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## From the President's Pen...

**Friends, the Institute is now on Facebook!** And why, you may ask, is that such big news?

**There are now 300 million people on Facebook**, and the number is growing every day. What began as a social networking site for college students has become one of the premier places to connect with our friends and family, and for them to connect with theirs. Increasingly, Facebook is the place to be! Not surprisingly, businesses and organizations have found that if you want to spread the word about your product or your cause, this is one of the fastest and easiest ways to do it.

**How does it work?** If you are already on Facebook, you probably know. On the search bar in the upper right hand corner, just type in our name – the Institute for Civility in Government, and it will take you to our Facebook page, where you can catch up on what is happening, post a comment, and perhaps most importantly – become a fan! Becoming a fan will put a link to the Institute's Facebook page on your profile page. Anyone viewing your profile page will know that you are a fan of the Institute, and will be able to follow the link so they can become a fan, too. Its grassroots communication made easy!!! In fact, when we first launched the Institute's page on Facebook, we had our first fan literally within minutes, and we are picking up more every day! Some of the fans signing on have been members of the Institute for years. Others we are just "meeting" for the first time. And so the word spreads and the movement grows.....

**For those who want more information** about the Institute and its work, or who perhaps would like to become a member of the Institute, there will always be a link on the Institute's Facebook page to our website, [www.instituteforcivility.org](http://www.instituteforcivility.org).

**If you are not yet on Facebook** but would like to take advantage of this opportunity to let your friends know about the Institute, all you need to do is go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and set up an account. It is free and it is easy!

**While being a fan of the Institute on Facebook is not the same as being a member of the Institute, both are important.** Both add your voice to the call for civility. Both are a measure (however imperfect) of the support civility enjoys within our communities and across our nation. Both communicate to our elected officials and the larger community that you believe civility is important, and both help further our work in creating a civility movement in this country – a civility movement that makes civility the norm, not the exception; a movement that creates the expectation that even as we practice civility in our daily life, our elected officials will do their part in modeling civility as well.

**That is what the Institute is all about – facilitating dialogue, teaching respect, and building civility!** It is a movement we need, and we need it now! Thanks so much for making it happen! Thanks so much for your support!

*Cassandra Dahnke,*  
President and Cofounder

*page turners...*

## **The Third Side** **Why We Fight and How We Can Stop**

It is not surprising that William Ury, a world renowned negotiation expert, should write this book about conflict resolution. What is interesting is the approach that he takes. Upon realizing that his background includes a Ph.D. in social anthropology, his approach not only makes sense, it lends credibility to his thesis.

Ury contends that the human race is as disposed to negotiation as it is to violence, and spends the first portion of the book describing why he believes this to be true. It is easy to race to the assumption that Ury is going to conclude with what many would consider an overly optimistic view of what is possible and what is not in the world of conflict. He does not.

Rather, he builds a convincing argument that the human community is being woven closer and closer together through shared space, commerce, communication and other interests. And he willingly concedes that this “closeness” will lead to more conflict, not less. But this is where his argument becomes intriguing.

Ury believes that at the heart of conflict is the perception of an expandable pie – or not. When there is enough of what is needed for everyone (e.g. land, food, shelter) there is little conflict. But when the amount of what is needed becomes “fixed” and there is the perception that there is NOT enough for everyone, competition ensues and conflict erupts.

What fills Ury with hope is that he sees the primary resource in the world today as something that is very expandable, and indeed requires cooperation – knowledge.

It is an intriguing path that he carries us on through this book, and he does not end with either social history or theory. Rather he provides concrete suggestions for how we can deal with violence through prevention, resolution, and containment. For each of these the author describes in some detail particular roles he considers essential. It is done in a way that makes it possible for each of us to figure out which role(s) we are best suited to fulfill.

According to the author, prevention requires providers, teachers, and bridge-builders. Resolution requires mediators, arbiters, equalizers, and healers. Containment requires witnesses, referees, and peacekeepers.

This book was written prior to the events of September 11, 2001, and so it admittedly leaves one wondering what the rest of the story would be, so to speak. Even so, the book does touch on ethnic and religious clashes, on the need for a sense of identity and autonomy often being at the heart of war.

And yes! He talks about the political landscape in the U.S.A. And what does he say? Genuine dialogue comes out of genuine relationship! We could not agree more.

Ury concludes his book with 12 suggestions for practical, possible “next steps” toward building a world where conflict is handled in a fair and civil way. The last of the twelve is “Help Create a Social Movement” where people are able to co-exist peaceably even in the midst of conflict. That would seem to describe perfectly what the Institute is all about!

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**About the Author:** William L. Ury is co-founder of The Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, and is a world famous negotiation specialist. He is author of *Getting to YES* and *Getting Past No*.

**The Third Side** (previously published as *Getting to Peace*) is published by Viking Penguin, New York, New York, 1999, 2000

## ***On the Move...***

The Institute is continuing to pick up the pace with more events than ever coming up in the New Year. We already have Civility Training and/or Speaking Engagements scheduled in Houston, San Antonio, and Wimberly (all in Texas) and at Montreat, North Carolina. We are also actively working on arrangements for events in Arkansas, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, California, and Pennsylvania.

Presentations suitable for a class, faith community or civic organization provide an introduction to the Institute and its work. In addition, Civility Training can be scheduled in either 2 ½ overview sessions or as an in-depth 5 hour seminar, providing information on belief systems, listening and communication skills, team work, and other civility tips.

**Do you want to build civility in your community?** Contact us now and let's start planning! We would love to come to your town!

## ***Coming Soon to a Community near you!***

### **Civility Training Opportunities**

**Saturday, January 16**

9:00 am — 2:00 pm

St. Giles Presbyterian Church  
5900 Pinemont  
Houston, Texas 77092

**Saturday, February 27**

10:00 am — 12:30 pm

Wimberly United Methodist Church  
1200 CR 1492  
Wimberly, Texas 78676

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## ***Welcome New Members!***

***Yasmin Anderson-Smith***

***Harriet Leveen***

***Susan Lotz***

***Tom Lotz***

***Gene McFaddin***

***Scott Roberts***

***Eldon Sheffer***

***Phyllis Speck***

***Anita Stech***

***Harlan Stech***

***Freda Washington***

***Shannon Webster***

***Who do you know who needs to join?***

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## ***See this dot?!***

This dot is your guide to your membership in the Institute, and will be a part of each newsletter you receive.

**Green** - your membership is current. Thank you! ☺

**Yellow** - Your annual fees are due. Please send \$25 to the Institute to maintain your support and to continue receiving newsletters, emails, and invitations to special events. ☹

**Red** - Past due! Sorry, but unless you renew your membership, we will be unable to keep you on our mailing list. ☹

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## ***Year End Giving***

Please don't forget the Institute when making your end-of-year donations. Your generosity makes it possible for us to maintain and expand our excellent and unique programs! All contributions to the Institute are tax deductible. Membership and contributions may be made on the website [www.instituteforcivility.org](http://www.instituteforcivility.org) via PayPal or mailed to:

**the Institute for Civility in Government**

**P.O. Box 41804**

**Houston, Texas 77241-1804**

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*May all the caring and all the sharing  
of the season bring you joy!*

