Areas Interest/Research:

- **“Collapse” paradox**: The very beliefs/practices which helped people to survive, no longer do, and actually facilitate decline/demise. Problems of perceived “indignities” may be a factor in this sense:
  1. Tension between “dignity” of respecting tradition, and forward looking “dignity” of survival
  2. Tension between rationality and faith-based beliefs:
     - Is dignity of religion compatible with dignity of rationality?
     - How does tolerance for religion intersect with dignity of rationality?
- Free Speech issues
- Art/Music/Nature as providing the space for, and substance for, Conflict Transformation
- Evolutionary Biology as lens for understanding everything else

What hope to get out of this gathering?

- Clarify competing conceptions of dignity
- Consider dignity of individual versus dignity of the group

What hope to contribute?

- Facilitation skills
- Spontaneous ideas as generated during the conference/workshop

What does dignity mean to you and your work?

I. In Mediation:

- *Dignity of mediation* should be patently affirmed, as a process of equal value offered in court, as alternative process of conflict resolution involving autonomy, recognition and empowerment of individuals. Currently this process is undermined and undervalued: i.e., provided with fewer resources, inadequate time and space, regarded as inferior to, and subordinate to traditional adversarial and authoritarian legal processes
- *Possibility of dignity* as value is offered for consideration/lens for framing each party’s experience

II. In Academia:

- Concept of dignity is explored/debated
- Tension between dignity that is accorded to process of education, and dignity accorded to students?

III. In both Mediation and Academia:

- Tension: not all humans equally warrant being granted dignity?
  1. Does dignity require reciprocity?
  2. Criteria for “earning” dignity?
  3. Criteria for “forfeiting” right to be granted dignity?

Exhibit A: Legal decisions upholding “sincere religious belief” as determinative in public policy, regardless of scientific grounding, and with inconsistent application

- In the context of access to contraception, how is dignity relevant? If someone’s “sincere religious belief” not only prohibits one from using contraception, but also mandates obstructing others from access to contraception, in a world of over 7 billion people, with scientific consensus of 2 billion as optimal sustainable human population, wherein lies dignity?