

Why I Believe War Is Not the Answer
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I recently watched a Frontline documentary on the Syrian war. This film contained many graphic images centering on the battles between rebels and the military in the Orontes River Valley. On one side of the river, the rebels are primarily Sunni Muslims; the other side contains a village of Alawites. For years, the Alawites and the Sunnis peacefully coexisted. But when tensions developed because of the actions of Syria's dictator, Assad, the Alawites took one side and the Sunnis another. Watching this documentary made me start thinking about the reasons why people throughout all of history have gone to war. I'm sure there are many, but I believe that the main reason is hatred. Throughout the entire world, hatred is almost always the tipping point between conflict and war. In order to find a different path through conflict, people around the world need to learn love rather than hate and to realize the consequences of war.

In healthy conflict, people can have a disagreement, but still agree to respect each other and their opinions. When conflict starts to turn sour, respect is no longer part of the discussion. Once people lose respect for each other, they no longer care. They don't care about the person's feelings, opinions, or concerns. When a person stops caring how they affect others, he or she becomes dangerous in the way that they can do anything to this person without seeing consequences or feeling guilt. We see this in Syria today. When Assad became a dictator, he no longer cared about the people that he had sworn to lead and protect. The absence of love led to conflict, which turned to hatred for others with a different political opinion, which then turned to all-out war.

War has more costs than just the lives lost. The children of the war have to pay the price for the folly of their fathers. Many don't think of the eyes that are watching, learning, and developing during war, but they are always there. The children of the war are being raised on fear, fear of the terrorists, fear of air strikes, and fear of tomorrow. Any day could be their last. That fear festers inside. It twists and turns and becomes bitter. This fear turns into hate for the one that makes them fear and this fear leads to future war. When children are raised with nothing but fear and death in their lives, they forget how to see the light in the world. Their lives lack the laughter and joy that is part of the human experience. What conflict is worth all this pain on the future generation? For this reason, leaders need to weigh the consequences of their actions before choosing war.

As long as the world has existed, so has hatred. Cain hated Abel, and so brought forth the first murder. Hitler hated the Jews, and so World War II came to pass. ISIS hates the Western world and all that it stands for, so they have waged war on us. The costs of hatred and war are only death and pain for both sides of the conflict. Conflict can be resolved, but only if we respect and love each other to set an example for the world. Hopefully someday those who are more inclined towards conflict could see that the answer is not war, but love.