



# The Art of Teaching & Learning

## Group & Conflict Management

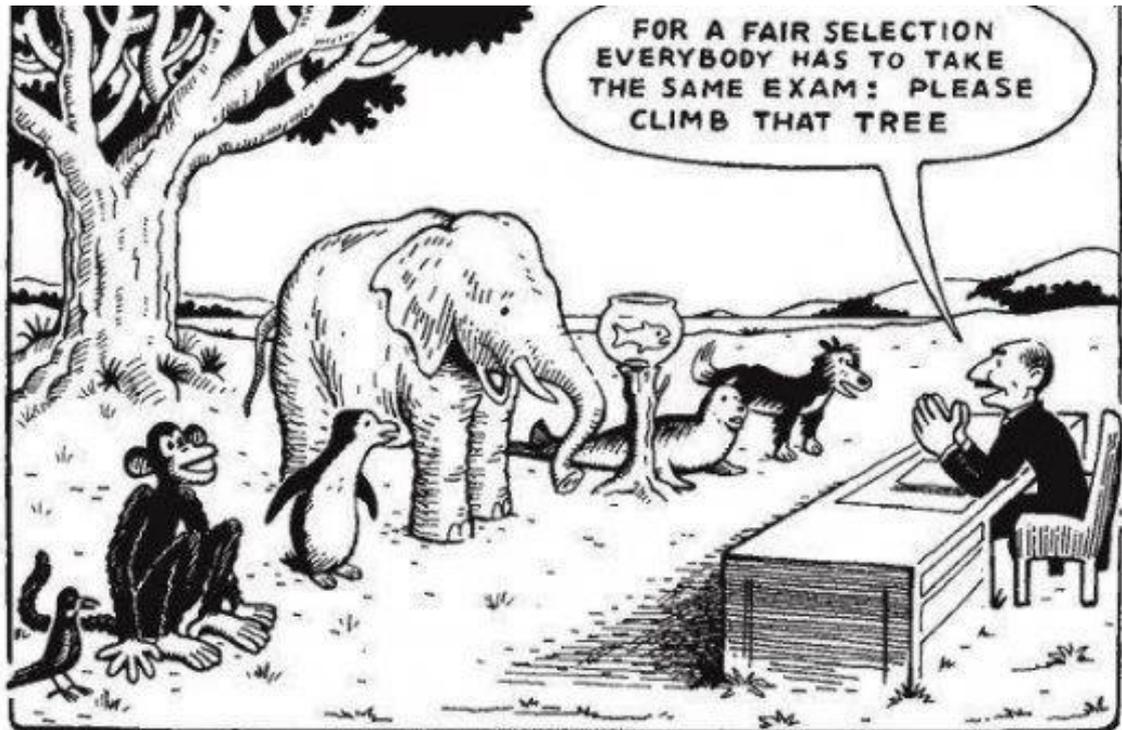
*“Building a safe learning container”*

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“Do exactly what you wish to do in this course and say and write exactly what *you* think and feel.” (Carl Rogers)

“A **learning identity** lies at the heart of the learning way. People with a learning identity see themselves as learners, seek and engage life experiences with a learning attitude and believe in their ability to learn.” (Alice & David Kolb)

“(…) I wish to aid in the development of our most precious natural resource – **the minds and hearts of our children and young people**. It is their curiosity, their eagerness to learn, their ability to make difficult and complex choices that will decide the future of our world. We need the help of all of our young – the despairing, alienated youth of the ghetto, the aimless, affluent youth, the serious, thoughtful children, the whole great mass of our young people – if we are to preserve this fragile planet and build a future world worthy of persons. The only way we can be assured of that help is to assist our youth to *learn*, deeply and broadly, and above all, *how* to learn.” (Carl Rogers, ‘Freedom to Learn for the 80s’)

“Freire argues that traditional education also promotes a form of internalized oppression and a non-learning identity. It is based on a “banking concept” where all-knowing teachers deposit ideas in students’ minds to be received uncritically, mechanically memorized and repeated. He offers the alternative of “**problem-posing education**” that empowers a learning self-identity. It is based on a democratic relationship between student and teacher that begins with the here and now experience of students’ lives and encourages the praxis of critical reflection and action to improve their lives.” (Alice & David Kolb)

"No curriculum or teacher can take account of **everything going on in a learning group**: the diversity of learning channels; the variety of kinds of intelligence; the participants' differing degrees of experience and background in the content matter; the complex realities of rank, class and ethnicity that influence participation; the projections being made on the teacher or facilitator; the degree of participants' self-confidence and assertiveness; the relation between the mainstream of the group and its margins; and the multiplicity of individual learning goals. But a self-organizing group can, given some time, operate with this degree of complexity! It can create a system in which an amazing number of needs can be met." (George Lakey, 'Facilitating Group Learning')



Are these next three things clear for every individual in the group? **Role – Status – Norms**  
Some need **affection** from the group, others more **inclusion**, and still others, some kind of **control**. Are these needs met?

***“The container***

- *breeds collaborative spirit, so participants can learn from each other;*
- *encourages participants to be real rather than pretend to be 'the good student', so authentic curiosity can emerge;*
- *creates safety for taking risks;*
- *creates an affirmative environment;*
- *reduces the distractibility of the group and therefore saves time for more content;*
- *assists people to make connections in the content of the curriculum - connected people make more connections.”*

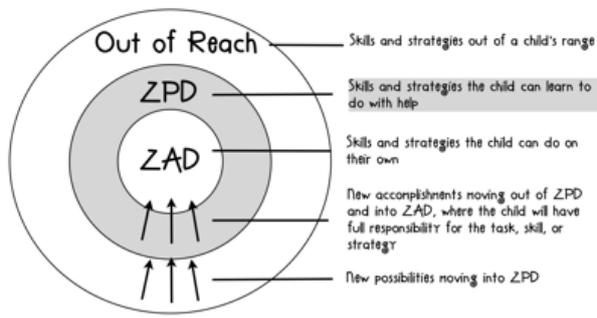
(George Lakey)

*“ **The learning way** is about approaching life experiences with a learning attitude. It involves a deep trust in one’s own experience and a healthy skepticism about received knowledge. It requires the perspective of quiet reflection and a passionate commitment to action in the face of uncertainty. The learning way is not the easiest way to approach life but in the long run it is the wisest. Other ways of living tempt us with immediate gratification at our peril. The way of dogma, the way of denial, the way of addiction, the way of submission and the way of habit; all offer relief from uncertainty and pain at the cost of entrapment on a path that winds out of our control. The learning way requires deliberate effort to create new knowledge in the face of uncertainty and failure; but opens the way to new, broader and deeper horizons of experience. Learning is intrinsically rewarding and empowering, bringing new avenues of experience and new realms of mastery.”*

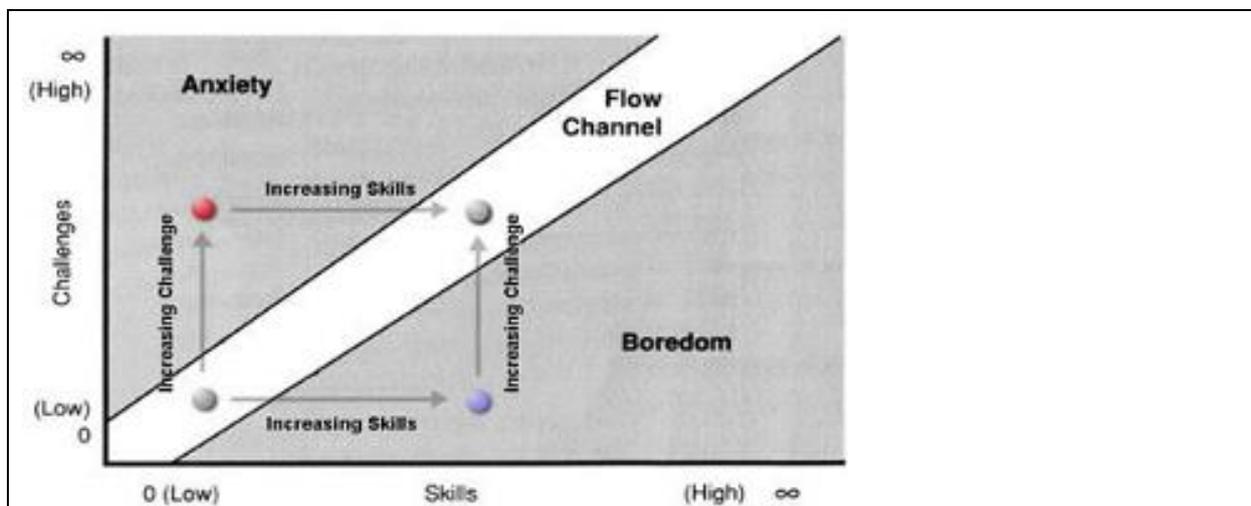
(‘On Becoming a Learner: The Concept of Learning Identity’ - Alice Kolb and David Kolb)

***"Difference enhances life.** This is not to be confused with shallow notions of inclusiveness or experiencing diversity where one stands in the space of privilege, taking in and from those who are other. But rather where one is fundamentally moved - transformed utterly. The end result of this transformation is mutuality, partnership, and community." (Ron Scapp)*

## Zone of proximal development (Lev Vygotsky)



## The Flow Model of Optimal Experience (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi)



The studies have suggested that the phenomenology of enjoyment has **eight major components**. When people reflect on how it feels when their experience is most positive, they mention at least one, and often all, of the following:

1. We confront tasks we have a chance of completing;
2. We must be able to concentrate on what we are doing;
3. The task has clear goals;
4. The task provides immediate feedback;
5. One acts with deep, but effortless involvement, that removes from awareness the worries and frustrations of everyday life;
6. One exercises a sense of control over their actions;
7. Concern for the self disappears and
8. The sense of duration of time is altered.

*“Learning groups need times when the participants are all together and times when they are divided into subgroups (or individuals). The first is integration; the second **differentiation**. Those two phases are so natural I see them wherever I go, even in dinner parties and car trips.*

*Every group needs this rhythm, just as much as the individual needs to inhale and exhale. Differentiation is expressed in small group activity, pairs, individual work, and even sizable caucuses. (In a group of two hundred, a caucus of fifty is differentiation!). Integration is expressed in whole group activity.*

*If a teacher doesn't provide for this rhythm in the design, the group will create it anyway. A teacher who tries to hold a class in its whole group format will, if sharp enough to notice, see that participants start to zone out after a while – they simply need to differentiate. Asking humans to inhale exclusively is a fruitless enterprise!”*

“Carol Dweck (Molden & Dweck 2006) has studied the “lay theories” that people have about themselves and others. In particular she and her colleagues have examined the **differences between those who see their abilities and attributes as fixed and static and those who believe that they can incrementally learn and change themselves**. Those individuals who believe that they can learn and develop have a learning identity. The learner faces a difficult challenge with a “mastery response” while the person with a fixed identity is more likely to withdraw or quit. Learners embrace challenge, persist in the face of obstacles, learn from criticism and are inspired by and learn from the success of others. The fixed identity person avoids challenge, gives up easily, avoids criticism and feels threatened by the success of others. Not surprisingly students with a learning identity, regardless of their tested intelligence, are more successful in school than those with a fixed identity.” (Kolb & Kolb)

“Another intriguing finding is that **learning identity may be contagious** in the sense that those who have a learning identity tend to create relationships that stimulate it in others and those with fixed identities also act in ways that pass on fixed views of others. For example, those with a fixed versus incremental view of themselves show greater stereotype endorsement, perceive greater out-group homogeneity, and show greater intergroup bias and more biased behavior toward out-group members. They are more susceptible to the fundamental attribution error—believing that others actions indicate the “kind” of person they are; underestimating the influence of situational factors on their behavior (Levy et. al. 2001).”

**Self-identity** = balancing characteristics that reinforce a **fixed self**—negative self-talk, avoidance of risk and failure, and being threatened by the successes of others—and those that build a **learning self**—trusting one’s ability to learn from experience, seeking new experiences and challenges, persistence, learning from mistakes and using other’s success as a source of learning.”

## The Key Competences of Life Long Learning

- communication in the **mother tongue**, which is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts;
- communication in **foreign languages**, which involves, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- **mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology**. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen;
- **digital competence** involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT);
- **learning to learn** is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organise one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities;
- **social and civic competences**. Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation;
- **sense of initiative and entrepreneurship** is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risktaking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance;
- **cultural awareness and expression**, which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative

*These key competences are all interdependent, and the emphasis in each case is on **critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking and constructive management of feelings.***

### The Person-centered Education Model (Carl Rogers)

The person-centered approach is at the opposite end of conventional education. It is sharply different in its philosophy, its methods, and its politics. It cannot exist unless there is one precondition. If this precondition exists, then the other features listed may be experienced or observed at any educational level, from kindergarten through graduate school.

- The precondition is: a leader or a person who is perceived as an authority figure in the situation is sufficiently secure within herself and in her relationship to others that she experiences an **essential trust in the capacity of others to think for themselves**, to learn for themselves. (...)
- The **facilitative teacher shares with the others—students**, and possibly also parents or community members—the **responsibility for the learning process**
- The **facilitator provides learning resources**, from within himself and his own experience, from books or materials or community experiences.
- The **student develops his own program of learning**, alone or in cooperation with others.
- A **facilitative learning climate** is provided. An atmosphere of realness, of caring, and of understanding listening is evident.
- The **focus is primarily on fostering the continuing process of learning**.
- The discipline necessary to reach the student's goals is a **self-discipline**.
- In this growth-promoting climate, the **learning tends to be deeper**, proceeds at a **more rapid** rate, and is **more pervasive** in the life and behaviour of the student than is learning acquired in the traditional classroom.

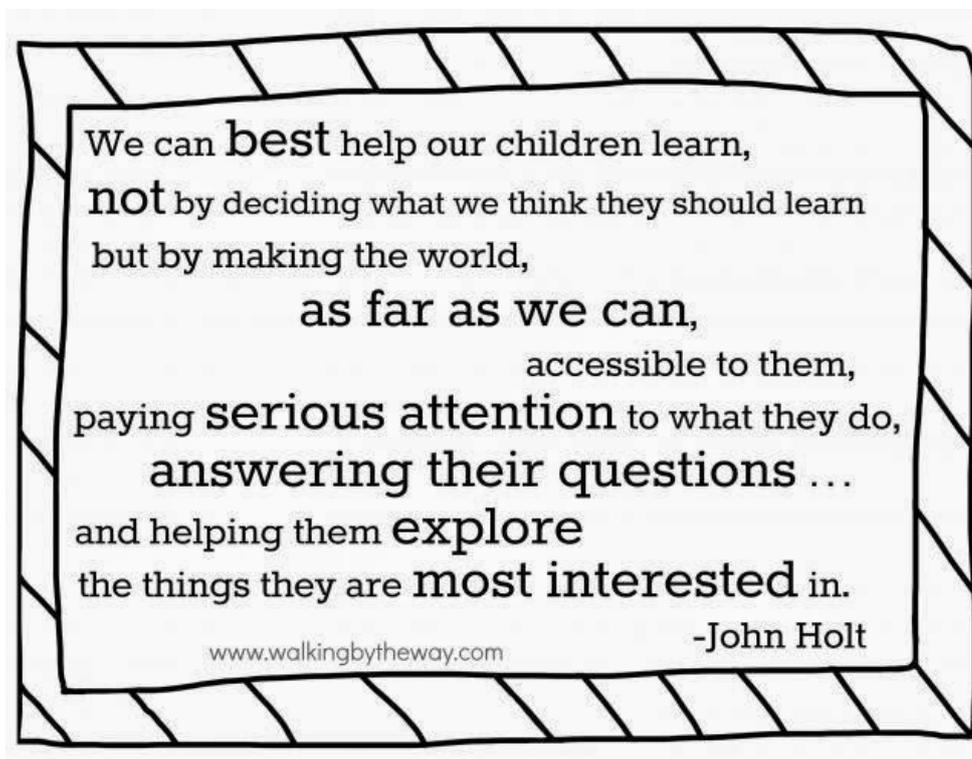
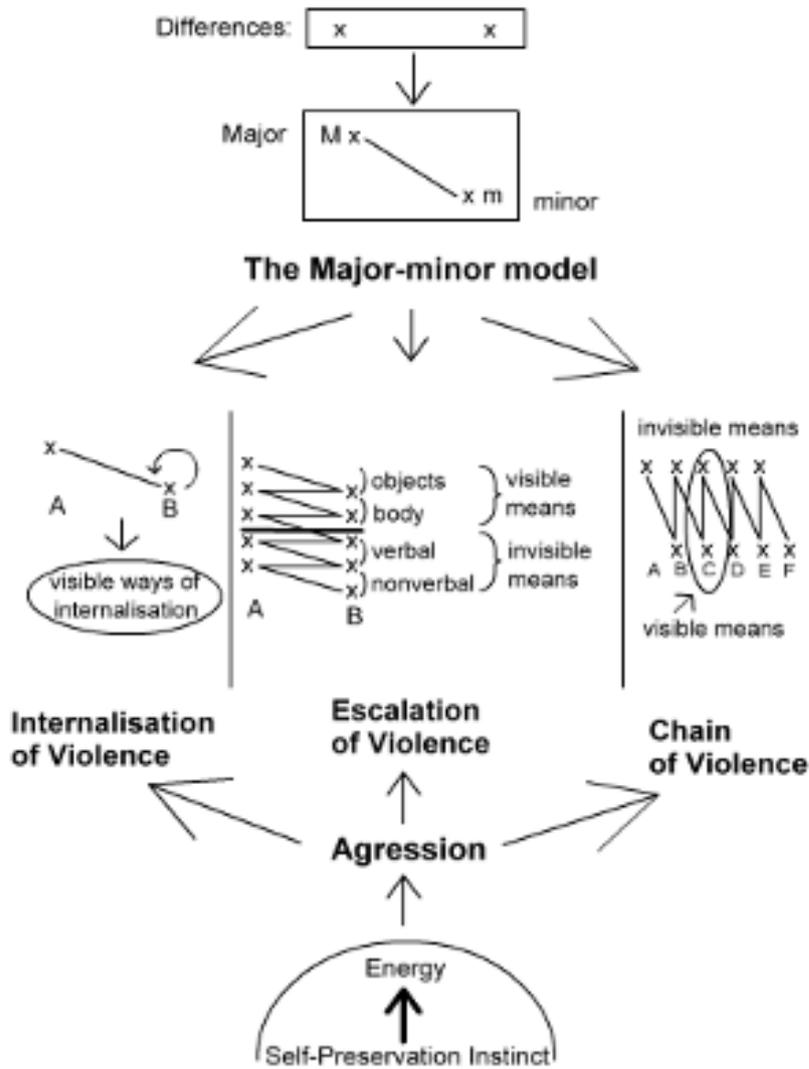


Fig. 1

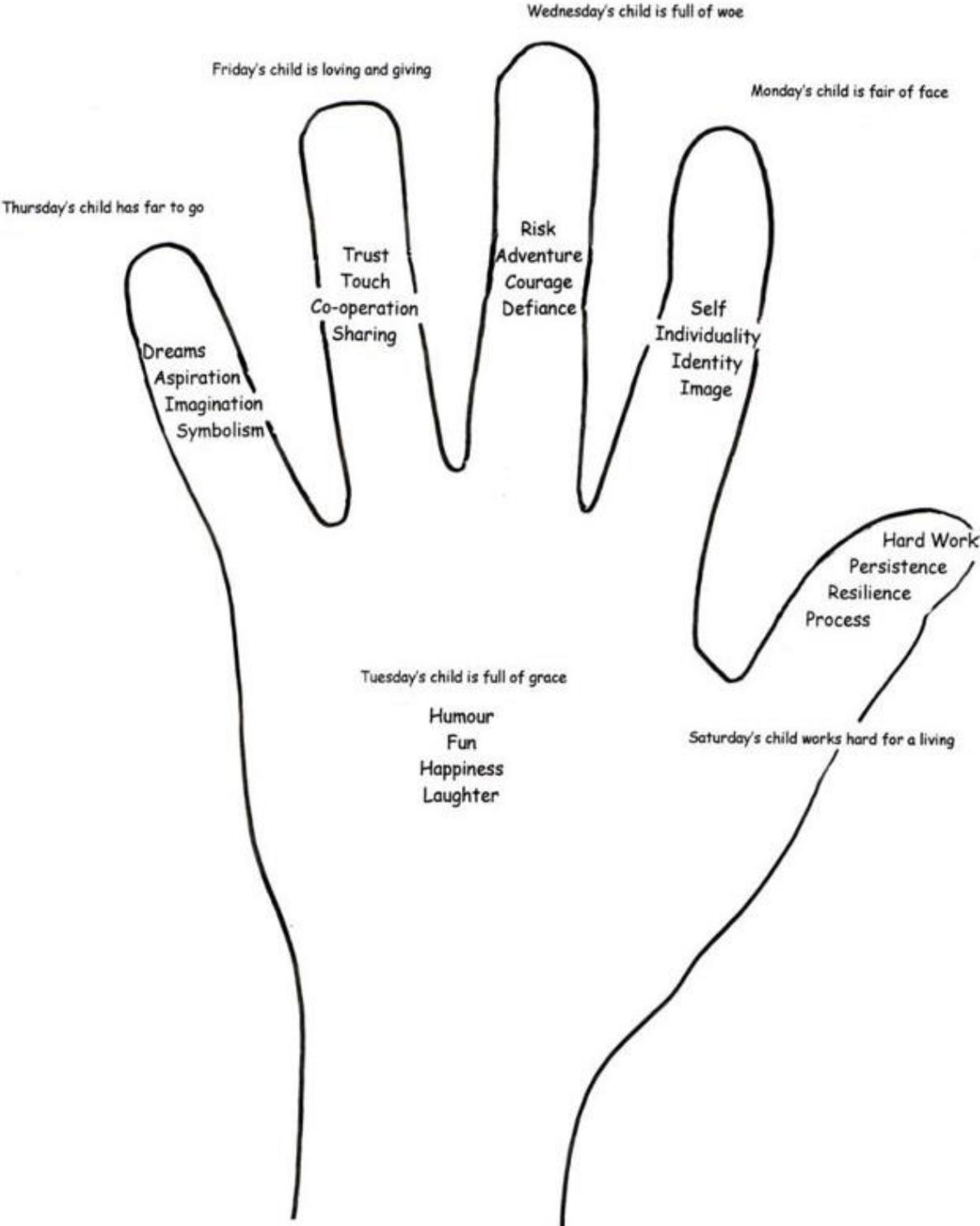
**Violence: the root and the mechanisms**



Types of Agression: Frustration – Instrumental – Prejudice – Medical (mental, drugs)

Types of Coping with Agression: Confrontation – De-escalation – Flee or Avoid

THE HAND OF REG BOLTON



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