounce the unacceptable behavior as not befitting civilized people. Moreover, that declaration must follow with specific, decisive and direct actions to remove this blight from the surface of this earth.

What would this plan practically mean? First, there must be a call to action based upon a common acknowledgment of human rights and freedoms. These declarations have been around for centuries. The best

example of it is the Constitution of the United States. They exist in the bastions of the capitals of civilized societies.

They don't need to be dragged out and reread. They exist in the hearts and souls of freedom loving people in every land. They exist in the faces of children as they look to us for safety and solace of a parent's promise.

ISIS is ultimately the fault of a western political philosophy and foreign-policy. We fooled ourselves into believing that the Middle East conflict was a "tar baby" that would not stick, and ultimately engulf the West in its age old struggles.

It's time to form an international group specialized in removing "carcinogenic cells" led by real leaders such as British Prime Minister David Cameron, French President François Gérard Georges Hollande, King Abdullah II of Jordan to name a very few. Simply put, the American-led coalition needs a genuine leader. American or not, but someone who is not afraid to lead and take the direct action necessary to remove this scourge which threatens to engulf our planet.

Winston Churchill placed a red card upon documents that required immediate attention it simply said, ACTION THIS DAY. If there was ever a time in current history that required such a card and a bold person to place that card in front of the world councils, IT IS NOW!

To Mrs. Kasasbeh, I can only say what the civilized world is thinking today, I am terribly sorry for your loss. I can only hope that those in leadership positions throughout the world will use your terrible loss as a rallying cry for action. If we fail to act now, like any cancer unattended, it will spread and kill even more.

