

PARENTS OF THE FIELD PROJECT.

Interviewee: Professor Roger Fisher.

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Venue: Martha's Vineyard, Mass.

Interviewer: Dr Chris Mitchell.

Interviewer: It's the 4th of August, 2005 and we are here on Martha's Vineyard as part of the "Parents of the Field" Project. We're interviewing [Professor] Roger Fisher of Harvard University and one of the founders of this field - if it is a field, or a discipline, or whatever we're [calling it] ! So, thank you very much, Dr. Fisher. It's most kind of you to spend the time.

Dr. Fisher: Please call me, Roger, if you will, Chris.

Interviewer: May I do that? Thank you. I'd like to reminisce a bit if you don't mind. When you first came into this "business" - or this field - how did you actually enter the practice. You were telling us you were a meteorologist and then you were a lawyer. How did you get involved in negotiation and mediation, which you've written about extensively? How did you come to be part of it?

Dr.Fisher: That's a good question. I came back from World War II. I'd been an aviator – not a pilot, but an airborne meteorologist. I flew around looking at the clouds over the North Atlantic and, if it was safe, over the islands and the Azores and then over Japan when we were in B29s, when winter came. I came back and discovered that my roommate and my closest friend, Dana and Reed, had all been killed in the War by flying and I thought, "What a hell of a way to deal with that". I wasn't a pacifist. I enlisted. I just felt, "This is not a very good process".

So, I'd applied to law school before the war and I decided to go to law school focusing on international problems, international differences, that kind of thing and when I finished that, I was offered a clerkship, but I decided I'd go to Paris with the Marshall Plan, work on Harraling's [sp ?] staff and deal with the world that then was. So, I spent a year in Paris and then I went to work for a law firm that did a lot of international work. There were quite some international problems from the War on[wards]. I covered Berlin cases, Indian and Pakistan over the Indus River, Iran and Afghanistan over the Holan River dispute, Danish ships over the United States in seizure during the war - and I did a lot of work on international problems as a lawyer. I did that for half a dozen years and then I was

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invited to argue cases to the Supreme Court, which I found I loved. So, I spent two years arguing cases in the Supreme Court. Harvard invited me to come back and teach and I came back to teach. None of the cases that I argued had been settled - all that could have been settled - so one question I had was, "Why don't lawyers settle cases?" So, that's how I got into the field of conflict. How do you negotiate and settle cases.

Interviewer: So, what sort of field was it when you came into it...?

Dr Fisher: I didn't think it was a field... I don't know. I was interested in advising governments on how to do better. They hadn't done very well. One of my first books, *"International Conflicts For Beginners"* - that's the role of the beginners on the theory of how you deal with international problems. I was concerned with – there wasn't much theory on how you want to talk to each other, how you want to listen, understand the other side's point of view. So, I became interested in that, was teaching it and became an academic at Harvard Law School, visiting for a year. And then they made me a professor.

Interviewer: You became part of Harvard Law School and yet you were interested in the dynamics and the problems of negotiation. How did that fit into a law school?

Dr.Fisher: Well, [when you are] dealing with case, and the question [to start with is can you] understand their point of you, understand your own and then if you're sure of both], you can talk. A lot of times, they're just – we don't get to a judge. As I said, I spent a couple of years arguing cases to the Supreme Court and I loved it, but when you're talking with somebody else, you're not just trying to persuade, you're trying to understand. Even in court, they'd ask me a question and I say, "Ask that again. I'm not sure I understand your concern there." We asked the questions – you want to deal with a problem and you want to understand how the other side sees it. What I care about – what they care about, not their position, not their position.

Interviewer: So you came into the field mainly for interest in negotiation and understanding the underlying position of the other side, as well. ?

Dr.Fisher: Understanding the interest of the other side.

Interviewer: Your *"International Conflict for Beginners"*. Now, I remember reading that as a... student, but I remember that you'd actually... brought out another book before that, which I remember... I can remember the subtitle, but I can't remember the title – *"The Craigsville Papers"*?

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Dr.Fisher: *The Craigsville Papers!* There was a conference in Craigsville where somebody out of the American Academy asked us to come down and spend a month here in Cape Cod and I commuted from here - from the island - by ferry boat, spent the day and came back. Most of them lived right there. I wrote a couple of papers; one on “fractionating” conflict - how do you break it up into pieces.

Interviewer: Yes. I remember that.

Interviewee: I remember that – I think it's a true story – a reconnaissance plane saw a Soviet trawler pulling up a New Bedford man's lobster pot and eating lobsters out of it. The thing was flying overhead and they saw these Russians pulling up the lobsters. So, the dispute wasn't: What should the United States do about this intrusion ? It was [about] territory waters. I said, "No, no. This is a dispute between a lobster fisherman and a ship over a couple of lobsters. Don't get US/Soviet Union [involved] over territory. Let's discuss the lobster business". Everybody says, "Don't escalate an issue to be as big as possible"

Interviewer: Yes. I remember reading that article, actually... I'm trying to remember who else was in that book. I don't think Herb [Kelman] had a piece in it, but I remember your piece very clearly and I'm trying –

Dr Fisher: Rappaport had a piece.

Interviewer: Rappaport had a piece in it as well. Did Dick Snyder have a piece in that? I can't remember.

Dr Fisher: I've forgotten.

Interviewer: Yes, because I think that was the first thing of yours I ever read... I think they called it *International Negotiating Behavior* on our side of the Atlantic, or was that what they – I remember being slightly puzzled because "*International Conflict For Beginners*", I had as a paperback and then I came across it as a hardback with a different title. "*International Negotiating Behavior*" - or something like that.

Dr. Fisher: I think there was an English edition. They thought it to was too smart to be called "*International Conflict for Beginners*".

Interviewer: Yes - but I liked the pictures in it. I thought they were fun!

Dr.Fisher: Well, Robert Osborne did the pictures.

Interviewer: Yes. So, you were at Harvard. You were on the law faculty. You were getting interested in influencing policy makers and you were more than

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interested in negotiating and improving problem solving. From those particular times, who else can you remember as being somebody who had useful ideas for you? Did you –

Dr.Fisher: Ken Boulding was one I talked with a lot - and then Tom Schelling was at Harvard for a while –

Interviewer: Of course.

Dr Fisher: - a good friend of mine. We spent time on some of those issues together there. Herb Kelman had his own seminar and I visited it once, I think, and talked to a group of students. It was a combination of research and doing it, but they were kind of embarrassed about doing it. There's no embarrassment about trying to make a difference. He thought, "I'm an academic. I must sell you a belt [?] conflict", and I should just incidentally talk to the Middle Easterners. I could, incidentally, have Israeli and Palestinians here. I've much more thought of myself not as “in the academic field”, but as trying to develop ideas of use to people in dealing with their differences. How to improve the way they deal with their differences. Some theory about how do you – what's some good advice you'd give to someone in a conflict? What's the best advice I can give? What would they do? How should they do it? I was more interested - very much - in dealing with decision makers. Secretary Vance, at that time the Secretary of State, had the house next door to me [in Martha's Vineyard]. I gave him a copy of a book called, *"International Mediation, A Working Guide"*.

Interviewer: Oh, yes. I've got a copy of that, as well.

Dr Fisher: I've got a photograph of him sitting on the terrace right within 50 feet of where we are – 25 feet of where we are, reading that book... I got a snapshot of it... Secretary Vance was living right near where we are, the next house up the pond from where we are, a friend of mine, and I remember his saying: “We're going to have the Arabs and Israelis together. What should we talk about?” I said, "The important thing to learn is that you can't do much in three days". The conference lasts no more than three days. He said, "They're going to be here a week at Camp David". I said, "You're going to have Sadat and Begin for more than a week? It will never happen". He said, "Well, they committed. We told them to pack their clothes for a week". I said, "Oh, let me think about that. You can do more with that during a week. Maybe you can get them to start changing from face-to-face to side-by-side. How do you work together on this?" I find that change of posture is critical. One of my students from the Kennedy School took a law school three weeks negotiation courses I had and he went back [and became]...President of Ecuador, and he called me up and said, "Roger. I just got elected yesterday

as President. Come down. What should I do with Fujimori on this? What should I do?" I said, "Well, I love having an A student become elected president. It's even better to have him call me up the next day and ask for advice." So, I went down and talked with him and I said, "You're going to meet Fujimori?". He said, "Oh, yes". I said, "Well, don't just have it shaking hands, having you lined up together. I want a photograph taken of the two of you sitting side by side working together. I want to change the posture. Not just shaking hands, not just standing up in a line, but sitting down side by side". He said, "There'll be staffers all over. I'll have one done", and he came back with a front page newspaper story with a photograph of the two presidents sitting down side by side talking. He said, "Fujimori, when he saw that photographs, he said: 'You know what this means? This means we've got to deal with these problems. We're not just [[determining] who's winning and who's losing, who's going to back down. We're working on it together. The photograph tells the public we have to work together. How do we settle these problems?' ." They met together several times during the next few weeks and settled every problem they had between the two of them.

Interviewer: That's great.

Dr.Fisher: That's the satisfaction I get of changing – getting one president to say, "Okay, let's work this out together. Let's sit down side by side, not a confrontation, but side by side". I'm interested in developing ideas that have some merit to them, having some sense of 'This is a good idea' - and then talking to people, trying to get them involved in those ideas.

Interviewer: I remember my old friend, Jim Laue, whom you know, I think... He used to be very insistent upon where you sat was very important and how you sat and how you looked at each other was very important. So, obviously something he picked up from you ?

Dr.Fisher: I want them working together. I want to change – this is confrontation. I want them side by side, dealing. The problem is over there and we're working on that problem together.

Interviewer: Now you, I think, were one of the people who was a founder member - if not 'the' founder member - of the "Program on Negotiation at Harvard, the PON ?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: How did that come about?

Interviewee: Well, I had students – we were working with – Bruce Patton was an assistant of mine. I knew him from – I taught an undergraduate course he

was in and he came to law school and worked with me a great deal. He's still involved a great deal... "We ought to do something". Bruce came along and we had lunch with Howard Raiffa at the Business School and Bruce was there and Bruce Patton said, "We have to organize an activity, something that's going on. Not just you two meeting - but there has to be a project, a program, something, a project". So, we called it the Harvard Negotiation Project for a while, and then other people came and Frank Sander wanted to get involved. So, there was my project and then there was a bigger program. PON was an umbrella organization which Bob Manoukin became involved in, and others, later as we got involved. We had a project to see what we should be – and the project was kind of – our goal was to produce ideas about negotiating with other people. How should you do it? Do we have any words of wisdom to say to people? It's not just studying about how they do do it, but how do we develop the best advice we can... generate, telling people; "If you want to negotiate, here's some things to do. Focus on your interests, not your position. Communicate. Listen, as well as talk. Build a relationship, a side by side relationship. Separating... operations from deciding. Brainstorming from committing." In a meeting, people are often reluctant to put an idea out for fear of it being tied to their name and it will be their idea. And, we say, "No one is committed to anything now. Now we're generating ideas". So, separate inventing from deciding, and then after you invent an idea, then you want to make commitments to it. All the time, you're trying to build a relationship.

So, we got seven elements that we thought were critical in negotiation. We could teach negotiation on how people focused on interests, building a relationship, communication and so forth.

Interviewer: And from that emerged *Getting to "Yes"* ?

Dr.Fisher: Yes. That became *Getting to "Yes"* - in due course.

Interviewer: The thing that I always liked about that book was [that] it was readable. Did you make a deliberate effort to... ?

Dr.Fisher: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: - avoid jargon and...

Dr.Fisher: One of the things was not just to have an academic book on the shelf, but to have a book that people would like to buy. We used to read it aloud back and forth to each other. Every time you had a word you didn't like or you wanted to shorten the sentence down - stop and mark it down. We read it back and forth until the book became so human - conversational. It was not producing something chiseling into rock of words, but to try to make it language that people use, a language that is easy and reading it

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aloud – I thought reading a manuscript out loud back and forth, every time either one wanted to change a word, do it. Change it. Make it more conversational. Make it easier.

Interviewer: My old boss used to say, "If it's not in the Pocket Oxford Dictionary, get rid of it".

Going back to something we were talking to earlier off camera – we were talking about whether – however it started and however you got involved in it... whether it's justifiable to call it [Conflict Analysis, Conflict Resolution, Peace Studies] whether it's justifiable to call it “a field” - and you have some views about that.

Dr.Fisher: I'm not sure it's a field, but that's an academic problem. That's like, "How should we organize these ideas at a university or a school? What should the books be about for these ideas?"

My concern is how do I get ideas that help people. How do I... I don't care whether it's a field or not ! I want to have these ideas where people will pick it up. It [*Getting to "Yes"*] becomes a best seller – that book continues to sell. It sells – what it is, 20 years out the road – it sells 3,000 copies a week.

Interviewer: Really?

Dr.Fisher: It's 150,000 copies a year every year and this is a very simple book. It's 'an airport bookstore' thing that someone can pick it up and read it. So, my concern was not generating a discipline at Harvard in the Law School and the negotiation field as much as my colleagues were concerned with that. I was concerned with improving our ideas and making them so useful. I remember one person, he said, "Oh, you're [Professor Roger] Fisher". I said, "Yes". He said, "I want you to know I read that book. I knew everything in it already. I just didn't know I knew any of it.". I said, "Okay. Perfect". These are ideas - organized common sense. People say, "I knew that but didn't know I knew it". It's not producing an academic field.

Interviewer: Let me push you a bit more on that, because willy-nilly, a field seems to have grown up, but one of the interesting things about it is that it does seem to have this very strong practical side of things. It's not just you that insists on doing practice. I'm thinking about Herb [Kelman], Jim Laue was very much involved in that.

Dr.Fisher: Yes.

Interviewer: My old boss, John Burton, was very much involved in this. Johan Galtung. Everybody who's a name in it seems to have a strong bent to [practice]... So... I'm going to press you a bit more on this “field”

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business... because whatever it is, one of the striking features about it is [that] most of the leaders in it have always had this practical, policy-orientated side, as well, to it, and I think that has made it – probably-almost unique. But there are always at least two elements which always seem to me to compete... One is the desire to make it into a “social science”, and the other is the desire to have an impact. Now, you've very firmly come down on the... impact side of things, but did you – you were at Harvard. You must have had pressure to become a “respectable” academic.

Dr.Fisher: I resisted that.

Interviewer: But it was there, was it?

Dr.Fisher: I wanted the ideas to be worth bringing to bear on the practice. So, I was working to improve the ideas, but not just to improve the ideas to have a discipline and a nice scholarly book to say, "This is the way it's done". Scholars look at what *is* a great deal. What is the way, how it exists. I'm saying, what *ought* they to do? How do we improve with the way they deal with differences? How do we improve the skill people have in dealing with their differences, working together a lot? So, I'm not concerned with – I've been much less concerned with building a field here as making sure that my ideas and the ideas of those who work with me - my students and others - made a difference and could make a difference in the world, could *do* things.

Interviewer: One of my colleagues back in England says that one of the most important thing for an academic - whether practical or otherwise - are his students... Do you think that your students have actually taken up these ideas and remained – what's Kurt Lewin's nice phrase - 'practical theorists'? Who do you think of when we say: “Your students carrying on?”

Dr.Fisher: Well, I'm very proud of the students... I find there's a thread which – my definition of the problem is that there's a gap between the way things are and the way they should be and you're saying the problem is we want to understand the origin of the field, the history of the field. So, you're working on one problem. My life is not concerned with the history of how the field got evolved. I'm concerned with gap between the way things are and the way they ought to be. I look for diagnoses. I would say too many people spend time in the field looking up at themselves examining the academic thing, rather than looking at why leaders don't take these ideas - why George Bush doesn't. Why he considers negotiation a sign of weakness.

Interviewer: Yes.

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Dr.Fisher: Sometimes you and I are working on different problems. My problem I work on typically is people are not dealing with their differences as well as they should, and so I'm saying, what causes that, and the politician - the President - is busy dealing with the public opinion, dealing with his constituents... so, he says, "North Korea is doing it all wrong". So, that's no way to negotiate with North Korea, but it's a good way to talk to his constituents. So, I want to see how do I get the best ways to negotiate into the heads of the politicians.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr.Fisher: The President believes that it's soft to negotiate, it's a sign of weakness to negotiate. You want to tell him – there's nothing possibly worse than telling North Korea what they ought to do. "You ought to abandon nuclear weapons". You're up here in North Korea listening to that and you say, "What the hell?"

Interviewer: Yes

Dr.Fisher: "If they want to talk to us, all right. Don't just sit back and *order* us to abandon our nuclear weapons program". So, the president is doing poorly I believe – or the administration is doing poorly – because they see the problem as; "How do we keep the constituents happy, how do I look tough, how do I look proper, how am I doing the right stuff?" And I'm saying we and North Korea have some differences. We ought to have somebody over there – not the president, perhaps, but the second assistant secretary, listening to the North Koreans, saying, "How do you see the problem? Here's how we see the problem. Let's sit and talk about it a while and see how we can deal better; see if we can develop a joint recommendation to make to our leaders on both sides". So, I'm constantly concerned with how governments and diplomats are NOT negotiating wisely. They're doing it wrong.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr.Fisher: I'm not concerned with how "the field" of negotiation is not being developed properly. Now, I've trained a lot of students. Some of them are interested in these problems. Some go to teach. Some are working in consulting. "Vantage Partners"- Mark Gordon and the team - they fly around the world and advise governments how to do it and advise businessmen how to negotiate, what they ought to do with what they're doing it on. But, this tension – I'm concerned with what we can say about the process that will help people do it better.

Interviewer: I want to come back to that, if I may, because my particular Institute has that as a problem and I need some advice... but maybe we can come back

to that towards the end because this whole... connection between giving advice that people will listen to has created a real problem for us... We need to... think about it, but let me come back to that towards the end, if I may, because I don't think we're in disagreement about what we ought to be doing. I am just... interested in the development of your own thinking. ... You're obviously very pleased with the impact that you had on the Ecuador/Peru border negotiations. Looking back over some of the things you've done in the past, some of the... practical ways in which you've helped people talk to each other, and discuss, and negotiate - what stands out in your own mind...that you're most pleased with ?

Interviewee: I think one is to have them see a problem as a joint problem, not as... adversarial. The biggest thing with Ecuador and Peru was when Presidents Jamie Muzad [sp ?] and Fujimori sat side by side, and newspaper photographers showed them sitting side by side working. The photograph was published. They both began to realize, "Our differences are metaphor. There are two of us to deal with jointly. We have to work on them together and let's get your ideas and my ideas and [see] how we do it". That's what the trick [is], what's needed to get things to work well ... Too often a leader says, "I'm this county. We're supposed to tell them what to do. We have to tell North Korea what to do. We have to tell -", and they're not creating their differences as a shared matter of concern. They're treating it as something to argue about, like a win or lose the battle with it.

So, a large part of my work is to try to persuade people to work together on their differences. I'm thinking I'm marketing the skill of "working with differences". It's NOT the field of conflict resolution. The words "conflict resolution" are funny. It assumes that... conflict can be anything from the difference of an opinion to a war, and "resolution" implies that it's all been settled. I remember two students of mine, madly in love, a male and female, and they were fighting in my office all the time, arguing all the time, coming in, no one talking first and then one day the girl came in by herself and she said, "Roger, we want you to be the first to know. We have solved our problem. We're getting married". I said, "Congratulations. Sit down". I said, "You'll now have more issues to deal with. You'll have more with children, where to live, what job to take"

There's no such thing as a resolution. The Middle East is not going to be resolved. There will be Arabs and Jews there forever. They'll be dealing with their differences for ever and they'll have to improve the way they deal with their differences... When people say, "I'm going to resolve this conflict, the Middle East Conflict", they've got it wrong - it's not going to be resolved. It's going to be, "How do we improve the way we're dealing with it." So, my concern constantly is spreading the skills of dealing with differences, practicing listening skills, understanding, paraphrasing back what you think you've heard, checking it out, listening

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again, jointly brainstorming. "I'd like your advice". "How do you think we should do it now?". The best advice I'd give anyone is to ask for advice.

I get the President of Ecuador and I say, "Are you meeting Fujimori?" "Yes". I said, "Ask his advice". "Ask the other president's advice?" I said, "Yes. You've had differences going on for fifty years. Ask his advice about how you should deal with these. He must have some ideas". When you ask advice, you automatically indicate we're in this together and I want your ideas and maybe I've had my advice for you, but we're working together on it and that is the way differences work better.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr.Fisher: So, to me, the getting people to understand that they want to work together, they want to ask each other's advice - that's quite different than saying, "I'm going to tell the North Koreans that they ought to abolish their nuclear weapons program".

I want people to become aware of the need of becoming skillful at dealing with the differences, both sides, each side. Each person can – I want to listen better. I want to understand you. I want to paraphrase. I want to ask your advice about what you think about this and I want to give you my ideas that I have and see if they work together. Let's see if we can deal with these problems. That is the essential skill of dealing with differences that I want to impart. It's a shared problem that we have to work on together.

Interviewer: Where do you think, in your past experiences, you've been most successful in getting that philosophy across to leaders and [other] people? We've talked about Ecuador...

Dr.Fisher: Ecuador - fortunately, Jamil Muzad [sp ?] was a student of mine when he was a politician and then he became mayor of Quito {?} and I was down there once and had dinner with him. Then he got elected president, called me up on the phone and said, "Roger, I won the election yesterday. Come down and now we'll decide what to do". So, that was very exciting.

I think also, in a way, that with Egypt, with President Nasser – I spent a couple of hours with him personally working with him...t and we hit it off very well. He just – and I thought I was set for the future. He died a couple of months later, a surprise death, just a heart attack.

Interviewer: Was that before you wrote, *Dear Arabs*, *Dear Israelis*, or after? I can't remember.

Dr.Fisher: Gosh, I don't remember, either.

Interviewer: That was another of your books I read.

Dr.Fisher: It's just another book. It's advice. It's letters [that] I wrote to an Israeli friend, to an Egyptian friend, to a Jordanian friend, to a PLO friend, saying, "Look. There's no solution. There's not going to be a conflict resolution – like, we got married and we solved this problem forever. It's an endless process of people wanting to get good at that process." They want to get skillful at dealing with differences, whether it's international differences, personal differences.

You and I may disagree. Let's discuss and understand that and go forward. But, the “resolution” field has a notion that we're going to come and solve these problems. Conflict resolution - we resolved that one. Significant conflicts are dealt with. There's never going to be a solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict. They're not going to sign a treaty and it will be over forever. They'll have a problem the next day, about discrimination, about immigration, some suspected criminal, about violence of some group. So, the notion of conflict resolution - both words are bad.

Conflict – I don't know whether it's a war or conflicting ideas; and “resolution” implies it's once and for all settled. I'm trying to improve the field - if you call it a field - of improving the skills for dealing with differences... spreading those skills, improving the content of the skills, and then spreading them more widely.

Interviewer: Well, it's a good description but you're never going to use it as a label, are you? It's not “snappy” - but I know what you mean.

Dr.Fisher: “Dealing with differences” is pretty good.

Interviewer: Dealing with differences - okay. Yes.

I remember many years ago when I was teaching in London, I actually taught in the Department of Systems Analysis and I finally persuaded my Head of the Department to put on a course called “Conflict Management - How to Manage Your Conflict”, and I remember talking to a member of another department and he said, 'What course are you teaching?', and I said, "Conflict Management". He said, "What's that?" I told him - something about negotiation and something about third parties, etc., and he said, "That's not conflict management. That's life". I said, "Yes, but I didn't think I could get a course called “Life” through the Curriculum Board !"

Dr.Fisher: The difficulty I have with conflict “management” - and we have a Conflict Management Group –

Interviewer: That's right, “CMG”...

Interviewee: - there's a fear that people want - we're going to manage their conflict... I'm coming in to manage your conflict - and “I don't want you coming in,

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Roger, and managing *my* conflict”. So, it's how we deal with our differences because it's skillful, managing our differences.

Interviewer: So, how did CMG come about, [the] Conflict Management Group?

Interviewee: Well, with some students – we set up a group of students and formed a consultant firm and they called it Conflict Management, Inc., with a corporate existence and a Board of Directors and... the group was a NGO. It was a for-profit activity. Conflict Management Inc. You'd advise businesses and managers how to deal with it.

Conflict Management Group was a non-profit. Now, we've merged with Mercy Corp. and they've set up the Conflict Management Group as part of Mercy Corp. So, we've got activity for a thousand people around the world as one thing to learn. I was in Istanbul this spring teaching 30 Mercy Corp people from Africa and Asia some of the theories of what we're dealing with. They deal with conflict every day. It would be nice if they could have not just “development” - building housing - but really helping with economic development, social development, and help them in the process of dealing with the people they're dealing with - how they do it better.

Interviewer: You said something a couple of minutes ago which I meant to follow up on. Again, going back to the work that you did in the Middle East, you were talking about early contact with – I still think of him as “Colonel” Nasser. I can't think of him as President Nasser.

Dr.Fisher: President Nasser.

Interviewer: ... But, you also had good contact with the Israeli side, as well.

Dr.Fisher: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: So, for a while, you were very closely working in that particular area. Did that last for a very long time? .

Dr.Fisher: Nasser died.

Interviewer: Of course, right. And, so then that came –

Dr.Fisher: Osama El-Baz [sp ?] was a student of mine at Harvard Law School, a Masters LM student. He became assistant to Nasser, as well as assistant to the foreign minister. He had these two hats from President Masser and [the] foreign minister, and worked with President Sadat and I met with him several times. I met Sadat through him first and talked with Sadat somewhat. I never became as close to them. The Arab/Israeli conflict is so deeply imbedded on both sides that the leaders keep thinking there is so

much to decide and a summit is a very hard place to decide. They should ask second level people to work together and make recommendations. They should get a team; a joint working group of four or five people and say, "Hey, look. Let's see if we can make recommendations that we can give to both sides". That's the process that's going to work better than – when you get to the top, the crisis is so important... George Bush wants to decide this, or President Nixon wants to decide this.

North Korea - we should have second level people talking with North Koreans and seeing if they have recommendation we could both recommend. We don't want to separate international diplomacy in so much as wanting to separating the brainstorming of possibilities, formulating some specific possibilities and then recommending – jointly recommending - something to the leaders for their consideration. It's really very useful in mediation I've found...

When Secretary Vance resigned, [President] Carter was – the hostages were being held in Iran and Carter decided that he wanted to rescue them by helicopter and Secretary Vance said, "That's a very bad idea, Mr. President, and it's so bad an idea that I want to convince you. I'll take it so seriously, that if you try that, I could resign". He said, "I'm President and I'm going to go ahead and do it". So, he tried the helicopters and of course the streets were crowded up [to] the minute the helicopters landed. Nothing happened. One helicopter couldn't work and the whole thing was failure.

Interviewer: It was a fiasco.

Dr.Fisher: Vance resigned. Lloyd Cutler called me up from the White House – he was White House Council – and he said, "Roger, did you see what happened?" I said, "Yes". He said, "Well, see what you can do.". "Are you serious ?" "See what you can do. You have no authority whatsoever. You have 24-hour access to me through the White House switchboard". I said, "Perfect". I don't like authority. If I have authority, I put some limits on it. You can do this, but not that. If I have no authority, I love it.

So, I got hold of the Ayatollah Basti on the telephone and said, "What do you want?" He said, "That we don't want?". I said, "We'll start there". We don't want 45:30 to the Saudis anything. We don't want this." So, I listened to the Ayatollah Basti for a while and I said, "Well, what else do you want?" "We want to be recognized as a government. The Shah is dead and the United States never recognized us". So, we talked over what he wanted and I got in the middle of this in talking back and forth and developed some ideas of what they wanted, and then I said to Lloyd Culter, "I need a mediator." He said, "You're doing fine". I said, "I'm a friend of yours. I'll never hurt you. I want [an] Islamic government to mediate this thing." He said, "No, no, no. Let's not get them involved, - [that's] very political". I said, "Get me an Islamic government you would accept as a mediator and I'll call you back tomorrow". He called me back

and said, "Algeria". I said, "Really, Algeria". He said, "We are so different politically, we decided to be very pragmatic on everything. Ask Algeria". So, I got a hold of the foreign minister of Algeria and I said, "I'm not mediating. Iran would like you to mediate". He said, "The United States wants us to mediate?" I said, "Not the United States – I want you to mediate". "Who are you?" I said, "I'm nobody. I'm a professor. I'm nobody at all." I said, "Don't say the United States has decided. I'll talk the United States into it". He said, "I don't want to waste my time". I said, "Don't worry. I will see if the United States accepts you, but don't say the United States wants you". So, we got the Ambassador to go to Teheran. So, Algeria said, "Do you accept us as a mediator?", and lo and behold, the United States accepted them and I got out. I handed over my draft notes and Algeria took it over and went forward with it.

Interviewer: Wasn't Mohammed Sahnoun the ambassador - I think he was?

Dr.Fisher: I think it was.

Interviewer: Yes, I know him from way back from when he was at the OAU... The other thing I was going to ask - because you were talking earlier about Camp David and about Secretary Vance, and I have used [it] a couple of times myself [about your idea of "a single negotiating text." Now, is that something you'd thought of before Camp David or did it come up [earlier] ? Where did you get the idea from?

Dr.Fisher: No. It was an idea [that] we'd been working on... and we had – at the international summit - we had Secretary Vance here at the Terrace and we showed him this notion - the power of a single negotiating text. That the third person who shuttles with drafts - it just goes back and forth. It's not a proposal, not the other's proposal, [it's] just seeing if he can get it better and better - and finally making a proposal and walking away, and...Secretary Vance got it. I'm not sure President Carter ever really...

Interviewer: Well, he [President Carter] still uses it, you know...I was in a meeting with him once at the Carter Center when he was talking about how he was trying to do one of his projects, - I think in Africa - and he was saying, "I sit down with these two sets of ideas on my [word processing] machine and I sit down and I try to combine them". It sounded very like –

Dr.Fisher: Well, good. Good. I had talks with him. I had lunch with him at his request and sat down. He had me help teach a class with his students when he was teaching. He asked me to be an interlocutor for him. The students were all in the class. We had a lot of fun together.

Interviewer: I have great respect for him...

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Dr.Fisher: Oh, I think he's less strong on theory than he is on *rapport* with people and establishing a personal *rapport*....

Interviewer: Well, that's a good thing to be good at. I always think – even going back to your point about the need to help people develop skills to deal with the others in difficult situations - there has to be some theory behind the actual skills.

Dr.Fisher: Oh, yes. I guess it's theory about interests and not positions. A theory about communicating two ways. It's not just telling. It's listening very carefully, learning. It's building a side by side relationship with them so you're not this way. You're working together on that problem. It's building *rapport*. It's brainstorming together and separating - and vetting - ideas from making commitments. You don't commit until you've got some very good ideas and it's also – if it would be vetted that way - your best alternative. It's funny - people really don't think of what they're going to do – what's the best they can do - if an agreement doesn't work out and that's the measuring stick all the way along. You want to say, "My best alternative to negotiating with you is such-and-such. I'll walk away. I'll do this". That and the BATNA – the concept of your best alternative is not even understood widely, and negotiators - they didn't have the notion. We tried to reach – if we can't reach an agreement, we leave, but –

Interviewer: But then what?

Dr.Fisher: - then, where do you go? Where do you go if you walk away ?

Interviewer: Yes, I know. My colleagues use that idea very much when they're teaching a negotiating class - Best Alternatives to No Agreement.
The other thing that I was going to ask you about was - I've got a note down here. Have you ever talked a little... with Hal Saunders, because when you were talking about the... need for a dialogue between North Korea and this country to... brainstorm together, it put me very much in mind of the kind of work that he'd been doing in Tajikistan - and his "Extended dialogue". Have you talked to him?

Dr.Fisher: I know Hal. I haven't seen much of him recently. We talked a good deal years ago. Dialogue has the concept of "to waken conversation" and that's not negotiation. You're not producing an agreement. I look at the goal of dialogue – I'm looking to understand what he cares about. I'm looking to understand how they see the problem, what the problem is. It's all the time.

On the Iran [problem]... if Carter couldn't settle this thing with the hostages. He would not negotiate with Iran. He saw negotiation as being very soft. He was not going – his colleagues told me – I was working with John Deales [sp ?] on this hostage question and we had to settle it before

he [Reagan] come into office or not settle it at all - that kind of deadline. But I was pursuing it and I got this deal worked out and the State Department was working on it and they were supposed to set up an escrow account in London so the claims, if there was a dispute about it with the Shah – a bank account - whether it belonged to the government or belonged to the family. If they had a dispute about it, they couldn't sell it and it would go into escrow at the Bank of England. The day before the inauguration, my student in London called me up and said, "Roger. There's no escrow account set up." I said, "What? No escrow account? I thought they both talked to the bank". He said, "Well, we had Americans talk to the bank, but the bank needs a piece of paper. It has to have a piece of paper."

I couldn't get what the problem was. The Iranians and Washington accept the International Monetary Fund. It elected a director there. I got a hold of him at his house in Georgetown and I said, "What's the problem?" He said, "I'm not sure there is a problem". I said, "There IS a problem". "Oh, if there's a problem, I know what it is. It's the escrow account". I said, "Yes, that's the problem, but why?" "Interest," he said, "Muslim countries don't pay or ask for interest. They don't know what to do". But, the instructions say they give out interest. I said, "That's the problem? The inauguration is at noon tomorrow". He said, "Well, that's the problem".

I called up the Central Bank of Iran. It was 10:00 at night. Someone answered the phone. I said, "Sorry to bother you, but I want to talk to the President or the Executive Vice President of the Bank about the interest on the escrow account". She said, "They're in a meeting". I said, "You're in the outer office?" "They're in a meeting back in his office." "Oh," I said, "Good. Take a note in and tell them I want to talk to one of them, either of them, on the phone right now about getting this escrow account done before tomorrow noon". She said, "I won't".

Instead of bawling her out, I thought and said, "You must have a very good reason for say no and I wonder what that reason is". She said, "I interrupted the meeting about an hour ago and they said, 'Do not interrupt this meeting for any reason whatsoever.', so I'm not going to interrupt it. I said, "Bank's closed?" "Yes". "You're in the outer office?" "Yes" "Is there anyone else in the outer office?" "Yes. There's a young man here". I said, "Good. Give that young man a note and ask him to interrupt the meeting and say I'm on the phone and want to talk to them about the escrow account". She said, "I can do that - I can do that".

So, she got that guy, gave him a note. I held the line for about five minutes from Teheran to here, Cambridge, and some Executive Vice President is on the phone and he said, "What do we do about interest?"

I said, "Look, tell the bank to keep accurate track, if any of it is given to them, keep accurate track and don't pay any interest to anybody but keep track and when it's settled, that may be their fee, it may be something else. You'll work it out, but just –".

He said, "The bank needs a document that says the bank will keep track of the records and pay no interests to anybody and discuss it later with the parties if it becomes relevant. We can do that".

"And it can be before noon tomorrow?" "Yes. We'll do it and get it done".

It was done in Washington, long done. So – it was never used, as far as I know, because the banks would either decide whether it belongs to the government or to the Shah's family. If it belongs to the Shah's family, the Shah's family can take care of that. But, that's the kind of conflict resolution, piece by piece.

Interviewer: What was it - Joe Nye's book, *Peace by Pieces* - or something like that. "Building Peace, Piece by Piece"

So... looking back a bit again, you've wanted to help people understand how to deal with other and how to deal with problems much more easily and to develop some skills in this. How successful do you think you've been and what have been some of the successes that you've had - and some of the disappointments that you've had?

Dr.Fisher: Well, I think there are two aspects of it. One is developing the theory and practice, what are the right things to do, and then spreading these to government officials indirectly and by word of mouth, and so forth. I think we've become – with colleagues, we've become fairly... *Getting To Yes* and other books indicate what you have to do. We've given the seven elements of negotiating. You want to establish relationships, establish communications, and so forth... I think on the substantive process, those are very good. On the marketing of it, not as successful. I would keep thinking my client is the United States Government - that's everybody ! And when [Cyrus} Vance was Secretary of State, he was interested and I spent time with him on *International Mediation*. He liked the book, and I gave him a copy of it. When Lyndon Johnson was president – very strong human relationship, but he kind of abused it somewhat by leaning on people and pushing very hard... but I had access to his staff and could get some ideas in there on getting things done.

During the Viet Nam War, I had a chance to go to Paris and meet with Madame Binh, who was the Foreign Minister for the Viet Cong and what she said – I talked to her and she said, "Why does the United States report casualties?" I said, "Report casualties? What do you do?" She said "Nothing. North Viet Nam, the same way, nothing. The families gradually learn. They stop getting letters and they assume somebody's died but there's no big occasion when a group of them die together... the United States cares so much about casualties that they report every day, they report casualties. They tell the public about that. Why do you do that?"

I said, "It never occurred to us not to report casualties". She said, "You care more about casualties than you do about the country". I said,

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"That's true. Most Americans don't know where the country is" "We care more about the country than we do about casualties". I think the United States cares too much..."

Interviewer: Okay... the escrow account. Had you finished with that one?

Dr.Fisher: Yes... it was agreed that there would be escrow accounts set up, and that if the bank had a problem with domestic U. S. banks, they'd put it in – [if] they couldn't agree whether it belonged to the government [or] to the family - they would put it in escrow. Usually they settled them all in what they were doing. Getting it done before the inauguration became a deadline because President Reagan said he would not deal with Iran. He said he would be very tough. He didn't want to be soft, negotiating with Iran -coming in first thing...

Interviewer: It all worked out because also Reagan didn't want the thing sold and credit going to Castro, of course.

Dr.Fisher: He would [have been] happy to have it [that] Carter be the one who compromised with the Iranians, not him.

Interviewer: Right !.

Dr.Fisher: He didn't want to have that happen - and it worked out fine.

Interviewer: Africa.

Dr.Fisher: I've done some [work] in South Africa, some in Egypt. Not much in – well, I was in Ethiopia once, but not much in the middle of Africa. Haven't done –

Interviewer: I know you were working in Ethiopia at one point.

Dr.Fisher: Ford Foundation sent me there to find out whether the law school they'd set up at the University was any good. They sent me down to do an evaluation of the law school there.

I was hoping to see the Emperor - a friend of mine had given me an invitation to see the Emperor, but alas, he was out of the country at the time. I didn't have a chance to. I was told, "They check you at the gate, and as you come through the yard, there will be a lion loose in the yard, and he will run at you, and don't worry. Just hold your hand out and pet the lion if he comes in. The Emperor will be watching through the window to see if you're brave – how brave you are. So if you see a lion coming dashing toward you, just think it's a big puppy and hold out your – he's a very friendly lion. Hold your hand out. Don't have it like this,

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palm up. That's the way to hold the hand". I didn't get a chance to try this out.

Interviewer: Well, it's an interesting test, of course, but...!

People you worked with for CMG ? A good friend - that both Jannie and I know - is Landrum Bolling. Is he still there?

Dr.Fisher: Landrum is still very much alive. He's a very spry man for his 90's. He called up once - he's in Washington, - and said, "Are you free for dinner tomorrow night?", and I said, "Yes, certainly. Come up and we'll -". He said, "All right, and I'll be there for dinner time". He drove up from Washington by himself in a car, Washington to Boston. He came to the house, parked his car, had dinner, spent the night with us. The next morning he said, "That was fun. I'm driving back today". He turned around and drove back the next day. He was 91 or 92 at the time. He's very spry and very active. I know him very well. He's a very good friend.

We got acquainted by - I did a program on the Middle East, and he'd done a lot of work in the Middle East. *The Advocates* was a national television program - public television - *The Advocates*, which I ran. I wanted to have - we always have them - they write in their letters, but I wanted them to get something, so I found something we could mail them. Those who are interested in knowing more about this, I found the Quaker *Search for Peace in the Middle East* - a report they'd done, and those that want to write in after the program... and we would mail them a free copy of [the] Quaker *Search for Peace in the Middle East*.

I'd never met Landrum before, and he was the Chair of that committee, and he said, "Fine. I've got no idea how many people are going to [write in] - we'll provide them copies". There was something like 30,000 people wrote in for free copies of... *Search for Peace*, which is more than all the copies they had ever planned to print. So they printed out copies, and that's how I got to meet Landrum for the first time.

Interviewer: ... Did you ever work with him?

Dr.Fisher: We've worked closely together on many issues... He was on the Mercy Corps board, and they've now merged Mercy Corps and the Conflict Management Group. We've turned our house over to Mercy Corps, and it became the Roger Fisher House... on Waterhouse Street. They've taken on the Conflict Management project as being their field, so they're now teaching people conflict management. They run the CMG project. Mercy Corps has taken it on as one more activity. So it's very well - it works out.

Interviewer: One of the interesting developments that's happening in Africa at the moment, we have a Diplomat in Residence who used to be the...Deputy Secretary General of the OAU. Very nice Somali guy called Addulahi Osman, and he is very closely connected with some of the people in the

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new African Union, and is looking for people to help schools development in this new... Peace and Security Council of the AU. So they're looking for opportunities to train their young people in that.

Dr.Fisher: That might be something we could get Mercy Corps interested in doing as part of their activities.

Interviewer: Yes... That's certainly a possibility... I'm just beginning to run out of our official questions –

Dr.Fisher: Well, let me...see, if I focus not on the field - not on the field of conflict resolution - but if I focus on what I'm doing. I come in and I say, "All right, I want to spread the skills of dealing with differences, and I want to give people various thinking tools to do that". I want them to analyze... First, it's a very simple four quadrant tool. Lower left hand corner is: what's the problem? And a problem is a gap between the way things are and the way I'd rather have them. The plausible solution. Things are... worse off then they ought to be.... You have to identify that – which of the various problems you're working on. People are working on different problems. What is the problem? If ...if I say Darfur or Sudan is not dealing as well as it could with the terrible problems there because northern Sudan - that's the problem.

Then you go up to the theoretical level - quadrant two - which says: what's the diagnosis? What's causing that problem? What perception may be causing that? ...The government of Sudan - the Arab government of Sudan - may think that this can be settled by war, and the best way to do it is to do that, then they defer to their military units. The south thinks it's an ethnic situation, black versus Arab, and they're not really thinking out a process of how to go forward. You think of what the causes are.

Then for each of those causes, you move over and say, "What would be a remedy?".... If the people don't know – then you decide on a strategy for overcoming that cause.

Then you go back down to the fourth quadrant, lower right hand corner, and say, "Who should do what tomorrow morning?" If this is the diagnosis, if this is the analysis, what do we do? So I find if I'm working with people, I want to think together which problem are we working on? Which of... all the problems of the world are they talking about? How can we formulate that so we both work on it?

What's... the diagnosis of why is that problem not doing well? Regional causes - what could someone do about that? Better education, practical experience, joint brainstorming, a joint meeting...? What is that? ...We'll say that North Korea and the United States are dealing very poorly with their differences. The President says, "We'll tell you what to do. Abolish your nuclear weapons !". No one in his right mind in North Korea would abolish nuclear weapons because the American President told them to. They've got attention because they've got that [nuclear

possibility]. So you think, “Okay, that’s the problem in U.S. and North Korean relations”.

What are some causes of that problem? At the level of government, people think this is for the President to decide. Much better done down two or three levels with people working on that with no authority to make big decisions, exploring that. No authority.

Then the thought is: “We’ll win it in an adversarial way !” No, no, we won’t – our goal is to improve their relationship. We’d like to do that. So you’ve got the wrong goal, the wrong people, the wrong process. We’re making that correction. You say, “All right, with the people - who should we get to work on that? The goal - how can we deal with that goal? With the process, what can we do?”. Then you outline a strategy, and then you say, “All right, who does what tomorrow morning? If this is the goal, can we get Mercy Corps’ expert on North Korea to nominate somebody? Can we get them working on the North Korean delegation at the UN? What are we - what’s the goal?”. A joint collaboration on moving apple trees over there, or doing something. So you go right through each of the four quadrants with a particular problem, and that’s the kind of approach I take.

Interviewer: At the end I’m going to come back and ask you to get out of the box that we’ve tried to imprison you in, but I’ve got about three more questions before we give you that opportunity - okay?

Dr.Fisher: That’s fine.

Interviewer: One is - you’ve talked about linkages that you’ve had - and that you’ve created [in Iran], [with] neighbors... Who were some of the key links to the business of developing... ideas and spreading the word?

Dr.Fisher: Well, students of mine – a lot of my students have also gone into teaching of one sort - academic. There are a handful of them in academic places. Another is... Mark Gordon has set up a firm called Vantage Partners, and they spread the ideas to the business... community. They travel around the world, a lot of business in London... telling people how they can use these [ideas]. Doing trade workshops for them on training. So Vantage Partners has grown from three or four people to more than 50 people now, working full time on the training of executives in these ideas. That’s spreading.

Then the writing, again. I’ve got a book now...just coming out in the fall, called *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate*, which is recognizing that people are people. They’re not just computers...If I’m working with you - I don’t want this to get emotional - but if I express appreciation for your having come today and talked about this, and I think it’s terrific doing this together, and I really enjoy it. So you like to be appreciated. So... I guess I get a smile on your face if I appreciate you.

Now - affiliation. We've come from quite different backgrounds, we're working on this problem together on how do you make sense of this field, this area [this] enquiry that we're doing. So appreciation, affiliation. Then I've got to make sure I'm not impinging on your autonomy. You'll do what you want. I'm not – don't let me dictate what you do. You've got this time as your time. Ask the questions you want. I'm not going to say "No" to anything. You have autonomy.

Then- your status. We all have a lofty status in some area. When I put myself up as – I'm not putting myself above you in any way. I'm saying I've got my status, and I've got this area I work on. Then enroll your job – try to help your role be fulfilling. So I'd like you to have a fulfilling role, and this is frequently by suggesting [or] to ask advice - or by my asking your advice. What do you think I should work on? I'd like to - how can I make the best [use] of the few years - whatever time I have to work on this? What needs to be doing most? I'd like your advice on that.

So, if I include your role as including giving advice, that expands your role always. If your boss asks for your advice, or your subordinates ask for your advice, it lets you improve the [relationship] – make your role more satisfying, more rewarding. So those five concerns – a concern with affiliation, a concern with appreciation, a concern with autonomy, a concern with status, a concern with role. Those five concerns are not emotions, but... I can use those concerns to stimulate and help promote them in myself - and in you.

This new book called *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate*, has a chapter on each of these concerns. Sort of a thin book on ways to stimulate helpful emotions in yourself and in others.

Interviewer: When is it coming out?

Dr.Fisher: November ? October – November, sometime. Viking Penguin will have it out this fall.

Interviewer: Well, I'm not going to give you advice, but I am going to ask you about where you think you are going to put some effort in the future - and where do you think you will be going from now on?

Dr.Fisher: It's a good question. I've wanted to ask myself. I'm now in my 80's. I can't live forever. What should I be doing that's useful? I've thought one is to pull together a tool box for Mercy Corps. To chart the four quadrant chart, the seven elements of negotiation, currently perceived choice charts. I find in negotiation I want to look at how you see your choice. What is the question you think I'm asking? If you say yes, what happens? If you say no, what happens? Why is it you keep saying no?

So, if I want to influence someone, I want to know what [is] their currently perceived choice. What would a target "balance sheet" look like that made them come out the way I'd like them to come out? How would

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that have to be? So there are a number of tools, and I thought I might try and prepare a toolbox for Mercy Corps' people. They have a lot of people, I thought they might like that....

Interviewer: It's interesting, your use of the word "tool box", because that's almost exactly the word that some people in the Guernica Peace Center have used about some of their techniques. They have this rather elaborate – it's actually a folder, but they call it a toolbox. I think they've used a couple of your ideas as well.

Dr.Fisher: Well, I'd love to see that.

Interviewer: How's your Spanish?

Dr.Fisher: Only so-so.

Interviewer: Well, you'll probably be all right. Next time I see Juan Gutierrez, I'll get him to send one to you.

Dr.Fisher: There's no English version?

Interviewer: There's a Spanish version, there's a Basque version. I imagine your Basque isn't –

Dr.Fisher: My Basque is no good at all ! My Spanish is very poor, but my grandchildren speak Spanish –

Interviewer: I'll try and get you the Spanish version of it. Anything else? A toolbox for Mercy Corps. Where then?

Dr.Fisher: ...I don't know where the market is to get them to use it – get people to use these ideas more. The difference between asking – well, for example, when the President tells North Korea to abandon their nuclear program, as a negotiation strategy, I'd say, "Hey, why don't you have your Assistant Secretary meet with them and talk about what they're interested in, find out what they care about, and what we can do... that might help. Then our concerns with this thing". Just announcing, "Stop all programs for nuclear weapons," is not the way to be effective. It's the way to make us adversaries rather than partners. Trying to court them. I don't know how to do that. "I need your advice."

Interviewer: Is this something that we, in this - whatever it is - area of inquiry, or field, or whatever - could be working on now? Should be working on now?

Dr.Fisher: Well, I think working on making the ideas attractive to those people who see their problem as dealing with constituents *and* dealing with

adversaries. Let's focus on who is the enemy? Who are our constituents? What do I say to the public about North Korea?

I want to be sure – I want to have something [else], I can see [leaders] come out of a meeting with, “I told him this”. Not, “I asked this”. Maybe get the public to understand. I think Senator McCain has some of these ideas more closely – these are ideas that you've drawn out, and you explore with people. And you don't order them about.

Interviewer: This goes back to “looking back” on your work in the field. We've talked about many of the things that you've done. What were some of the things where you... think you could have done better, or [that] could have been done better?

Dr.Fisher: I think... in dealing with the United States government, I've been – I've counted on having – I've dealt with the days when Kennedy's brother and McNaughton was Assistant Secretary of Defense, and [Robert] McNamara was Secretary of Defense. When I would come up with ideas and they would fly - they would go... I could talk to some of the White House staff, and it would be done. The idea would be incorporated.

I think I've become less market prone to the people of the Republican administration - less concerned with how will they see these ideas. Who could peddle them? Who could ask more questions and get them doing more? I think the hardest task has been... I find I have more success in dealing with foreign governments - Ecuador, South Africa - dealing with both ANC... I did a workshop for De Klerk's Cabinet, and did a workshop, then, for the African National Congress - a four day workshop - something like that - with a group of eight or a dozen people together. That was done...No one in the White House wants an invitation to a workshop on how to do the thing. They're not interested, even in the State Department. I haven't tried hard enough, probably. But I've been disappointed that they...I've had much more difficulty getting the United States Government to accept these ideas than Ecuador, Peru, South Africa, - other countries.

Interviewer: Yes. Well... this brings me back to my own... personal concern. My institute has just moved down closer to D.C... The idea is it will be much easier to influence the policy community down there... So, what I'm asking for... is your advice. I want your advice on how do we write a book - or how do we go about getting the experience - that enables us to write a book, the title of which is *Getting Ideas Across*? Getting people to listen. Getting people to come out and take on board some of these ideas...

Dr.Fisher: It's the first hurdle. I felt I could diagnose what causes this. People think we're know-it-alls. They think, “I've been working here for years, and you come in one day and tell me I'm doing it all wrong”. So we don't

listen enough to be helpful to them when they're doing it. If you come in and say, "Look, we'll tell you how to do this. We thought about it a little while, here's the right answer". No one likes to be dictated to and told it that way.

So one - I think - was less sensitive to the marketing of it, and to understanding how they think – how they see the problem. Getting them to say what their problems are. Getting them to diagnose their symptoms, and possible causes of their symptoms. What difficulties they have. Spend a little more time thinking about that, and putting it in their terms rather than, "Here's my answer. You work it out. You make it work. You fit it in together. This will cause you to do it".

It's understanding how other people - reasonably - see their problems, why they're doing what they're doing, and not just coming and saying, "You're doing it wrong. I know you're doing it wrong because I've thought about this at Harvard a lot. I've thought about this at the Institute".

Interviewer: Okay,... I think this is the last one, but... Who else would you advise us to talk to? Who else has been part of this area of inquiry...?

Dr.Fisher: Let me think... the less academic, the more active oriented might be interesting. Mark Gordon is one of my favorite students, who is now the managing partner of Vantage Partners. It's a firm in Cambridge. He travels oh, every week he's traveling across the ocean and going somewhere. Bruce Patton is someone who's worked with me more than for half of his 50 years... I knew him as an undergraduate student, and he's been in this area. He's now a Vantage Partner. He now still has a role in a negotiation project, and that is one. I think...you might find, in terms of field...I think you [should] talk with someone like Liz Koppelman, who is one of the co-authors doing our book. She's now at Stanford, I believe.

Interviewer: Koppelman, okay. Yes.

Dr.Fisher: Teaching. I would say that the people that – the students who've stayed in academia and gone ahead – Scott Peppit [sp ?]. I forget if he's at Oregon or – I'll pull some names together for you...

Interviewer: Okay, that would be good.

Dr.Fisher: [I'll] think on it, because I think these younger academics, who are 50 years behind me in terms of what they're doing, but they're committed to working in the same direction, would be ones to get some ideas from. I'll give you some names.

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Interviewer: Those are good... suggestions. Yeah. We were thinking, also, we ought to go and talk to Landrum [Bolling]...

Dr.Fisher: Landrum! A) Landrum is good at talking, B) he's got a very wise view of everything. I think he'd be someone to get his ideas. Very good.

One thing the students have asked me to do is get a collection of my stories. I've used stories so often to make a point, that they want...It will have to be the way I tell them now, it's not what really happened, because the stories keep getting changed. I've adjusted them to fit the circumstances, but they...

People so often think the problem is somebody else's problem. One of my favorite stories - we were flying the North Atlantic with a hotshot pilot in a B-17 - four engines - flying over from Goose Bay over to Iceland.

Interviewer: I remember those.

Dr.Fisher: Weather reconnaissance. It was a beautiful day. Clear, not a cloud in the sky. Just – it was – the weather was nothing. We were at 10,000 feet going over, and just for a lark, without telling the crew, the pilot feathered the number one engine, and then the propeller is stationery on the wing, out here on the left wing. The effect on the crew was so satisfying to the pilot - a B-17 flies fine on three engines - but having one engine just stop there, that just for a lark, he feathered all four engines, so the other three engines stopped. So for one moment, all four propellers feather tipped in the wind, and not a bit of power on the plane. He thought - boy, he really fooled us !

So he decides to unfeather it, pushes a button, but then he remembered you had to have power to start an engine. Even on the ground an airplane has to be plugged in. Yet the plane was dead. We were gliding with all four propellers feathered to the wind, toward the ocean, ice, out in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, out of sight of anything. The co-pilot, in words I'll never forget, in the silence said, "Boy, oh boy, have you got a problem". There was just absolutely – now, fortunately we had –

Interviewer: How'd he get out of that?

Dr.Fisher: We had a sergeant on the plane who remembered that we had a – if we ever land at an airstrip in Northern Greenland [there was not a base there, but there was an airstrip to the north you could land] – if we ever stopped there we had to have a way to start the engines. So we had a putt-putt generator on board. We carried a generator there. It was like an outboard motor - and he found the generator, wrapped a rope around it, attached the wires, couldn't make [it go] - connected two or three times, got the thing going, hadn't used it for years. We got power, and so the pilot could... unfeather the engines. I got prematurely gray hair, at the time. But this – the notion that "Boy, oh boy, is this *your* problem. You've got

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a problem. That one – what can *you* do about it? The question is what can I do about it? To the pilot, he said, “Boy, oh boy, have you got a problem.”, as we headed toward the ice cold ocean !

Interviewer: Let me ask you one other thing while I think about this. Again, this is not anything to do with the interview. What are you going to do with your archives?

Dr.Fisher: With my ...?

Interviewer: Archives. Now, I have an ulterior motive for asking you this, because we have just been given... a piece of property on the river... Occoquan... . It's a beautiful piece of property. We're going to build ... a research, retreat...and conference center there... It's going to be a place where you could bring your North Koreans, and your American government, third tier people to talk about...[their problem] It's going to be a kind of a Camp David - a kind of a Rand Corporation or CMG...

Dr.Fisher: I think it's very important to convince people that informal, private discussions - coming up with ideas - where no one has the authority to make commitments... they can make recommendations if they come up with them, but that's it. That is just... extremely important. I find that [with] almost all the problems, my advice is, “Look, let's sit down with some North Koreans and talk about that. Let's sit down with some Sudanese, and see what we can figure out on this. Sit down with some people to ...”.

That's just so necessary - and you have to have the place, and you have to have the initiative. The Carter Center hasn't quite done it. They could do some of it – more of it. The President has a big name – it's his activity. It's not just a place...

Interviewer: But the other thing we're going to do is try to put... archive material there of people's experience. So I've asked Hal Saunders if he'll put his papers and archives there. I've asked Herb [Kelman] but Herb has said no, he'd probably give [the papers] to Harvard - but we've got Jim Laue's papers. Now, [you] don't have to answer this at the moment, but think about the possibility of [donating your own papers there...]

Dr.Fisher: Well, ... myself, going back - my father [who] lived to 99, spent his time throwing away as much as he could of papers.

Interviewer: Don't throw it away !

Interviewee: He sent back to the children – each of the children, six children - we got letters that we had written to the family sent back to us. If you want to know, “Here's the letters you've wrote – it's from the Army. Here's the

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letter you wrote from – [all] my correspondence with them. My mother called it “Family United News,” – FUN - which she would... During the War, she got letters. She would duplicate parts of it so everybody can see. Instead of writing to all six – my five siblings and both parents would write one, and they got something out... What to do with the files is a very good question.

Interviewer: Well, if you –

Dr.Fisher: Give me a proposal and –

Interviewer: If you come to the point of wanting to get rid of the files, don't do what John Burton did - he burned them.

I said I'd come back to {this question}.. If you were setting up this interview with Roger Fisher, what would you have asked?

Interviewee: I think about that when I read your letter with the questions. I was trying to think – I would want someone to...[ask]; “What is my box?” Not that it's an academic field, but... how has the history of the field been? Rather it's, “What is my current working set of ideas?” Like the four quadrants. How I start with a problem. How I go back and forth. If that's the final suggestion, what is the problem with that? If I go around the circle several times, I go backwards or forwards with it going, filling in ideas.

To some extent, I felt asking me [about] this “field”, as though the center of my interest was the field of conflict resolution. What have you done in this field, and how is the field going? Are they doing what you want? So forth - a more blank slate.

I've been looking for ways to think clearly about differences, and think clearly about the elements of differences. What's wrong with the way it's done? What's causing those defects? Some possible strategies for improving the way that's done. What are possible ways of implementing? Who does what next?

I've been trying to find – helping people think clearly themselves, asking those questions about purpose. What are some purposes you have? Process. What's your notion of process? Products. Three – what would be the products for success of all this stuff? Purpose, process, products, or... Get those products – but if you're asking purpose... what do you see as your purpose? What do you think is your process?

I find students are more imaginative than my colleagues are. They've all become quite wooden and boxed in. So I much prefer working with students than...

Interviewer: Happens all the time, doesn't it?

Dr.Fisher: Yes. They're working with those of us who are equally rigidified, locked in. So... take some people you think of as doing interesting things in this

sort of area. Asking them what – how they've seen what they're doing, what they're trying to do more of, or what they're trying to do less of, and what's wrong with that what they've been doing? Rather than saying "the field of conflict resolution".

See, you have the field of conflict resolution, you've got some money to try and figure out what's wrong with the field and what's going on, and ... the people are not dealing with their differences very well. Family differences, international differences. Why is that? A lot of it is people are learning they're right. "I know I'm right, so I'm going to persuade you that you're wrong.", rather than, "Gee, I think I'm right, but tell me how you see that you're right". More ideas from others on that.

Why is it that they go so quickly – go to if we disagree, there ought to be an end to that disagreement. Who says? If there's a ballet dancer and an acrobat, you don't have to say, "Well, what do they disagree about?". They can both do their thing. If there's someone with one area, someone with another area, each of us – we don't have to agree. We don't have to find "the right" answer. There's probably is no right answer. So... not all the conflicts should be resolved, and they're not going to be resolved. They're going to be "dealt with".

Now, how do we deal with them in a way that I learn as much as I can from how you do it? How do I learn as much from how you deal, how you see these problems that I could learn from? That's... the sort of thing I'll be pushing... See, resolution implies you resolve something. Of course, you resolve something if there's going to be a contract and you bought the land, or you signed a deed or something like that, but most of relationships, you don't come to a written conclusion about what they are. Marriage is one, typically, you don't have to... How do you keep learning? Some advice on how you learn, how to keep learning. What are some of the... the hypotheses about these things?

How do we... and I find that the older I get, the more I need to learn about all these things. Get as much as I can. I stopped at this county well [and he] wanted me to understand what was wrong with the well...seven gallons emitted, and two gallons emitted, and four gallons emitted, and he wanted me to really understand well drilling. He was so keen to have me understand where the pump was, where the bottom of the well was, what was going on. The diameter of the pipe, and what was wrong with the pipe, and...I could have spent the day with him learning about well drilling...

Interviewer: Glad you decided not to.

Dr.Fisher: I decided I'll keep learning other things as well !

Interviewer: One of the things that we talked about earlier was the fact that we were doing this interview very much on our terms, and it might not have been focusing on things that you wanted to talk about if you had been

interviewing Professor Roger Fisher. So, if you were giving the interview, what sort of things would you like to talk about?

Dr.Fisher: I'd like to be asked; "How do you think? How do you tackle a problem? In particular, what tools do you use to think?" For example, I start everything with what is the problem? What is the real world problem? The problem is the gap between what is and something else. That's the problem. What problem is it? Then before going to what to do about it, go up and say diagnoses. What are some causes of that problem? People are not negotiating right. They think it's an adversary process rather than joint problem solving. So what are the causes?

Then from each cause, I would come over and say what is the approach, or what is the strategy to deal with the fact that people are talking to their constituents, not the other side. What do you do to deal with the fact that they're caught up in a bureaucracy? No one makes any decision. It's a collective – how do you overcome that? Then, when you get the strategy, then come down to four action ideas. Who does what tomorrow morning?

So we call it a circle chart. You start with the problem, diagnosis for what the causes are, strategy, and then come down to who does what? What are the action ideas for tomorrow? ... I find that thinking tool - one of several I use - is just fundamental.

Ought to be asked, how do you think? Not how is the field going? Not how's the process doing? How do you think? When I come back, what's the problem now, as I see it?

Then I make another chart on what are the elements that you're looking for? Communication, relationship, interests, possible options, standards, criteria, legitimacy. What do you do if you walk away? What commitments do you make - if you make commitments? Those seven questions about every negotiation are just central to what's going on. That's the way I think, and... I'm more interested in how I think than how the field of Conflict Resolution came along.

I don't like Conflict Resolution as a name. Resolution – conflicts are not resolved. They transform, they continue in different ways. The Middle East will never be solved. It's going to be Arabs and Jews there forever, and the notion of focusing on resolution ! I focus on what are the skills of dealing with such differences? How was the process you used? How do you turn people from adversaries to side by side problem solvers? How do you turn them from fighting to saying, "Let's work on this together.?" That's... the field I'm interested in. It's not how does the field of Conflict Resolution – what's its history? It's how do I help people work together and think? How do I change it from adversarial to problem solving? How do I change it so you shift to affiliation, appreciation? I appreciate what you're doing. I understand what you're doing. That's what we're looking for.

People on the international scene are dealing with constituents - their constituents. They talk to North Korea as they want the Americans to hear them talking to North Korea. So they're not interested in the thinking about thinking. They're interested in how do I placate...my constituency? Or how do I look belligerent and tough enough? How do I stand tall...? I want to say, "Hey, how do we work with North Korea? What is the best way to do it?". Not tell the President to tell them what to do. Have some second level person travel to North Korea, and meet his opposite number, and say, "We need your advice. How do we deal with this problem? What ideas do you have for how the United States and North Korea ought to move forward? We have some ideas, but I wanted to listen to you. I want to understand what you're saying".

That's what...they don't do... because that's not the game they're playing. They're playing adversarial activities. They're playing - we're enemies. We don't negotiate with people - with bad people. We only... threaten bad people. They have these models of how they do it, which is not the way to deal with conflict at all... I was asked, "Would you go out and talk with the people in Iran and see what they really want?". This hostage question. Find out their interests. What do they care about? Are they being treated fairly? Are the Americans humiliating them, or trying to? What's the problem with them? Each case, I want to understand how the other people see the problem. I want to turn with them, and work on that problem together with them.

International conflict is we have differences. I want to understand how you want to deal with differences. I want to work with you, together, so we can both deal with those sensibly. It's not unilateral. I'm telling you what you ought to be... what you ought to do. Abolish your nuclear weapons. Do this or that. No, it's we're in the business of living on this small planet together, so try to work it out. How do we understand each other? Am I listening carefully enough? Do you have any fresh ideas? That's a good one. Now give me your advice. How can we respond to that?

The best advice I have for anyone is to ask for their advice. Ask them and seek advice... When you're in "an advisory role" you're automatically on the same side. I'm trying to give you advice on how to deal with it. So, asking [for] advice is excellent advice.

End of interview