

## Avoiding Humiliation: From Intercultural Communication to Global Interhuman Communication

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### Abstract

*Intercultural communication has the potential to fertilize transformative learning due to its power to unsettle us. This article suggests that we may go beyond being unsettled ourselves and let the very field of intercultural communication be unsettled. This article puts forward the proposal to inscribe intercultural communication into global interhuman communication. We suggest founding a new field, the field of "Global Interhuman Communication."*

*Intercultural communication is a field that has a particular responsibility to discuss how this process can be guided fruitfully. This article proposes that a new paradigm of interhuman communication could embrace communication, globally and locally, as a kind of flexible navigation done by individuals with mixed identities following fluid negotiable guidelines, instead of placing individuals into fixed group identities with rigid rules.*

*Currently, cycles of humiliation strain the social fabric of communities around the world, and culture is deeply involved. Culture can be a result of humiliation, and culture can humiliate. More so, the very fact that millions of people on our globe live in abject squalor, while a minority indulges in luxury, humiliates everybody's humanity. The world's ecological and social problems belong to the entire planet—they are not confined to one or several cultural realms and therefore cannot be solved with traditional cultural scripts. This is a historically new situation. No history lesson can be of help, and traditional cultural solutions are not necessarily suitable.*

*Humankind needs to build a new inclusive and diverse global culture that selectively employs all the useful and functional aspects of our commonalities and our differences. This is because both our commonalities and our differences entail benign and malign aspects.*

*In this article, it is recommended to use human rights as a sifting tool to decide which commonalities and differences are to be regarded as benign—deserving to be included into a future global culture—and which are not. It is not possible to be neutral. Intercultural communicators cannot avoid asking questions such as: Who receives our support, power elites who manipulate people to be loyal underlings in supposedly "pure" cultures? Or do we support the*

*new vision of equal dignity for every single human being on planet earth?*

*Experts in intercultural communication, in their capacity as professional bridge builders, are particularly well placed to initiate and facilitate the building of a new global culture that is inclusive and diverse and serves the larger common good.*

*Key words: Dignity, humiliation, globalization, human rights*

## Introduction

This article discusses the role of culture and identity in a world of diverse cultures which are all under the influence of the two transformative forces of our time: globalization and the human rights movement. It is argued that, in order to avoid potentially destructive effects, we have to strongly promote *global interhuman communication* as an overarching paradigm for *international relations* and *intercultural communication*. We suggest founding a new field, the field of “Global Interhuman Communication.”

This article wishes to open up Global Interhuman Communication as a new field of endeavor for intercultural communicators, a global field, and it will therefore not focus so much on the practices of intercultural communication. The point of departure for this paper is that intercultural communicators are bridge-builders and that their expertise is not only essential within their very field, but is needed also for the larger task of building a new global cultural framework that can inform new and more beneficial cultural practices and institutions globally, but also locally.

Since 1996, the author of this paper is engaged in developing a *Theory of Humiliation (TH)* (Lindner, 2006), where the notions of pride, honor, dignity, humiliation, and humility are inscribed into current historic and cultural normative transitions. The author suggests that at the present historic juncture two forces bring humiliation to the fore in unprecedented intensity, not least to the field of intercultural communication: “globalization” (or the *coming-together of humankind*) is the first force and the *emerging human rights movement* is the second. The first sentence in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” a stipulation that directly contradicts traditional hierarchical social structures.

The author calls for new ways of communicating with each other globally in order to solve global problems (as well as local problems, which are increasingly intertwined with global problems). Solving problems requires cooperation, which in turn is aided by mutual respect for equality in dignity and hampered by dynamics of humiliation. All cultures need to contribute with their experiences and lessons learned, and intercultural communicators have a pivotal role to play. And not least, Japanese culture can teach the world a lot.

Intercultural communication has its roots, among others, in the very pragmatic need of companies to function internationally. Globalization has been strongly driven by the corporate sector growing beyond national borders. Many intercultural communication experts work as consultants for companies and are therefore bound by their

employer's *moral boundaries* (Coleman, 2000; Opotow, 1995). If the employer allows for child labor, for example, the intercultural communication expert working with this company is expected not to ask questions. The employee has several options, options that are inscribed between two extreme poles. One pole would indicate that she agrees that it is not the employee's role to think about her employer's moral preferences. The opposite pole would indicate that she quits her job in protest. Many alternative reactions could be placed in between these poles, for example, she could try to convince the management to change their ways. A professor of intercultural communication has already much more space to move than a consultant, since she earns her livelihood from an institution that has academic freedom enshrined in its value frame.

When we think back to Nazi-Germany, we believe that German neighbors ought to have stood up and not stood by when their Jewish neighbors were transported away (Staub, 1989). We deem it to be deeply immoral to treat some lives as being worth less. So far, however, humankind repeats Germany's failings and is not standing up adequately on the global scale. Six million people died in the Holocaust. Today, about twelve million children die each year before they are five years old of preventable diseases and poverty. At present, the global village is a ramshackle village (Jackson, 1990) filled with humiliation—millions of poor watch a few rich wallow in wealth, all suffer from environmental degradation that could have been avoided, and local cycles of humiliation endanger everybody. In former times, poverty was fate and nobody cared. In a moral framework of human rights, in contrast, all human beings are deemed as deserving of circumstances that enable them to build dignified lives. Gaps between rich and poor that were regarded as normal before are now felt to be obscene and humiliating for everybody's humanity.

In the spirit of "standing up," wider moral boundaries are called for. This article wishes to stimulate reflection as to the width of the moral boundaries and moral responsibilities of a student, professor, or consultant of intercultural communication.

Some intercultural communicators might believe that they can escape such difficult questions; however, nobody can avoid making moral statements. The various definitions of the very term "culture" disguise value statements—with "culture" being nothing less than the definitional underpinning of the field of intercultural communication. Usually elites, particularly in hierarchically organized societies, for example, define as "our culture" the "benevolent care of patrons over grateful underlings," while the underlings might be violently opposed to such a definition of "our culture." A Somali woman, living in Denmark and a staunch critic of female genital cutting, shouted: "Please do not respect Somali culture! It humiliates its women!" (at the International Congress of Somali Studies, August 6–9, 1998, in Turku, Finland).

Every act of intercultural communication is permeated by value choices, and this article wishes to draw the reader's attention to this fact. Since we cannot escape this predicament, it might be advisable to think it through and gauge our options. What is at stake are ultimate questions such as: What makes a life worth living? How should we view and treat the "other"? On what principles should society be organized? What should we live for? What should we fight for? What is it that ultimately matters? (Smith, 2005, p. 4).

Not only our moral responsibility is at stake here, but also the validity of knowledge itself and its usefulness for practice. Renowned philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas warns that monetary and bureaucratic systems currently invade the communicative potentials we hope should help us understand our lifeworld and that this invasion distorts them without our being aware. He speaks of the *colonization of the lifeworld* (Habermas, 1987). Habermas breaks down the concept of “knowledge constituting interests” into the technical, practical, and emancipatorial interests of knowledge. Kurt Lewin (1890–1947), often called the father of modern social psychology, introduced to social psychology the “Lewinian way of thinking” by stipulating, among others, that theory has to be useful for social practice (Deutsch, 1999).

This article suggests that we take the emancipatorial interests of knowledge, as highlighted by Habermas, seriously and employ them for the Lewinian call to make theory useful to practice. Perhaps it is our moral responsibility to engage in deeper emancipatorial inquiry, and this not only in theory, but also in practice? If we do that, it means unleashing creativity for building a new global culture.

This article takes those ultimate questions as an overarching guiding vision and is thus part of present peace movements, such as the fields of *Peace Education* and *Peace Linguistics*, or the *Culture of Peace* movement, a global movement that is developing within the framework of the *International Decade* (2001–2010; [http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/uk/uk\\_sum\\_cp.htm](http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/uk/uk_sum_cp.htm)). The Charter of the United Nations, 1945, professes: “We the people of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

This paper calls upon intercultural communicators to invest some of their time and their creativity into building a larger and more beneficial frame for the world than has hitherto been realized. A more beneficial frame would not only promote social and ecological sustainability for humankind and strengthen the validity of our scientific endeavor, but also improve the very context within which intercultural communicators work. Envisaging such a task first requires making a pause, taking a step back, and reorienting our priorities. Facilitating this reorientation is the aim of this article.

This article is organized in four parts that all address the question as to how currently existing cultural knowledge systems can be made fruitful for constructing a larger global cultural frame that protects cultural diversity in the service of the common good of humanity. In the first section, the importance of protecting cultural diversity is highlighted. The second part addresses the potential dangers that may emanate from accepting cultural idiosyncrasies too blindly. The third section discusses how we can construct a new inclusive and diverse global culture that serves the larger common good. The fourth part ponders the principles, skills, and guidelines we need for such a task.

### **Focusing on Cultural Diversity Is Crucial**

Does wishing to build a new global culture equal forcing the world into cultural uniformity and sameness? No. The vision of a global culture put forward in this arti-

cle promotes precisely the insight that studying and celebrating cultural differences is crucial and that this endeavor deserves much more attention from the world and academia than has been given to it so far. However, what is added here is that for difference and diversity to be benign a certain ranking must be introduced: common interest must be placed over difference.

Maintaining biodiversity is crucial for the survival of humankind. Likewise, the cultural diversity that *Homo sapiens* has created on planet Earth is vital. Consider, for example, *ubuntu*, the traditional African philosophy for living together and solving conflict in an atmosphere of shared humility (Battle, 1997). Also Japanese concepts for connection and togetherness *uchi* (inside), an in-group, have the potential of serving as cultural blueprints for a future global culture of humankind. This is because, globalization signifies, among other meanings, the ingathering of the human tribe—this is the correct anthropological term—into one single in-group. It means that humankind is emerging from a past where in-groups faced out-groups. Japanese *uchi* cultural scripts could be very helpful in this process (while, clearly, traditional cultural paradigms that teach how to keep out-groups out would be counterproductive in this context).

Haru Yamada (1997), in her book *Different Games, Different Rules: Why Americans and Japanese Misunderstand Each Other*, offers a number of useful paradigms for a sustainable *uchi* of the future global village:

- *wa* (harmonious integration of the group)
- *nemawashi* (collective decisionmaking)
- *uchiawase* (sounding out)
- *sasshi* (anticipatory guesswork)
- *haragei* (silent communication)
- *amae* (interdependence)
- *ninjo* (human emotion or compassion)
- *seishin* (selfless spiritual strength)

Also the global corporate sector will benefit from learning Japanese cultural concepts. Ryuzaburo Kaku, now honorary chairman of Canon, the Japanese technology company, promotes conviviality or *kyosei*: “All people, regardless of race, religion or culture, harmoniously living and working together into the future” (quoted from the web site of the company Canon, <http://www.canon.com/about/philosophy/>).

### **Focusing on Cultural Differences Can Also Be Malign**

The concept of culture is fruitful when used descriptively, and more research is urgently needed. But when reified and applied as a prescription, problems arise. The belief that one ought to “have a culture,” or “belong to a culture,” introduces pain that otherwise would be absent, most poignantly the pain of not belonging. For instance, in Japan, children with one Japanese and one non-Japanese parent often are called *haafu* (“half”). “Half” suggests that such a human being is not a full human being, but only half a human being, not belonging fully to each of his or her parental cultures. Why not “double”? (Nagata, 1983).

In the past, prior to the emergence of the concept and reality of *One World*, in-group bias represented an arrangement that reassured people. However, in a globalizing world, it increasingly turns into an unhelpful one. When the world is becoming one single global village and no longer contains *many villages* pitted against each other in fear of attack (*International Relations Theory* calls this the *Security Dilemma*), the world can no longer be conceptualized by ways of our forefathers. The myth that “a culture” can be “ours” and not “yours” and that this drawing of borders can bring us safety, turns into a hazardous myth. And the belief that in-group members are more trustworthy than outsiders might turn out to be a fallacy. My son, in my own home, might get into bad company through the Internet and develop into a monster, while the foreigner walking through my neighborhood might be entirely harmless.

The same critical analysis may be directed at our use of status. Apart from differentiating people and practices horizontally into being *in* versus *out*, we often also rank vertically into *higher* versus *lower* status, both within cultural realms and vis-à-vis others. Not always does the “foreign” out-group, for example, signify *less* status, sometimes it means *more*. In Japan, for instance, French culture is regarded very highly. Shops, particularly, fancy French names. And almost nowhere in the world are brand names so well accepted as in Japan. In short, some aspects of Western culture, particularly French culture, are regarded as *higher*. Undoubtedly, there is a certain amount of satisfaction that can be drawn from feeling “higher,” for example by wearing clothes of “higher” status. However, is it worth replacing traditional indigenous design, in Japan as much as in the rest of the world, with Western unsightliness? And is it worth damaging one’s health? How far away is wearing Parisian high-heeled shoes all day from the outdated Chinese practice of binding feet?

Intercultural communicators are bridge-builders. Nobody is better placed to identify the malignant effects of biases, explain them to the world, and think up better ways. This article engages in this very global explanation and communication effort, thus opening up a new field of activity for intercultural communicators.

### **Constructing a New Inclusive and Diverse Global Culture**

At the 2005 Aoyama Symposium on International Communication, entitled “Exploring the Current Status and Future Direction of International Communication as a Field of Study” (Aoyama Gakuen University, Tokyo, March 5, 2005), Richard Evanoff told the following story. Richard, himself from a Western background, is married to a Japanese wife. When their first child was born, his wife wanted to have the child sleep between them, explaining that Japanese culture indicates more than kinship, namely “skinship.” The concept of skinship follows the kanji pictogram of a river (three parallel lines), with the wife and husband on the sides and the child in the middle. He, Richard, in contrast, wanted the children to sleep alone in their own room. The couple found the following way out of their seemingly irreconcilable positions: their children do not sleep between them, but alongside his wife. In other words, between themselves, together, Richard and his wife developed new norms and

new processes.

In his article “A Constructivist Approach to Intercultural Ethics” (Evanoff, 1998), the author insightfully presents a map that can be used to build a new global culture. As he explains, there are two extreme poles between which we have to navigate, the extreme *realist* pole on one side, and the extreme *idealist* pole on the other. Traditional empiricism, following John Locke, has tended to see the human mind as a blank slate on which nature inscribes itself. This is the fundament for the realist approach to ethics that believes that moral truths and values can be directly discerned in nature. In contrast, the idealist approach to ethics regards moral truths and values as culturally determined. There is little or no common ground between different cultural realms with their diverse histories of conceiving ethics that could lend itself to meaningful dialogue.

Evanoff proposes a third, interactive approach. Meaning, value, aesthetic beauty, and knowledge do neither belong exclusively to the realm of objective reality as standing outside of all human perceptions and valuations, nor are they just the property of subjective mental processes. There is an interplay: actors and objective reality interact, not directly, but mediated through humanly constructed meanings.

What do we need to know if we wish to design a new inclusive global culture following Evanoff’s interplay strategy? How do we start? To begin with, we need *motivation*—or *anticipation* (Kelly, 1955). Then we need clear *goals*. We also need the *optimal approach* as to how to go about it. And finally, we are well advised to become *aware* of possible *pitfalls*.

### **How to Proceed: Task Orientation, Not Ego Orientation**

People with *performance* goals wish to look smart and avoid mistakes; in other words, they have an *ego* orientation and try to satisfy high expectations of others by performing well (Dweck, Mangels, & Good, 2004). Those with *learning-mastery* goals, on the other hand, desire to learn new things, even if they might get confused, make mistakes, and not look smart; in other words, they have an intrinsic motive towards achieving mastery in the task.

Research shows that students with mastery goals are basically more successful. They “are more likely to search for and to find successful transfer strategies than are those with concerns about validating their ability” (Dweck, Mangels, & Good, 2004, p. 43). In extension, the task of building a new culture will benefit from being approached with a *task*, and *not* with an *ego*, orientation.

The inappropriateness of the ego orientation becomes clear when we look at some examples. In 2005, a train accident occurred in Japan, where an ego orientation led to disaster. One hundred and seven people were killed and 562 injured when a train crashed into a building, mainly due to the train driver’s desire to cover up for earlier blunders. In 2004, a building at the Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris caved in. On June 29 1995, the Sampoong Department Store in the Seocho-gu district of Seoul, South Korea collapsed in the largest peacetime disaster in South Korean history, claiming 501 lives and injuring 937 more. In all cases, security considerations had been systematically overruled for the sake of appearances. Prioritizing polished ego façades over functional appropriateness can have disastrous effects.

### How to Proceed: Beware of Tacit Knowledge

What next? We need to become aware of the fact that our *tacit knowledge* may contain traps and pitfalls that hamper our project. Tacit knowledge is knowledge that escapes our conscious attention, even though it is at the core of the activity of designing—be it designing a new house or a new global culture.

Many hold to be true—without ever becoming aware of this fact—that human beings need a circumscribed geographical place and a culture to belong to. Or, others hold to be true that “man is aggressive by nature” and will never reform. Yet others think that humans cannot live without an image of an enemy against which to consolidate their identity. All these beliefs are misleading, and even dangerous. Research shows that humans are neither aggressive by nature, nor is their health dependent on enemy imagery. This is just to name a few traps of our general tacit knowledge that underlies our views on life and the world.

A number of thinkers are relevant in this context, both from the naturalistic-positivistic-pragmatic trend in modern thought and the phenomenological-existentialistic orientation (Skjervheim, 1976, p. 186). As for the latter orientation, Pierre Bourdieu developed a *Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1977). Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, in her analysis of the motives of the Japanese *tokkotai* pilots, draws on Bourdieu’s notion of *naturalization* (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002). Bourdieu writes on the naturalization of the arbitrariness of an established order and how an entire system of schemes of perception, appreciation, and action constitutes what Bourdieu terms the *habitus*. It is this habitus, explains Bourdieu, that lends order to customary social behavior by functioning as “the generative basis of structured, objectively unified practices” (Bourdieu, 1979, p. vii; see also Bourdieu, 1977, Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977), the author exposes the naturalization of the “criminal character”; and in his *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault analyses the naturalization of the dividing line between the “homosexual” and the “heterosexual” (Foucault, 1979).

As to the other trend in modern thought, the pragmatic trend, John Dewey (1859–1952) developed a philosophy of pragmatism and an approach of *knowledge in action* for interpreting *design as knowledge-based activity*. Apart from Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Carl Rogers, and David Kolb are other important theorists. Michael Polanyi describes *personal knowledge* as something not entirely subjective and yet not fully objective (Polanyi, 1962). He posits that we, without being aware of, or able to express it, use the knowledge that is tacitly embedded in our tradition and culture as an unarticulated background against which we distinguish the particulars to which we attend. Donald A. Schön (1930–1997) was another influential thinker addressing the issue of tacit knowledge in his work on the theory and practice of reflective professional learning (Schön, 1983). Clearly, the list of contributors to the fields of inquiry relevant to the pitfalls of tacit knowledge is much longer than here presented.

### Where to Go: From Honor to Equal Dignity for All

In Japan, the feudal Shogunate of rigid hierarchical ranking gave way in 1868, and since then a slowly meandering transition towards more equal dignity—as stipulated in the Human Rights Convention—has been taking place, which permeates all



walks of Japanese life. Until some years ago, for example, there was no word for equality-oriented love between man and woman; words denoted a relationship of unequal partners where she would admire him and he would find her sweet. But by combining two kanji pictograms, a new written word has been created recently that denotes precisely such an equality-related relationship. Furthermore, there are two words for husband in Japanese, *shujin* (which means master) and the more neutral *otto*. Feminists certainly do not talk about their husbands as *shujin*.

Not only Japan is part of this transition, the entire world is touched by the transition towards a culture of equal dignity, be it by opposing it or by welcoming it. In the past, all around the world, many societies exhibited the fixed hierarchy of worthiness that also characterized the Japanese Shogunate.

Human rights offer a totally new way of organizing human communities. No longer is people's worthiness ranked, with higher beings presiding over lesser beings, human rights un-rank the old system. Since ranking and un-ranking cannot be done at the same time, every society around the world, every community, and every individual, intercultural communicators included, are forced to take a stance. Whoever engages in building a new global culture must decide which template to follow.

### **What to Avoid: Malign Sameness**

As mentioned earlier, globalization could be taken as another word for the in-gathering of the human tribe into one single in-group, leaving behind a past where in-groups faced out-groups. A related term is *transculturation*, describing the phenomenon of merging and converging cultures. Where transculturation impacts ethnicity and ethnic issues, the term *ethnoconvergence* is sometimes used with related terms such as *assimilation*, *homogenization*, *acculturation*. The author of this paper argues for "selective converging"—for building a new global culture that avoids malign converging and emphasizes benign converging.

Since building is what architects do, let us listen to what architects have to say. Koichi Nagashima, renowned Japanese architect, discusses the malign effects of blindly buying into global universalism and sameness (Nagashima, 1999). Nagashima argues that we have to develop a *glocal community*. He estimates that what we now call nation state will become obsolete, due to globalization. He reckons that even though a sad Western bias was ubiquitous in the non-West regions of the world throughout most of the 20th century, the situation is about to begin changing now.

### **What to Avoid: Malign Diversity**

If we agree with Koichi Nagashima that traditional Japanese architecture deserves to be revived, protected, and treated with new respect, do we wish to revive all old traditions? What about Japanese feudalism? Or Chinese foot binding? Or honor killings? Or female genital cutting? Or South African witchcraft murder? Do we wish to revive and protect those practices as well?

Lily Zakiyah Munir, Research Fellow at the Islam and Human Rights Program with Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, reports on a recent conference that considered the role of women theologians, both Muslim and Christian. Participants worried that the status of Muslim women in many parts of the world lags behind that of

other women. Participants highlighted verses from the Qur'an that reject discrimination and marginalization in the name of religion. Munir writes, "It is time that women's liberation theology be promoted in Islam" (Munir, 2006).

In an article on interreligious and interethnic relations, Reimon Bachika writes, "The major pitfalls on the road to a world culture seen in the present context are attempts at imposing a set of values and declaring that all values are of equal significance. As for putting all values on a par, this would lead to excessive particularism and arbitrariness. This would make 'black holes' of cultures from which no sense of commonality can grow" (Bachika, 2006, p. 18).

In other words, both sameness and diversity entail potentially malign and benign elements. The solution for humankind is not that all become the same or that all cling to difference. The important cleavage is not between sameness and difference but between benign and malign elements in sameness and difference. Only the benign aspects are suitable for a new global culture.

## Outlook

The questions discussed in this paper point in the following direction: Do we wish to treat cultures as fixed "containers" with "pure" contents? Do we want to maintain those cultural definitions and practices that violate human rights? What do we do with all the humiliating aspects of culture? Can the field of intercultural communication be a morally neutral field? If not, which ethical norms can guide intercultural communication? If we accept human rights as a guiding moral frame, how do we integrate them into our concept and practice of intercultural communication? And do we have a responsibility to look beyond the field of intercultural communication and invest its expertise into a larger global project of culture building? If yes, how can a *decent global village* be built (following the call for a decent society put forward by Avishai Margalit, 1996)?

Four guiding principles are put forward in this outlook. First, it is suggested that it would be beneficial to promote respect for the individual (rather than for the group). Second, it is proposed that it is worth making a case for contamination and fluidity (rather than purity and rigidity). Third, let us consider giving common interest priority over difference, and define this common interest by way of human rights. And finally, fourth, it would be beneficial to "harvest" useful and beneficial cultural practices from all cultures to help us build a globally inclusive culture for a decent sustainable future for our world.

### Guiding Principle 1: Respect the Individual

Where do cultural practices come from? As discussed earlier, ethnocentrism and disrespect for cultural diversity must be overcome. But how can we judge a situation in which tyrants say to their victims: "*Our* culture is to punish disobedient underlings and the world better accept this punishment because our underlings are part of *our* culture! *Our* culture is hierarchical and our underlings belong at the bottom." Some underlings may agree with their masters and enjoy their patronage. Others will

protest vehemently and turn to the international community, with intercultural communicators standing in the first line, and ask for respect and protection of *their* culture under the banner of human rights. Their masters will also turn to the international community, calling for respect for *their* culture, meaning their desire to force their underlings to accept oppression.

In conflicts between members of different cultures, how should intercultural communication be inscribed? Where should recognition and respect be placed—with the other culture or the other person? In this paper it is suggested that those who adhere to human rights values must recognize, acknowledge, and respect the other person, not his or her membership in another culture. Every individual has his or her own personal dignity. The other culture may be a cause or a product of humiliation. Respecting culture difference for its own sake may compound past humiliations by adding further humiliation.

### **Guiding Principle 2: Allow for Contamination**

The Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, Seattle, assembled recommendations for the United States entitled *Diversity Within Unity: Essential Principles for Teaching and Learning in a Multicultural Society*. They write, “*E pluribus unum*—diversity within unity—is the delicate goal toward which our nation and its schools should strive” (Banks et al., 2001, p. 13).

Kwame Anthony Appiah, a philosopher at Princeton University, makes a “case for contamination” (Appiah, 2006). He says “no” to *purity*, *tribalism*, and *cultural protectionism*, and “yes” to a new cosmopolitanism.

Emmanuel Lévinas (1906–1995) highlights the *Other*, whose face forces us to be humane (Lévinas, 1985). His term of *métissage*, or *intermingling*, means that both “I” and the “other” are changed by our contact. Also Michel Serres, famous French philosopher, advocates *mixing* and *blending* (Serres, 1997).

### **Guiding Principle 3: Build a Sunflower Identity**

Identity may benefit from being built according to the principle of subsidiarity, which means that it is ranked so that higher-orders override lower-orders. The subsidiarity principle is prominent in the design of the European Union and states that matters ought to be handled by the smallest or lowest competent authority, thus disseminating leadership onto different levels—unlike in traditional hierarchies, where decisions concerning all levels are concentrated at the top. In the same way, the inner structure of the identity of every individual can be brought to scale to the challenges of our world at the appropriate levels. The image of a sunflower offers an illustration: the core represents everybody’s essence as a human being, and three layers of petals are the various “intermingled” fond connections to a) people, b) benign practices around the world, and 3) places. Also Marshall Singer (1998) uses the sunflower as an image for signifying that each person, rather than belonging to one single culture, participates in multiple cultures. Compared with Singer, in Lindner’s concept ranking is added, insofar as the core is ranked over the petals.

The human brain mirrors this ranking in its regulatory feedback loops, where subordinate loops are embedded within superordinate loops. Superordinate loops

tend to be linked to longer-term, abstract goals, whereas subordinate loops are associated with proximal mechanisms. Dysregulation occurs, when lower-order mechanisms supersede higher-order mechanisms (Bonanno, 2001).

Mindful ranking is also at the core of the peace work done by Mahatma Gandhi or Nelson Mandela. It is what preserves humanity particularly in cases where this seems difficult to defend.

#### **Guiding Principle 4: Deconstruct Existing Cultures and Build a New Diverse Global Culture**

Humankind needs to build a new inclusive and diverse global culture that selectively employs all the useful and functional aspects of our commonalities and our differences. Both, our commonalities and our differences entail benign and malign aspects.

Interestingly, at present, millions of people are already engaging in this task, even if they are not consciously aware of it. Based on surveys and in-depth interviews, Paul Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson identify three main cultural movements that characterize our time (Ray & Anderson, 2000):

1. *Moderns* (the cultural movement that started about 500 years ago)
2. *Traditionals* (the first countermovement against Modernism)
3. *Cultural Creatives* (the other, more recent countermovement against Modernism, currently flowing together from:
  - a. the *Consciousness Movement* (inwardly oriented)
  - b. the *Social Movement* (outwardly oriented) that both started out around 1960)

Ray and Anderson point out that at present, Cultural Creatives are not aware of the fact that they are part of a growing movement. They suggest that Cultural Creatives would benefit from recognizing that there are many like-minded people “out there,” open for cooperation and mutual encouragement. Ray and Anderson indicate that old-fashioned Moderns, or “realists,” will not necessarily prevail, but succumb to the new trend.

#### **The Skills We Need**

Adair Nagata usually ends her Intercultural Communication Theory course at Rikkyo University in Tokyo, Japan, with pointing out that peace begins within. She encourages her students to “cultivate your capacity to be an Everyday Peacemaker.”

Which skills do we need if we want to follow Nagata’s call? Which competencies and abilities are required to build a new culture that heeds the call for peace, both in our direct social environment and globally?

Nagata’s concept of self-reflexivity stands at the beginning (Nagata, 2005). We need to take a step back and look at ourselves and the world from a distance in order to gain the calm poise and mature oversight that peace making requires. Nagata exquisitely describes the concept of self-reflexivity and how her concept of bodymindfulness can help to achieve it. Self-reflexivity requires taking a step back, looking at oneself and the world from a distance

Furthermore, as laid out earlier, we need to nurture a local and global culture of

learning and task orientation. Ego orientation instigates the covering up of mistakes. Merely safeguarding our ego facades may lead to colossal fatalities and block reasonable conflict management.

### ***Tolerate Uncertainty***

In the chapter “Emotion and Intercultural Communication,” Matsumoto, Yoo, and LeRoux (2005) develop four main ingredients to personal growth as key to successful handling of conflict, namely Emotion Regulation (ER), Critical Thinking (CT), Openness (OP), and Flexibility (FL). The authors call these psychological processes the *psychological engine* of adaptation and adjustment. The authors identify emotion regulation as the key ingredient and gatekeeper of the growth process. “If we cannot put our inevitable negative emotions in check, it is impossible to engage in what is clearly higher order thinking about cultural differences” (p. 9).

As Jacqueline Wasilewski (2001) most insightfully explains, the ability to constructively channel and manage negative emotion is the “gatekeeper” of communicative effectiveness, particularly in an increasingly interconnected world that requires superior communication skills for tackling the negative emotions that are bound to be elicited in intercultural encounters. We must learn to tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity confidently. When we do not understand our counterpart, jumping to conclusions out of a need to “be sure” will produce failure. We have to learn to stay calm and use frustration creatively, with imagination and inspiration. What we need in this process is *curiosity, courage, and patience* (Satoshi Nakagawa, personal communication from Jacqueline Wasilewski, June 25, 2005).

### ***Stand Up and Not by: Shutaisei***

The book *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (Dower, 1999) can teach the world a number of important lessons from Japan’s past experiences. Dower speaks about Natsume Soseki, one of the premier philosophers and novelists of modern Japan (1867–1916), who called for a spirit of “individualism” vis-à-vis the state. The novelist and essayist Sakaguchi Ango (1906–1955) affirmed that genuine *shutaisei*, true “subjectivity” or “autonomy,” at the individual level, is required for a society to resist the indoctrinating power of the state. For Sakaguchi, each individual needs to create his or her own “samurai ethic,” his or her own “emperor system” (Dower, 1999, p. 157).

Soseki’s call for *shutaisei* links up with Ervin Staub’s call to stand up and not by in the face of injustice and atrocities (Staub, 1989). Staub argues that the significant element in the atrocities perpetrated by Hitler’s Germany was that *bystanders* stood idly by instead of standing up and getting involved.

We, the bystanders of this world, the so-called international community, are called upon to bring peace to the world. The international community needs to stand up, using an approach of genuine *shutaisei*, and help build sound global institutions that pacify the globe. Intercultural communicators, in their role as bridge-builders, carry a preeminent responsibility.

### ***Emphasize Benign Commonalities and Differences***

When we emphasize our core commonalities, for example that we all are human beings, rather than our differences, this does not mean that we deem differences to be irrelevant. Differences are extremely relevant, but secondary. This paper argues that we need to give more attention to both, to commonalities and to differences, however, by ranking them and by selecting only the beneficial elements. Sameness and diversity can both be put to benign or malign use.

For example, today, we have the same architecture everywhere; cities worldwide are indistinguishable in their ugliness and dysfunctionality. This is malign sameness, malign global uniformity. On the other side we have postulates of unbridgeable differences between, for example, Islamic and Western culture. This could be called malign insistence on difference. As discussed earlier, it pays to analyze power relations; sameness as well as difference, when defined by an elite for “their culture” are often rather malign, and sameness and difference that serve individual quality of life are often rather benign.

### ***Connect***

Muneo Yoshikawa (1980, 1987) has developed a “double-swing” model that conceptualizes how individuals, cultures, and intercultural concepts can meet in constructive ways. The model is graphically presented as the infinity symbol, or Möbius Strip,  $\infty$ . Yoshikawa draws upon two sources, firstly on Buber’s concept of dialogue, secondly on the Buddhist logic of “soku.” Buber’s idea of “dialogical unity” in *I and Thou* (Buber, 1944) emphasizes “the act of meeting between two different beings without eliminating the otherness or uniqueness of each” (Dow, 2005). A two-fold movement between the self and other allows for both a unity and uniqueness. Yoshikawa calls the unity that is created out of the realization of differences “identity in unity.” “Soku,” the Buddhist logic of “Not-One, Not-Two” resonates with this notion of “identity in unity.”

### **Some Guidelines for Implementation**

Stella Ting-Toomey (1999) puts forward a list of recommendations for ethical transcultural communicators. An ethical transcultural communicator:

1. is willing to make mindful choices in response to the various situational contingencies of problematic cultural practices;
2. is willing to assume a social commitment to work for mindful change so as to create a morally inclusive society;
3. is willing to uphold the human dignity of others via a respectful mindset, an open heart, inclusive visions through ethnorelative lenses, and practicing mindful transcultural communication competencies. (p. 276)

Let us look at a list of recommendations for creating a new global culture developed by the author of this paper, a list that has the historically new insight at its core that humankind is one single family with the joint responsibility for a tiny fragile home planet.

From intercultural communication to global interhuman ethical and functional communication:

1. Highlight commonalities and give them priority, because they are crucial as unifying common ground.
2. Highlight differences, yet, relegate them to a secondary level (do not imagine and/or reify difference/s, because this gives them undue priority).
3. Use human rights as a tool to identify and nurture those commonalities and those differences that support human rights and deemphasize those that do not (the most significant cultural fault lines in the world are not between cultures—Japanese, Western, Eastern, and so forth—but between commonalities and differences that support human rights versus those that do not).

Using such a template entails great promise, not only for a more constructive global cultural frame, but also for what Jean Baker Miller describes as the “five good things” that characterize growth-fostering relationships (Miller, 1986):

1. increased zest (vitality),
2. increased ability to take action (empowerment),
3. increased clarity (a clearer picture of one’s self, the other, and the relationship),
4. increased sense of worth, and
5. a desire for relationships beyond that particular relationship.

Since many who read this journal are consultants to corporations—national, international, or transnational—a note on creativity might be relevant. Creativity and creative self-realization represent *pragmatic* calls for equal dignity, in the spirit of the maximization postulate (Lasswell & Lerner, 1965). Being treated as somebody of equal dignity, as somebody whose views have weight, opens space for creativity.

Creating a Global Culture of Peace needs consultants who counsel the world well, consultants who show the way out of the box, and who warn particularly young people that even though predefined solutions and career paths might have the highest status, searching for new solutions, though initially a fuzzy and unrewarding process, might be what the world needs most.

The international community, the global bystander, including every citizen and every intercultural communicator, carries a responsibility for building a Global Culture of Peace harnessed in global cultural and institutional structures that ensure a dignified life for all. The goal is a sustainable world, both socially (peace, and justice as defined by human rights) and ecologically (survival of humankind within the biosphere of our planet). In practice, this means working for the Millennium Goals (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>) and for building global institutions that are based on human rights.

Happy isolation is no longer possible. It would resemble the passivity that we criticize when we think of Nazi-Germany and how people turned their backs when their Jewish neighbors were transported to a concentration camp. Let us all become global culture builders, pathfinders for a new and more constructive future for humankind. Let us transcend past collectivist honor culture that turned people into obedient underlings; let us leave behind current Western “rugged” individualism that condones uncaring arrogance; let us strive for a global culture of connected individualism where we combine *shutaisei* autonomy with humility and mutual connection.

With respect to the field of intercultural communication, let us inscribe *global*

*interhuman communication* into *international relations* and *intercultural communication*. Let us found a new field, the field of Global Interhuman Communication. We need “meaningful” rather than “effective” intercultural communication (Martin, Nakayama, & Flores, 2002). Emphasizing global interhuman communication will greatly enhance both meaning and effectiveness.

The *Transformation Theory of Adult Learning* (Mezirow, 1991) can be of help. Mezirow speaks of *disorienting dilemmas* that bring about transformation, dilemmas that unsettle our fundamental beliefs and call our values into question. Nagata describes to what extent intercultural communication can have unsettling effects and that therefore the study of intercultural communication is particularly suited to stimulating transformative learning:

Studying intercultural communication exposes us to different ways of thinking, feeling, and doing. Our usual ways of being are likely to be called into question as we engage with people who speak different languages and have different ways of life. Our growing realization as we study other cultures that there is more than one valid and acceptable way to be human may provoke new and unsettling questions and open possibilities we never considered. (2006, p. 41)

What this paper suggests is that we not only allow ourselves to be unsettled, but that we go one step further, that we also let the very *field of intercultural communication* be unsettled. Intercultural communication needs to be more than accepting of the status quo. It needs to be emancipatorial.

Intercultural communicators have a central role in building a *decent* global community (Margalit, 1996). Public policy makers need to draw on the expertise of intercultural communicators, and intercultural communicators need to insist that they be heard. Let us unleash our creativity for this end.

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