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ABSTRACT

Social connectedness constrains individuality in favor of relationship. Group affili-
ation contributes to a tension between self and social motivation. Often, it becomes
difficult to find mutually acceptable solutions to common problems In such cases,
conflicts may emerge which require professional intervention to resolve. This article
presents a model of conflict resolution which draws resource from sociological theory,
research, and practice It delineates an adaptable strategy applicable to a wide range
of social structures and concomitant relational problems

Theoretical Relevance

Regardless of one's theoretical preference, conflict resolution is an essential
process in creating, sustaining, and modifying social structures.

The *functionalists* emphasize structural equilibrium as a means of perpetuat-
ing existing social relations. Unsettled conflicts are interpreted as dysfunctions
which threaten to undermine social solidarity. *Conflict* theorists attribute value
to the process of conflict mediation as a method of achieving successive social
formations which are more egalitarian than previous ones.

Symbolic interactionists focus on the importance of agreement by all parties
forming a social set on the meanings attached to various interactional behaviors.
Theorists from the *social exchange* perspective are most concerned about the
the cost/benefit differential associated with alternative choices available to nego-
tiating actors.

Sociologists from the *phenomenological* school utilize resolution procedures
as a means of constructing social reality in the first place and reconstructing it

on a continuing basis while the ecology of social formations experiences a series of sequential metamorphoses.

Clinical Sociology

The clinical sociologist attempts to convert the theories and methodologies of sociology into a usable interventionary mechanism that aids in producing social change which is acceptable to all persons affected by the consequences of the resulting social transformations (Freedman, 1982; Cohen, 1981).

It may well be that the arena of conflict resolution represents a social situation of maximal challenge to the sociological practitioner. Most people try informal methods of resolving conflicts first. Often, these efforts work satisfactorily. When they don't, a more formal approach, such as the one offered here, can be utilized to achieve a negotiated consensus acceptable to everyone involved.

Informal Versus Formal Models of Conflict Resolution

A structured resolution process takes into consideration the ideas proposed in the theoretical literature as well as the lessons learned from analyzing the results of empirical research. It involves the creation of procedural norms intended to guide the parties in disagreement along a predetermined route of social interaction designed to ameliorate differences without compromising the dignity and respect of each person's psychological and sociological status.

In Table 1, the conceptual and practical differences between informal and formal approaches at conflict resolution are suggested in a semantic-differential format. The distinctions made in the table also point out some of the ways that a more standardized approach involving an objective third person serving as a mediator (i.e., the practicing sociologist) both protects the rights of the subjects and facilitates a controlled environment in which the dissolution of differences can amicably take place.

To some extent, the very readiness to submit to a formal process of conflict resolution may constitute an admission that informal efforts have failed. The resultant reliance on the intervention of a third-party may represent a willingness on the part of the participants to voluntarily abandon some of their previous, more idiosyncratic proposed solutions. This fact alone increases the likelihood of eventual consensus. Therefore, it might be argued that willingness to participate in and abide by the outcome of a formalized plan of conflict resolution is a neccessary prerequisite to the successful elimination of barriers to goal attainment. Paul and Paul (1988:11) argue that conflicts cannot even be presented when people insist on hiding behind various psychological and sociological

defense mechanisms. On the other hand, the intention and openness to learn new ways to facilitate relational goals make conciliation possible.

A Working Model

The conflict resolution plan proposed here should be considered a "working model" subject to ongoing revision as it is applied to a variety of client groups representing a wide range of presenting problems occurring in a diverse universe of structural configurations. For example, the model was intended to be equally useful for resolving issues germane to marital couples, parents and their children or adolescents, group leaders and followers, organizational superiors, subordinates, or peers, as well as more macrosocietal structures such as political and economic relations within and between nation-states.

In some ways, the elements and steps of this model are similar to alternative models of conflict resolution available in a survey of the literature (Strong, 1975). And, in other ways, this model is different. What can be said is that it has emerged and developed out of a deliberate attempt to apply relevant ideas emanating from the continuing development of sociological theory-building, the constantly updated results of research studies, and the practical realities encountered in the actual socio-therapeutic setting. As can be seen, the continuing commitment to be responsive to these influences requires an open-ended process vulnerable to repeated revision.

Attributes of the Conflict Model

Some of the attributes of the conflict resolution model presented here include:

1. It limits interaction concerning conflicts to prearranged, mutually agreed-upon time slots. Since unresolved conflicts produce stress and tension, constraining their appearance on people's agendas permits emotional and interpersonal relaxation in between conflict resolution appointments.

2. It regulates the flow of issues to be processed. Only one issue per person per week is permitted. This guarantees that one participant will not be given preferential treatment over another. It also protects all parties from being victimized by unreasonable demands to change too much too quickly. Furthermore, a precedent of orderly, incremental, progressive improvement is generated. Everyone has the potential of leaving the interactions with a sense that things are in the process of being addressed, resolved, and implemented. The overall effect is the possibility of concluding that this is a preferable way to initiate and execute edifying forms of social change. It makes it easier to prioritize issues, wait for others to have their turn, and look forward to future interactions with optimism.

3. The model includes what Fisher and Ury (1983:59–83) refer to as "inventing options for mutual gain." Rather than being permitted to take positions regarding solutions early or late in the resolution process, participants are restricted from presenting or arguing for a particular choice. Instead, they are challenged to try to think of as wide a range of potential solutions as they can (Gutknecht, 1988:65–85). Participants who have or are given some acquaintance with the classic techniques of brainstorming as enunciated by Osborn (1963) will do better at this idea generation. At this point, it doesn't really matter if the proposed ideas are practical or desirable. The goal is to force expansion beyond preconceived notions and dogmatic stances. The purpose is to surpass the informal conclusions they have already reached and found to be impotent for achieving mutuality. It is at this stage that the clinical sociologist can draw from theoretical and empirical resources to input additional possible solutions originating from external sources. Usually these additions are interpreted as being more neutral or objective and gives those in conflict a sense that they have moved beyond win/lose alternatives.

4. As one moves through the process experientially, it becomes noticeable that nowhere during the process is any argumentation for or against the issue or proposed solutions permitted. It may appear to be strange that differences can actually be attenuated without directly addressing them with rational arguments. This is a deliberate part of the model's design. The premise is that it is extremely difficult to control the emotional responses of conflicting parties when they are being directly attacked or contradicted. It sounds plausible to instruct people to argue issues and not personalities. However, like most prescriptive admonitions, it is easier said than done. In contrast, this model supports the idea that it is an easier task to prevent an interpersonal explosion than to repair the damage afterwards. Participants, using this approach, are restricted to techniques of "active listening" (Gordon, 1970) and expressing their own personal or role reactions (corresponding to their organizational position) to proposed alternatives.

5. The actual act of deciding which alternative solution is selected is enacted via a predetermined democratic sequence of steps designed to enable both participants to cast their votes in the order of their personal or role preference. At this point, each voter has the option of giving consideration to the other's reactions to the various alternative solutions proposed or they can choose to stick stubbornly and unrelentingly to their own predetermined positions. Either way, the decision-making will not only take place, but each voter will receive his or her highest choice possible when linked to the preferences of the others also voting. This method of objectifying the collection of subjective decisions results in everyone winning and no one losing. Obviously, seldom does anyone get a personal top choice but each gets the highest possible choice obtainable from a

system of equal consideration of each voter's prioritized choices. The consequence is the most favorable compromise possible to everyone concerned.

6. The chosen alternative becomes the solution to try first. This means that participants have agreed in advance to abide by the outcome of the resolution process. If, however, the consensus solution doesn't work when applied to the real life test, it is not necessary to start all over trying to resolve the original issue. Instead, the second highest consensus choice is turned to, and then the third, and so on, until one works to the satisfaction of those involved. Experience shows that the first choice generally does work successfully.

7. Each member making the resolution journey should keep a diary (minutes) of each issue processed. These become the verifying documentation of resolved conflicts. They constitute a historical record of accumulating resolutions and become the underpinnings of future cooperative actions. They serve as a propagator of hope when future conflicts arise and they serve the function of socializing potential opponents into a mindset that negotiated change can serve to build a better tomorrow. Remember, the model recommended here does not require anyone to relinquish his or her own ideas or be involuntarily coerced into accepting the opponent's demands. Unless participants freely choose a solution also chosen by others, the normal outcomes are choices invented during the resolution process and often represent viewpoints not previously considered.

8. The only obstacle impossible to overcome with this model is the refusal of opponents to submit themselves to the process and to follow the rules explicitly. No one would be expected to accept this regimen of self-restraint unless convinced that this method has more promise than competing resolution paradigms. Certainly, no single plan will be equally practical for everyone, but since this model has benefited some and may have value for others, it is offered for consideration.

Applications of the Conflict Model

The format illustrated in Table 2 was specifically designed as a class-exercise for a Creative Thinking and Problem-Solving course in the academy. It was subsequently used in a staff-enrichment training seminar for the paid employees of a religious voluntary organization serving a constituency of about 2000 persons. A third application involved a workshop for married couples learning how to communicate more effectively. It has also been used for several years in a variety of ways in weekly counseling sessions with private clients, consultation with organizations and sets of organizations, and weekend retreats designed for marital and parental enrichment.

Hypothetically, it has been constructed in a fashion which is potentially adaptable to resolving conflicts on all levels of human organization.

**Table 1. Potential Differences Between Formal
and Informal Conflict Resolution Processes.**

INFORMAL	FORMAL
Unpredictable	Predictable
Disorganized	Organized
Aggressive	Assertive
Win/Lose	Compromise
Up/Down	Progressive
Deteriorating	Accumulating
Overwhelming	Incremental
Dominant/Submissive	Egalitarian
Situational	Universal
Event	Process
Random	Priority
Uncontrollable	Controllable
Destructive	Constructive
Distance	Intimacy
Separateness	Mutuality
Stubbornness	Cooperation
Personal	Social

**Table 2. Description, Worksheet, and Examples
of the Conflict Resolution Model**

The Robinette Method of Conflict Resolution

This method can be used with or without a third party referee. If present, the referee's task is (1) to insure that the conflicting parties follow the guidelines properly, and (2) to suggest additional possible solutions during the brainstorming session.

In most situations, there are multiple issues. In such cases, after one issue is resolved, the conflicting parties alternate the roles of Owner and Partner and repeat the process.

1. Select an Issue.   One of the conflicting parties chooses a single issue to be resolved. A designated time for resolution is agreed upon by both parties. The one who brings up the issue is the Owner of it. Putting the issue on the table legitimates it as an issue for resolution, and the Partner may not criticize the issue's legitimacy, content, taste, or importance.

Examples: **Owner.** The problem is that Fred hardly ever helps out around the house, and I think he should help a lot more.

Owner. The issue is that management treats us employees like tools rather than people, and we'd like some respect.

Owner. What bothers me is that Jane criticizes me in front of the children.

Owner. The problem is that I want to stay out with my friends and my parents insist on an 11:00 p.m. curfew.

2. Clarify the Issue.   The Owner explains, as thoroughly as desired, just what the issue is as the Owner understands it. During the explanation, Partner must listen quietly but actively, attempting to understand exactly Owner's view of the issue. Partner is not permitted to comment, object, or criticize. Owner may supply reasons and explanations for the issue, but may not suggest any possible solutions at this point. Similarly, Partner may not suggest possible solutions yet.

At the end of Owner's explanation, Partner must restate or summarize the issue *as Owner understands it*. That is, Partner must state the issue in a way that Owner agrees is accurate and fair. If Owner disagrees with Partner's summary, Partner must restate the issue again until Owner agrees. In this way, Partner will be able, eventually, to state clearly what Owner thinks about the issue. Both parties then write down this agreed-upon statement.

Example: **Owner.** The problem is that you, my line manager, are not communicating my orders to your subordinates.

Partner. You believe I am withholding your orders from my men.

Owner. Not necessarily. I think you are not communicating. Maybe you don't understand my orders.

Partner. You believe that maybe I do not understand your orders and that therefore I am not communicating them properly to my men.

Owner. Yes, that's an accurate summary.

3. Brainstorm for Solution Candidates.   As with all brainstorming sessions, judgment and criticism must be suspended. The goal is to generate as many potential solutions as possible, with a minimum of three. Five to ten or more is a better target. Both parties should contribute ideas freely and list each possible solution in a column, without numbering them (lettering is fine), and without discussing or debating them. A referee, if present, can offer possible solutions, which are also added to the lists. The goal is to exhaust all possible solutions, from one extreme to the other, from favorite to hated, as well as the in-betweens and indifferent.

The solution candidates should be as specific and concrete as possible. For

example, note that idea D below is "Pay $1 per hour extra" rather than "Pay more money."

Use all of the idea generating techniques you know. One particularly useful method is to ask what someone else would say, do, or suggest. For example, What would Pastor Thompson do in a situation like this? What would Professor Anderson say? What would CEO Perkins try?

Example: *Problem:* Management is trying to force computers on us, and we don't like it.

Solution Candidates:

    a. learn how to use them or get another job

    b. make learning them optional—let employees choose who will use them

    c. go on strike and call the media

    d. pay $1 per hour extra for those who use them

    e. hire new employees who already know how to use them

    f. offer training courses in how to use them

    g. forget the whole idea and not use computers

    h. have management explain the importance of computers to employees' future

    i. get some new managers who understand human beings

    j. a combination of ideas b and f

    k. a combination of ideas d and h

4. Evaluate and Rank the Candidates.   The parties in the conflict now take turns commenting on each alternative. The comment answers the question, "If this alternative were tried first, how would I feel about it?" No arguments pro or con or defense of the position are allowed, nor is response or rebuttal to the other's feelings or comments allowed. When each person comments on each solution candidate, both parties write down that response under it as a record. The goal of this part is to provide both parties with an understanding of how each feels about the whole range of alternatives and each possibility. Which alternatives does the other feel good about? Which are objectionable? Which produce ambivalence?

Example: **Owner.** I would hate the "use them or else solution."

    Partner. That solution would be okay with me, though I wouldn't want to lose some of my better workers.

    Owner. I would really like the optional use solution.

    Partner. The optional use solution probably wouldn't work. (And so forth, all the way through the list.)

Once each party begins to hear how the other feels, each can choose whether to be influenced by these feelings. A decision to be cooperative or stubborn, helpful or resistant, might be made. Regardless of the decision, the system will still work.

When comments have been made by both parties on the entire list of candidates, both parties individually rank order their lists, with the most preferred solution numbered 1. The ranking numbers for each candidate are then added together. The candidate with the lowest total is the solution to be tried first. If the two lowest totals are the same, the one with the digits closest together will be tried first. (For example, in two totals of 7 made up of a 4–3 rank and a 2–5 rank, the 4–3 choice is first.) If the two lowest totals are the same and made from the same numbers (as in a 2–5 and 5–2), the Owner's preference is tried first.

Make a list of the three lowest total possible solutions, in order of their totals. These are the three solutions to try, each in order.

5. Implement the Solution(s).   The ultimate goal of this whole process is to solve the problem by acting on it. Implement the first chosen possibility. Allow it sufficient time to be effective if it is going to be and then evaluate it. Did it work? How well? Does it need more time? Does another solution need to be tried?

Note: After the first four steps above, Owner and Partner trade roles and Partner, now Owner, presents an issue. If desired, the original problem can be reshaped and presented again from a different viewpoint, or a completely new issue can be presented.

Example Conflicts for Use With
The Robinette Method of Conflict Resolution

Each of these examples presents a conflict between two people. The conflicts will provide a good demonstration of the workings of the Robinette method, whether or not a third-party mediator is used. It is suggested that the people playing the roles in the conflicts be given some time to prepare (to "get into character") so that the working out of the solution will be as realistic as possible.

1. Marital Problem.   As a good friend of Edgar and Jane Travis, you are sad to hear that they appear to be faced with an insurmountable conflict in their marriage. You agree to listen to the problem and to help them overcome their difficulty.

Last week the following discussion took place between Edgar and Jane:

Edgar. Where do you want to go for our vacation this year?

Jane. I don't know. Wherever mother wants to. Somewhere she hasn't been.

Edgar. Wait a minute. We're not taking your mother with us this year. I want a vacation for us, one that we can enjoy together, alone.

Jane. We are too taking mother. I'm not going to leave her alone while we go somewhere and live it up.

Edgar. Well, I'm not going on a vacation with your mother along. Period.

Jane. Well, I'm not going on a vacation if we don't take her.

Edgar. Okay, then, we'll just stay home.

Jane. That's fine with me.

In addition to this discussion, you have talked to both people and heard the following statements.

Edgar. I know that Jane loves her mother and all and that's fine, but when I go on vacation I like to relax and have some peace and quiet and some time alone with my wife. Her mother is always "back-seat driving," criticizing me, the food, the motels I choose, you name it. Also, last year we spent the first week in a cabin with Jane's mother in the same room. The second week Jane's mother was in a closely adjoining room with thin walls, if you know what I mean. Well, you can imagine what that did to our love life. Jane was afraid her mother would hear something, you know. And when Jane and I are just walking around, if I try to hold her hand or kiss her, it makes Jane edgy because her mother is watching. And, of course, we can't discuss private subjects like finances or my boss when her mother is around.

I don't want to sound like a selfish guy, but I'd really like to have a vacation where I can enjoy my wife in peace, where we can be alone together. Maybe just have a nice candlelight dinner. Jane's mother is around our house enough as it is, so Jane sees plenty of her. Am I being unreasonable, or what? It seems like Jane loves her mother a lot more than she loves me.

Jane. Sometimes men can be so childish. I can't understand why Edgar doesn't like mother. It's not as if the poor old soul has a long time to live, anyway. She's already 68 and widowed—an old woman alone in the world except for me, her only child. I'd think Edgar could understand that. I want to make her last years as happy as possible, and she loves to travel so. How else could she ever get around? She doesn't drive any longer, so her only chance to travel is when Edgar and I go somewhere. And she loves traveling with us so much. It's her joy in her old age, I think.

And another thing. I really enjoy my mother's company. She's always got good advice when we go shopping together at vacation resorts (Edgar hates to shop, by the way), so she makes a good companion when Edgar is just lying around on the beach or taking photos of the trees. I guess my point is that if mother goes with us, at least two people will be happy. If we leave her home, only Edgar will be happy. Am I being unreasonable, or what? It seems like Edgar is only thinking of himself.

2. Love Problem.   You are friends of both Ted and Lisa, two of your fellow college students. They really appear to love each other dearly. However,

recently what began as a small disagreement has grown to a major conflict that threatens their relationship. The conflict focuses on the way Lisa dresses. The couple's statements follow.

Ted. Hey, I'm not a prude or anything, but I just don't like the way Lisa dresses. I mean, she seems to like overly revealing stuff. It's not just shorts and short dresses, but sometimes she wears necklines that make me wonder what she has in mind. Mostly, though, it's what she calls her casual dresses. She has one that really hugs her form, like leotards almost and it, well, it just embarrasses me. I've asked her to be more conservative for me and she just gets upset and tells me not to run her life or order her around. If Lisa and I have a permanent future together, I worry about what she will dress like. I plan to get a job where my public image will be important, and having a presentable wife is a concern. I don't mean some walking manikin or clothes horse, but just nicely dressed. And, frankly, I don't really like the way other guys look at her when she's dressed, um, the way she often does. Am I just old fashioned? I mean, I feel like an idiot even talking about this. I love Lisa a lot. She's the neatest girl I've ever met—smart, a lot of fun, and everything. But if she doesn't change her mind about her appearance, I really don't know whether our relationship should continue.

Lisa. Ted is a wonderful guy and all, but he's certainly being stubborn on this. I mean, what planet is he from, anyway? I don't tell him how he should dress or criticize what he wears. He walks around in a T-shirt and shorts half the time. He even used the word "slutty" to describe my appearance once. Oooh! That just about put an end to our relationship right there, you can bet. But, man, just look around. I don't dress any different from a lot of other people. I really don't see what Ted objects to. Maybe he just had a Puritanical upbringing. I love Ted a lot and think he's a really special guy—maybe even a guy for my future. But if he doesn't get real and stop harping about the way I dress, I don't know whether our relationship should continue.

Even though breaking up would dissolve their conflict, you naturally wouldn't be so callous as to suggest that. Help these people to find a happy solution to their problem.

3. Secretary's Duties.   Patricia has worked as a secretary for the Munchie Cookie Corporation for several years. She has just recently been transferred to product development where she now works for Mr. Blimpkin. Her official title is Secretary III. Friction has developed between the two people. Here are their statements.

Patricia. I've worked long and hard to get to be a business professional and I'd like to be treated like one. Mr. Blimpkin is always nice to me and all, but he seems to think I'm a gofer or an office boy. I mean, he's always asking me to get him coffee, for example. Do I look like a coffee machine? And the other day he asked me to pick up the new issue of *Business Week* when I went for lunch. It's always something like that: empty this basket, take this down to printing, you name it. I'm a secretary, in fact, a Secretary III. I've worked too

long to be treated like a servant. I enjoy the secretarial part of this job and don't want to give it up, but unless Mr. Blimpkin changes his attitude, it looks like I'll have to leave.

Mr. Blimpkin. Patricia seems to have an attitude problem. She doesn't want to do half the things I ask of her. If I ask her to do something she doesn't define as "secretarial," she makes a big scene or scowls or sometimes even gets sarcastic. I really don't want to give her up because she is really efficient and excellent at the things she does. But her unwillingness to do some of these little other helpful and life smoothing tasks is like sand in my teeth. I pay her well. I don't really understand what's wrong. I'm certainly not going to hire another person to do occasional deliveries to other departments. Unless Patricia changes her attitude, it looks like she will have to leave.

4. Yuppie Dilemma. Marty and Phyllis have been married for five years. Marty is thirty and Phyllis is twenty-nine. Marty is an investment banker at the Costa Mesa, California branch of Sun State Bank, making $63,000 a year. Phyllis is a stock broker nearby at Newport, Green, and Axel, a Wall Street brokerage, making (salary and commission) about $75,000 a year. Marty has been offered a job promotion as an institutional investor with a raise to $73,000 and entry into what possibly could be major career advancement—an opportunity to move up in corporate headquarters and eventually earn substantially more money. The promotion and possible future at corporate headquarters are in San Francisco, home of Sun State Bank. A conflict has arisen because Phyllis does not want to move to San Francisco. The couple's statements follow.

Marty. Sometimes I just don't understand women. Here I thought Phyllis loved and supported me, but now when my big break comes, she doesn't want me to take it. This opportunity has everything going for it: a promotion with a very nice raise, a great future, and an exciting lifestyle in a great city. I love San Francisco and can hardly wait to be working there. And the bank will even help us relocate. Phyllis says she's worried about her job, but she's a broker and she can always get new clients. When we got married she wasn't making all that much money, anyway. I don't know what to do. I can hardly wait to get going and yet it seems I suddenly have a ball and chain on. I love my wife a lot, but my career and my lifestyle are important to me also.

Phyllis. Talk about selfish. I mean, here we were, living happily in a wonderful Southern California spot near the beach, both with good jobs and nice futures. Then, wham! Marty gets this offer to move to San Francisco and he automatically expects me to trash my job and leave the beaches in order to follow him into the fog. I've worked for five years to build up my base of clients, and they are just now beginning to go full blast. I mean, I have the potential to be making $125,000 a year within the next three years, maybe more. But if I move up north, I'll have to start all over. My clients are local—that's the nature of the business. By moving to San Francisco, I'd lose my clients, I'd lose my income, I'd lose my tan, I'd lose my mind. Sure, I love Marty a lot, but my career and my lifestyle are important to me also.

Robinette Conflict Resolution Worksheet   Name _____

| Summary of Issue | ☐ Owner | ☐ Partner |

| | |
| | |

| Solution Candidates |

Rank Order		Candidates and Feelings About Them
Owner	Partner	

A _____
    O _____
    P _____

B _____
    O _____
    P _____

C _____
    O _____
    P _____

D _____
    O _____
    P _____

E _____
    O _____
    P _____

F _____
    O _____
    P _____

G _____
    O _____
    P _____

H _____
    O _____
    P _____

I _____
    O _____
    P _____

J _____
    O _____
    P _____

K _____
    O _____
    P _____

| Solutions to be Tried |

First _____ , Then _____ , And Then _____

5. Raising Kane.   It was love at first sight when Zach and Mary met. Even though Zach was Jewish and Mary was a Catholic, the couple overcame all obstacles, including the resistance of their relatives, and were eventually married. They have been quite contented up until now. After two years of marriage, they had a child, whom they named Kane. When Kane was born, the couple had some discussions over raising him, with Mary desiring that he be raised as a Catholic and Zach desiring that he be raised as a Jew. Nothing was resolved, and the matter was raised only occasionally. Now, however, Kane is three years old, and the discussion has recently become very heated. Their statements follow.

Mary. I want Kane to begin his religious training now, so that he doesn't grow up as an atheist by default. I was raised in the Church and when I got married I promised my priest and my mother that I would raise our children there, too. I think Zach wouldn't object if he just knew what it was all about. I've tried to get him to come to church with me, but he won't go. This is a very important issue to me because it concerns the soul of my child.

Zach. I agree that Kane should begin his religious training now, but I want him to grow up in the rich heritage and tradition of Judaism, which is his birthright. When we got married, we didn't discuss how we would raise our children. I just assumed they would be raised just the way I was. This is a crucial issue for me—it is about my very identity and the future of my people.

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