Knowing the 'Other'
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An essential pre-requisite for solving a conflict is knowing who your apparent opponents are and in order to attain that knowledge there is no adequate substitute for meeting face to face and being totally open to listening to the other side as much as – or even more than – pronouncing one's own opinions.

It is only by knowing how the other side feels and what is the basis for those feelings, that one can begin to understand not only the position of the other, but also the way in which one's own essentially differs.

I've always found hearing the other side to be extremely illuminating, bringing to light issues, both facts and opinions of which I was previously totally unaware. The dialogue is of course also the opportunity to elucidate one's own point of view and to observe how the other side undergoes a process of illumination similar to one's own.

I have reached this conclusion from a considerable number of meetings that I have had with Palestinian women whose social and educational backgrounds are similar to my own. In each case I discovered, partly through observing their own distorted "knowledge" of facts, how equally distorted was my own, how influenced by prejudices and preconceptions, by racial and national bias, by only partial knowledge of facts. There is no substitute for the face to face encounter of people who are in virtually every respect similar but whose only and major difference lies in the different narratives with which they have been inculcated and which they perceive to be not only **their** truth, but the universal truth.

The Jewish text that I have found most inspirational in this respect is Genesis 12:6-12, especially Verses 8-12. I find the readiness of Abraham, his willingness to give Lot first choice and his equal readiness to forgo what is clearly the superior portion of the land, altogether admirable and worthy of emulation.