

# Reconciliation of COVID-19-Related Rifts in Families

By Rob Rennebohm, MD

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*“We all make mistakes; We all will be forgiven.”* Shankara Chetty, MD

*“The highest justice is conscience.”* Victor Hugo

*“Never look down on people you don’t understand.”* Grandmother of Bill Bradley, U.S. Senator, Rhodes Scholar, and NBA player

*“It is not primarily the fault of ordinary citizens; propaganda can be extremely powerful.”*  
Cuban rheumatologist

*“The path to reconciliation travels through empathy, forgiveness, authentic education, healthy dialogue, an honoring of the conscience, heightened awareness of the power of propaganda, and practice of the fundamental principles of science, medicine, ethics, and democracy.”* RMR

Among the many tragic outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the rifts it has created within families. Most commonly, these rifts have been due to differences of opinion regarding the prevailing COVID-19 narrative, particularly its mass vaccination campaign. A common story is one of a vaccinated member (or members) of a family strongly disapproving of a family member (or members) who chose to not receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Often, this has taken the form of vaccinated individuals shaming the unvaccinated for being “selfish” and “unwilling to do the right thing” to protect the vulnerable. Additionally, the unvaccinated have often been accused of failing to “follow the science” and of following “right wing conspiracy theories,” instead. Unvaccinated individuals have often been shunned, estranged, disowned, or otherwise “suspended in disapproval,” because of their decision to not become vaccinated against COVID-19.

It is unclear how many families have experienced rifts due to different decisions regarding COVID-19 vaccination. A sizable percentage probably has. Probably, it is vaccinated family members who have most commonly initiated such rifts, but this is unclear.

Why have these rifts been so common? How might such rifts be healed?

Very often (if not the vast majority of the time) both the vaccinated and the unvaccinated were well-meaning regarding their vaccination decisions. Sadly, the rifts could have been prevented, if accurate public education and healthy intra-family and public dialogue had occurred.

Many (if not the vast majority of) vaccinated individuals chose to become vaccinated not simply for their own sake but for the sake of contributing to the protection of others, particularly the most vulnerable. They felt they were altruistically and admirably fulfilling a social duty. They also made their decision based on their faith and trust in the leaders of the COVID-19 pandemic response team (e.g., Dr. Fauci and the CDC), who, they, understandably, assumed were providing the best possible scientific, clinical, and public health advice. They felt a responsibility to accept the guidance of the “best available evidence-based recommendations.” They also felt a considerable responsibility to support those leaders, who were in the very difficult position of guiding huge populations through a new and incompletely understood pandemic.

Many (if not the vast majority of) unvaccinated individuals chose to remain unvaccinated because of appropriate concerns regarding the safety, efficacy, necessity, and wisdom of the mass vaccination campaign.<sup>1-15</sup> Many, because of the lack of adequate safety testing, appropriately worried that the vaccines might do considerable harm, on an individual level, to themselves or to others.<sup>13-14</sup> Many were concerned that mass vaccination in the midst of an active pandemic might cause harm at a population level.<sup>1, 2, 7-12</sup> Many thought vaccination was not necessary for children and healthy adults, particularly when the vaccines had not been adequately tested for safety or efficacy.<sup>13-14</sup> Many were hesitant to unquestioningly trust the leaders of the COVID-19 pandemic task force and, particularly, the pharmaceutical companies (e.g., Pfizer, which has a criminal track record, and Moderna, which had never before produced a vaccine). Many concluded that, on balance, any benefits of COVID-19 vaccination were outweighed by the many risks. Most (if not the vast majority of) unvaccinated individuals were not simply being selfish. Many, in fact, were primarily concerned about what was best for Humanity.

Why did well-meaning people come to opposite conclusions? In a nutshell, it is because the COVID-19 situation is extremely complex (scientifically and socially); the leaders of the COVID-19 pandemic task force did not adequately or honestly educate the public (or themselves, in many cases); and the leaders did not promote healthy, respectful dialogue. Instead, the leaders provided a simplistic and inaccurate prevailing narrative that greatly misled those who assumed they could trust those leaders and their mass vaccination campaign, and there was little or no dialogue. As I and others have explained in numerous writings,<sup>1-15</sup> well-meaning, altruistic citizens who wanted to do the right thing were betrayed by the leaders of the pandemic response. Some of those leaders were also well-meaning and altruistic and were simply misled themselves, but others (some of the most powerful) were not so innocent. Some of the leaders simply did not have a sufficiently deep understanding of the complex immunology, virology, vaccinology, and developmental biology involved in the pandemic; others knowingly engaged in medical malpractice, if not malfeasance. Throughout the pandemic, key leaders and promoters of the prevailing COVID-19 narrative and its mass vaccination campaign have egregiously violated fundamental principles of science, medicine, ethics, and democracy.<sup>3, 4</sup>

It is not the fault of vaccinated individuals that they believed strongly in the need to comply with the COVID-19 mass vaccination campaign. They were victims of an extremely powerful

and intolerant mis-education campaign.<sup>3,4,16</sup> The unvaccinated should not be faulted, either, for their decision to remain unvaccinated. Again, the hesitations of the unvaccinated were scientifically warranted.<sup>1-15</sup> The mass vaccination campaign has proven to be a horrible disaster, both in the short and long terms, both at the individual level and the population level.<sup>1-2,7-15</sup> The mass vaccination campaign has prolonged the pandemic and made it more dangerous.<sup>1-15</sup> Cumulatively, more lives will be lost because of the mass vaccination campaign than would have been cumulatively lost had the COVID-19 vaccines never been used.<sup>14,15</sup> It was very difficult for those who became vaccinated to know how disastrous the mass vaccination campaign would prove to be. Neither the vaccinated, nor the unvaccinated are at fault. It is the leadership of the COVID-19 pandemic response who primarily bear the responsibility. They have made enormous mistakes---scientifically, clinically, ethically, socially, and legally.

The bottom line is that **there was no need for family rifts to have occurred. Proper public education and healthy dialogue could have prevented such rifts.** But proper public education was not provided and healthy dialogue did not occur. Instead, divisiveness and a simplistic, inaccurate understanding of the science were promoted.

But how do we heal the rifts that have occurred? The path to reconciliation travels through empathy, forgiveness (even of the leaders of the pandemic response), authentic education, healthy dialogue, an honoring of the conscience, heightened awareness of the power of propaganda,<sup>16</sup> and respectful practice of the fundamental principles of science, medicine, ethics, and democracy.<sup>3,4</sup>

We must kindly and empathetically forgive each other for allowing the rift to occur. Neither of us was primarily at fault. We must learn scientific and social truths about the pandemic---what did the leaders of the pandemic response get wrong and why? What is the most accurate scientific understanding of the pandemic and the vaccination campaign? Why was the prevailing COVID-19 narrative so mis-leading? Why was the mass vaccination campaign so damaging? We need at least a certain amount of education about these matters, not only for the sake of healing the rifts, but also to make it less likely that such pandemic-related mistakes will be repeated in the future. We must engage in respectful, healthy dialogue about these issues---publicly, within families, and among friends (including estranged friends).

Each person must honor their individual conscience. As Dr. Chetty so eloquently and concisely stated, "We all make mistakes; we all will be forgiven." But as Victor Hugo said, "The highest justice is conscience," which means that, despite being forgiven, individuals will not become healthy (emotionally, socially, or physically) until they honor and apologize to their own conscience and vow to learn from and not repeat their mistakes.

As Bill Bradley's grandmother reminds us, "Never look down on people you don't understand." And, as the Cuban rheumatologist kindly stated, we need to recognize how extraordinarily powerful propaganda (the misleading prevailing COVID-19 narrative, in this case) can be. Heightened awareness of the power of propaganda helps us to understand why current rifts have occurred and will make it less likely that similar propaganda will mislead us in the future.

Finally, we must honor and respectfully practice the fundamental principles of science, medicine, ethics, and democracy.<sup>3,4</sup>

It is my hope that the rifts experienced by many families during the COVID-19 pandemic will be healed. It is in that spirit that the above-described path to reconciliation is offered.

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#### **FOOTNOTES AND FURTHER READING:**

The first 13 articles listed below (plus 40 other articles on COVID-19) are posted in the “Notes on COVID-19” section of Dr. Rennebohm’s website: [www.notesfromthesocialclinic.org](http://www.notesfromthesocialclinic.org)

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Vanden Bossche’s Analysis of the COVID-19 Situation---in a Nutshell

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/in-a-nutshell-dr-vanden-bossches-analysis/>

<sup>2</sup> A Brief Summary of the COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/a-brief-summary-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

<sup>3</sup> Eight Fundamental Principles of Science and Medicine

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/eight-fundamental-principles-of-science-and-medicine/>

<sup>4</sup> THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS MISMANAGEMENT

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/the-root-cause-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-and-its-mismanagement/>

<sup>5</sup> An Armed Forces Analogy: The Immunologic Consequences of the COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Campaign

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/an-armed-forces-analogy/>

<sup>6</sup>The General’s Memos—Simplified

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/the-generals-memos-simplified/>

<sup>7</sup>Respecting the Immune Ecosystem---Slide-by-Slide Written Transcript.

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/respecting-the-immune-ecosystem-slide-by-slide-written-transcript/> (Also, you can find the actual power point presentation in the Table of Contents, “Notes on COVID-19” section of the “Notes From the Social Clinic” website.)

<sup>8</sup>An Open Letter to Physicians and Physician Organizations

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/an-open-letter-to-physicians-and-physician-organizations/>

<sup>9</sup>How Has the COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Campaign Made the Natural Selection and Rapid Propagation of a HIGHLY Virulent Variant Highly Likely?

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/2315-2/>

<sup>10</sup>In Anticipation of a Highly Virulent SARS-CoV-2 Variant: An ADDENDUM

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/in-anticipation-of-a-highly-virulent-sars-cov-2-variant-an-addendum/>

<sup>11</sup>Video-Discussion: Clinical Implications of Geert’s Predictions

<https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/video-discussion-clinical-implications-of-geerts-predictions/>

<sup>12</sup>Do the COVID-19 Vaccines protect Against Severe Disease and Death? (Soon to be posted on the **Notes From the Social Clinic** website.)

<sup>13</sup>An Open Letter to Parents and Pediatricians Regarding COVID Vaccination---Part I (Posted in March 2022, with 1078 references). <https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/an-open-letter-to-parents-and-pediatricians-2/>

<sup>14</sup>Mead MN, Seneff S, Wolfinger R, Rose J, Denhaerynck K, Kirsch S, McCullough PA. COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines: Lessons Learned from the Registrational Trials and Global Vaccination Campaign. *Cureus*. 2024 Jan 24;16(1):e52876. doi: 10.7759/cureus.52876. PMID: 38274635; PMCID: PMC10810638. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38274635/> (With 293 references.)

<sup>15</sup>Rancourt D, Baudin M, Mercier J. COVID-19 Vaccine-associated Mortality in the Southern Hemisphere: <https://www.globalresearch.ca/covid-19-vaccine-associated-mortality-in-the-southern-hemisphere/5832840>

<sup>16</sup>The following link is to a video compilation of intolerant behavior directed against the unvaccinated by key promoters and key followers of the prevailing COVID-19 narrative. It is a sad and instructive example of “group think” and reveals how well-meaning and otherwise kind

individuals can be swept up by a prevailing narrative (and by fear) and led to behave in astonishingly intolerant, ill-informed, and unkind ways.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zl3yU5Z2adI>

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