

Chapter 47

Teaching Peace and Marketing Education: From Pieces to Peace

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a peace-centered process of teaching marketing that the author has implemented during 2002-2015 academic years with undergraduate and graduate business students in various marketing courses at two Christian Universities in the United States. The peace-centered process is related to the development of a unified world view about human life in a culture of peace and culture of healing and the development of virtues in a marketing career. The chapter discusses (1) the manifestation of violence in marketing, (2) the concept of a peace-centered process of teaching marketing, (3) the responsibility of marketing educators, and (4) the seven pedagogical strategies for this approach.

INTRODUCTION

Peace is essential for the vibrancy of human beings and the fullness of happiness in our moral ecology which respects life and supports human development and community (Novak, 2004, Lam, 2015). Marketing activities that advocate social justice and sustainability are predicted to be the key trends in historical development of marketing practices (Kotler, 2007). Peace is a universal virtue that sustains good marketing practices and embraces much promise for guiding the behavior of marketers (William & Murphy, 1990; Murphy, 1999; Thompson, 2002). “Peace in its essence is a spiritual state with political, social and ethical expressions” (Danesh, 2006). Peace can be expressed in intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup human relationships. In this chapter, peace is defined as “the harmony of all energies of life, their balance, and the recognition of all the opposites and conflicts” (Haring 1986:8). Peace is a process and will be shaped by a person’s perspective about reality, human nature, and meanings of life. Our mindsets will affect how to frame the issues and create the possibility of having peaceful solutions (Lupovici, 2013). The new mindset about peace needs to be sustained and practiced in a culture of

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peace and culture of healing with a peace-centered curriculum in education (Danesh, 2006). Teaching peace is strongly advocated to develop a better business environment and ecological sustainability in many countries' studies (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2015). Putting peace into the mind of people is one of the main focuses of the United Nations (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2015). Peace education is affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human rights Article 26.2 (United Nation Human Right):

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Harris and Synott (2002:4) state that peace education as 'teaching encounters' should draw out for people the (1) desire for peace, (2) non-violent alternatives for managing conflict; (3) and the skills for critical analysis of the structural arrangements that produce and legitimate injustice and inequality. Marketing education is defined as "a program designed to prepare secondary and postsecondary students to conduct the critical business functions associated with directing the flow of products and services from the producer to the consumer' (Association for Center and Technical Education, 2015). Do marketing educators just produce students to fulfill particular functions in the global digitalized market economy and continuously perpetuate social injustice in the system? Will these peace-building activities really be embraced in our existing competitive market? Does our marketing education really challenge the existing discourses or narratives that promote violence to human beings and nature? Do our marketing students cultivate the habits of life-long learning skills to examine themselves and their relationships with others? Is it possible to effectively teach peace in marketing education?

From my twenty one years' of experience with my business students in the United States and Hong Kong, I find that most students tend to follow cultural norms and achieve marketing objectives by stimulating materialistic or intense desires in their target customers. They accept the business reality as a battle field rather than a system for human flourishing. The consciousness of peace needs to be put into the students' mind set and our marketing curriculum in our pluralized, secularized, commoditized, digitalized global market economy. Students need more help in the development of becoming caring professionals as they are so distracted in their multitask reality and can easily compartmentalize their daily activities in the different realities without feeling any sense of responsibility to what they know. Carr (2008:221) said, "The more distracted we become, the less able we are to experience the subtlest, most distinctly human forms of empathy, compassion, and other emotions." Students' consciousness of themselves and others are found to be decreasing (Mirvis, 2008). The development of "multiple framing, reflective exploration of meaning, and practical reasoning" is not sufficiently covered in current business education (Waddock & Lozano, 2013). Through years of teaching and learning marketing, I assess more students are distracted and self-centered in the classrooms. I examine the common approach of teaching marketing is at best a piecemeal approach. Such an approach denies the inherent characteristic of wholeness of students and their calling. Students are trained to fulfill marketing functions¹ for the sake of organization objectives without being taught to treat people as sacred beings, and criticize self-deceptive practices in the field of marketing. I believe that it is a priority to guide my students through a broad range of classroom activities to understand how marketing relates to our human well-beings, discover who they are, to awaken their conscience, to aid them to use their conscience as their witness

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