

Facilitating Reconciliation Helpful Books for Individuals and Groups

“How can we help someone heal from the wounds of their heart?”

Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help

**Margaret Hill, Harriet Hill, Richard Bagge & Pat Miersma
(2007) Paulines Publications Africa/Wycliffe, Nairobi, Kenya**

This 11-lesson book is designed to help groups recognize and cope with trauma. The lessons address suffering, grief, rape, HIV/AIDS, caring for caregivers, forgiveness and planning how to live in a world of conflict. There is also a chapter on caring for children who have experienced deep trauma. Each lesson includes Biblical background, example situations and penetrating questions for application.

The authors use examples from a wartorn African context, but set them in fictional locations. Readers do not need to have the same background to make applications in their own lives. A specific advantage of this book is that it addresses how sin and reconciliation affect **communities**. The authors encourage a community response to promote repentance and reconciliation. In addition, the authors take considerable time to address the need to name and *deal with* our feelings.

Using clear English suitable for people who speak English as a second language or have a fifth-grade reading level, the authors address complex, difficult issues and challenge adults to respond as mature disciples of Christ. The simplicity of the language reinforces the straight truth of the lessons.

How to get it: Newer editions, including in Spanish, are available through Amazon for \$10 and less. This book will likely be difficult to find at a library.

***“... You will know you are on a true reconciliation journey if it is messy
and complicated and beautiful and transformational.”***

Roadmap to Reconciliation: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness and Justice

Brenda Salter McNeil

(2015) Intervarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL

This book aims to help groups and communities understand and pursue ethnic and racial reconciliation, by providing clear guidelines, tested methods and encouraging, but frank, stories from real life experience.

Professor and pastor Brenda Salter McNeil’s book reflects her expertise acquired from over 25 years of reconciliation ministry and her response to feeling convicted and inspired by young African-American activists in Ferguson, MO.

Dr. Salter McNeil starts with a reconciliation framework, continues with a model of a multi-phase reconciliation process, and concludes with an encouragement to pursue a flourishing future. She provides practical exercises for each stage of the process.

The basics:

“Reconciliation is an ongoing spiritual process involving forgiveness, repentance and justice that restores broken relationships and systems to reflect God’s original intention for all creation to flourish.”

Reconciliation involves:

- Catalytic events
- Realization phase
- Identification phase
- Preparation phase
- Activation phase
- Living out holistic transformation

“Catalytic events ... force a shift...The old does not fit into the new, and life no longer makes sense in the same way. Catalytic events can be confusing and deeply disorienting. This will be true in our pursuit of reconciliation, and we must learn to see the confusion and discomfort as part of the change process that will eventually move us toward transformation.” (p. 48)

The *realization phase* “is more than intellectual awareness or cognitive understanding. It is the visceral awareness of reality and a sense of one’s relatedness to it” (p. 57). This phase has three tasks: reorientation (new idea/realization), readiness (see a need for change, see the benefit of change, take stock of what it will require to change), and restoration (plan and act for change).

The *identification phase* involves acknowledging your culture of upbringing and other cultures sincerely, and committing to a shared mission with which all diverse participants identify.

The *preparation phase* is where people will often quit because they think they are already done. This is where decisions are made to “do things significantly or fundamentally different from how they have been done before” (p.85).

The *activation phase* entails communicating, advocating, relating and educating. Moving into *holistic transformational living* is not an end-stage, but an ongoing commitment to keep going. Dr. Salter McNeil recommends the importance of strategic storytelling and monument building (creating markers of what has been done).

How to get it: Check your local library and/or Amazon (from \$3 for used and \$12 for new)

“Every time you encounter a conflict, you will inevitably show what you think of God.”

The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict (3rd Ed)

Ken Sande

(2004) Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI

This book might seem overwhelming at first due to its size and scope, but it is written in clear, everyday language and addresses the challenges of personal conflicts in bold and Biblical language. Depending on one’s context, you might devour this book in a quick reading or take it in sections as you need insight on different situations.

Ken Sande is a professional conciliator with a ton of stories to tell. Some stories involve conflicts that only financially well-off people could have, but overall, the root of human conflict has to do with human nature – so even those stories can make a useful point for those with less money. Many of the examples are based in churches, families, marriages and businesses. Application questions and appendixes prove useful tools for processing current and past conflicts.

There are four major sections in this book:

- Glorify God – how will you use this conflict to glorify God, to seek to live in peace, and to do good?
- Get the Log Out of Your Eye – is this really worth fighting over? What is the “heart” root of the conflict and what freedom can you gain by confessing?
- Gently Restore – how will you speak? Between the two of you, in love, with one or two others along?
- Go and Be Reconciled – how will you forgive, consider others’ interests and overcome evil with good?

How to get it: Check your local library and/or Amazon (from \$1 for used and \$9 for new)

“If we want real forgiveness and real healing, we must face the real injury.”

The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World

Desmond Tutu & Mpho Tutu

(2014) Harper One: New York

Archbishop Desmond Tutu and his daughter have written a book that is immensely practical, compassionate and unflinching. Sharing their own deeply personal stories, as well as those of others, they provide a down-to-earth view of practicing forgiveness – both offering and requesting it, and of developing a forgiveness mindset. From apartheid to alcohol abuse, the Tutus address sin and the healing power of forgiveness.

The book shares the influence of Christ on their beliefs and practices, offering readers the opportunity to participate in the gospel. At the same time, each chapter offers a concluding meditation, stone ritual and journaling exercise that is compatible with, but not insistent upon, Christian faith. These process activities are well-suited for individual and group environments. Moreover, they are a great tool to push readers to do more than comprehend the ideas, but to work through their histories.

The three-part book addresses a) understanding forgiveness, b) sharing what the Tutus call the fourfold path (reconciliation process) and c) recognizing that you also need forgiveness and that everything can be forgiven.

The fourfold path of forgiveness involves:

1. Telling the story
 - truthfully
 - starting with the facts
 - with a trusted person
 - then potentially to the one who caused you harm
 - accepting that what happened cannot be undone
2. Naming the hurt
 - naming the feelings within the facts
 - remembering that all feelings are valid
 - recognizing grief stages and honoring where you are
 - finding someone who will listen without trying to fix
 - accepting your own vulnerability
 - moving forward when you are ready
3. Granting forgiveness
 - is a choice
 - helps us grow
 - moves us from victim to hero
 - being able to tell a new story lets us know we're healing
4. Renewing or releasing the relationship
 - while being accompanied by a trusted companion in this phase
 - allowing yourself to feel whatever you feel about the relationship with the person you have forgiven
 - describing your hopes and fears
 - making decisions
 - upon feeling settled with choices, you are finished with this phase

How to get it: Check your local library and/or Amazon (from \$2 for used and \$10 for new)

Books are listed in alphabetical order by author.