

The Bridge Between

Exploring dialogue through the lens
of Martin Buber and Contextual Therapy

Give Freedom to the Next Generation

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I met Bob de Raadt at the International Conference for Contextual Therapy in the Netherlands. His daughter Dorianne de Raadt (author of this story) witnessed a beautiful bridge built between two women, one Jewish and one German. This moment of building trust amidst historical trauma frees children to not carry invisible burdens of their elders. Thanks Bob and Dorianne!

Three women are sitting in the backside on the square before the Kotel, the Western Wall, in Jerusalem. They are free of duty that morning and they spend some time to talk about God, especially on this place. Next to them, there's a Jewish mother standing and praying. She takes time for her morning prayer.

She is there with her son, aged 1½ years old. While his mother is praying, he climbs on a chair behind his mother and jumps down on the floor. He climbs again on that chair and jumps a second time. One of the young women plays with the boy. She helps him on the chair, gives him a hand during jumping from the chair and plays another time with him. This goes on and on

The mother finished her prayers and she starts talking with the lady about her son and about their playing time. Then the mother asked the young lady: "Where are you coming from?" The young lady answers, "From Germany!" The Jewish mother is shattered by those words and she stops talking. Immediately she takes the arm of her son and rushes away, towards the Kotel ahead.

On the backside of the Kotel the three young ladies are confused about what happened. It takes a few minutes before the German lady makes up her mind and stands up, finding her way to the Jewish mother at the Kotel. The two other ladies starts praying for the Jewish mother and the German woman.

“Lady, did you lose members of your family during the Second World War (WW II)? Is that correct?” The Jewish lady says: “Yes.” A dialogue is coming up. The German lady explains that she works in Germany in ‘March of Life’, an organisation with the purpose to connect Germany and Israel together. She asks forgiveness for what has happened during WWII, the Holocaust. The Jewish mother accepts her words, although she also comments that the young German lady is not the one that is to be charged.

“Why are you here in Israel?’, the mother asks. The German woman tells that she is working in Aleh Negev, as volunteer, an organisation for children with special needs in Israel. What a powerful message: the grandchildren of the Nazi’s taking care for the most vulnerable children of Holocaust survivors. That touches the Jewish mother. One of her daughters is disabled and lives in Aleh-Jerusalem. And the name of the boy is: Israë! So things come together!

The Jewish mother reaches her hand to the young German lady and says: “Thank you!” Two Dutch young ladies are witnessing this tremendous meeting of two special worlds coming together. A moment of reconciliation and resilience.

- Bron: <https://www.thebridgebetween.org/blog/> Exploring dialogue through the lens of Martin Buber and contextual therapy: *Give freedom to the next generation* - Dorianne de Raadt (translation: BdR). Blog van Janet Stauffer, USA. June 19, 2018. Comment.