From Humiliation to Appreciation:

Walking Toward Our Talk

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Warm-Up Activity

Reflect on an experience in which someone made you feel especially valued or appreciated in your life...

Introduce yourself to a neighbor...

1. Share that experience. Describe what that person did specifically that made you feel truly valued (words or deeds).

2. Describe what this meant to you in that moment or continues to mean to you today?
1. **#1 cause of stress?**
   - ...lack of appreciation...lack of being valued...

2. **What is the opposite of humiliation?**
   - Relational experience of feeling valued...
   - Relational devaluation is a key source of hurt feelings...  
     Mark Leary et. al, 1998, Duke University
   - Stressful life experiences involving devaluation (humiliation) are strong predictors of major depression  
     Kenneth Kendler, 2003, Virginia Commonwealth University

3. **Human Dignity & Humiliation Studies**
   - How do we begin a conversation about humiliation?
   - How do we co-create a culture of connection across interpersonal and international differences and histories of conflict.
Three goals...

I. Introduce and integrate three emerging “relational” theories:
   - Relational-Cultural Theory,
   - Humiliation Theory,
   & “Appreciative Theory”

II. Think together about how to translate these theories into practice:
   Transforming working cultures...

III. Share a few words about walking the talk...
Hypothesis

Walking toward a talk of appreciation reduces the risk of humiliation (and promotes human dignity)

Humiliation

Appreciation

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One example...

From the Academy of Achievement
1997

Coretta Scott King
1927-2006

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Goal #1
Integrating Theories

Relational-Cultural Theory

Humiliation Theory

“Appreciative Theory”

“There is nothing more practical than a good theory.”
Kurt Lewin (1952)
THEORIES OF EVERYTHING

Everything's gone downhill since 1964.

Everything is my fault.

Everything is your fault.

Everything would be perfect if I had a dirt bike.
Theory #1

Relational-Cultural Theory

It’s not just about being nice...
Growing-Fostering Relationships

Resilience: One Supportive Relationship...
- Parent mental illness (Rutter, 1979).
- Separation from a parent (Rutter, 1971).
- Marital discord (Rutter, 1971).
- Divorce (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1990).
- Poverty (Garmezy, 1991).
- Child maltreatment (Cicchetti, 1989).
- Multifaceted or combinations of risk factors (Seifer et al., 1996).

Prevention: Parent-School Connections...
- Study of 12,000 adolescents...
- Independent of race, class, and socioeconomic status...
- Connection reduced risk of violence, substance abuse, depression, early sexual activity, and suicidal behavior. (Resnick et al., 1997).
Necessity of Connection...

- Community/Social Connectedness
  - National analysis of social connectedness, Harvard Professor Robert Putnam (2000) notes:
    "...studies have established beyond reasonable doubt that social connectedness is one of the most powerful determinants of our well-being."

- NEW! Social Neuroscience - Hardwired to Connect
  - "Human connections create neural connections"
    Daniel Siegle, 1999
  - "We need connection like we need food, air, and water..."
    Social Pain/Physical Pain Overlap Theory — SPOT
    Naomi Eisenberg et. al, 2003
  - Brain Connection - Amy Banks & Judith Jordan
Connection...

Five Good Things -

1. Zest…
2. Mutual empowerment…
3. Knowledge…clarity…
4. Greater sense of worth…
   (e.g., moving from humiliation toward mutual appreciation)…
5. More connection…

...is prevention
(e.g., preventing humiliation)

Jean Baker Miller, M.D.
1927 - 2006

Prevention through Connection...
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Theory #2

Humiliation Theory

It’s not about being nice at all...
What one feels when one is ridiculed, scorned, held in contempt, or otherwise disparaged for who one is rather than what one does.

- **People** believe they deserve **their shame**; they do not believe they deserve their humiliation.
- A “**conspiracy of silence**” discounts, denies, and, therefore, perpetuates the practice of humiliation in our society.
Humiliation Inventory

Linda Hartling

Two Forms of Humiliation

— the act of humiliating or being humiliated
— the state or feeling of being humiliated

Assessed Internal State

— Cumulative Humiliation
— Fear of Humiliation

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Acts of Humiliation...

- War
- Ethnic Cleansing
- Honor Killings, Terrorism
- Hate Crimes

- Interpersonal/Domestic Violence
- Social Exclusion
- Harassment
- Hazing

- Stigmatization
- Homophobia
- Racism
- Sexism
- Ageism
- Classism

- Ridicule, Taunting, Cruel Teasing, Put-downs
“...the nuclear bomb of emotions”

“...is the strongest force that creates rifts between people and breaks down relationships”

“...people who are humiliated will strike back when they can...”

Walking her talk around the world...
History and Humiliation

Three major types of societies...
William Ury
Evelin Lindner

Hunter-Gatherer Society

Global Knowledge Society

Complex Agricultural Society

- Rigid hierarchies
- Honor-based
- Masters/subordinates
- Using animals, people as tools

- Subjugation viewed as “normal and necessary”
- Humiliation viewed as legitimate

Human Rights

- Interdependence
- Subjugation/humiliation viewed as illegitimate

Future

We are here
From an Old to a New Arrangement of Relationships

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity.”

First paragraph of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly Dec. 10, 1948.

Masters (arrogation)

Underlings (humiliation)

Increased Conflict

Line of Equal Dignity

Human Rights
Humility

Globalization & Egalization

Evelin Lindner, Making Enemies, 2006
“...the most effective and powerful stimulus of violence in the human species is the experience of shame and humiliation...”
Humiliation: Pathway to Violence?

Relational-Cultural Context

Humiliation: Profound Relational Violation
Traumatic Disconnection

Humiliation

Social Pain
Eisenberg et al., 2003

Decreased Self-Awareness
Twenge, et al., 2003

Increased Self-Defeating Behavior
Twenge, et al., 2002

Decreased Self-Regulation
Baumeister et al., 2005

Recent Research on Social Exclusion
Klein, 1991
Hartling, 1995
Lindner, 2000+
HumanDHS

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School Shooters: Warning Signs

Individual Signs
- Feel insulted, angered, and hurt by real or perceived injustices.
- Inability to deal with rejection or humiliation.
- Feel isolated...do not fit in.

School Culture Signs
- Bullying is part of culture and authorities seem oblivious to it.
- Atmosphere promotes racial or class divisions.
- Pecking order among individuals.


Cultures of Disconnection/Devaluation
“Appreciative Theory”

...It's not just about praise

...antidote for humiliation

...one pathway to prevention and reparation

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It is not just the work we do together...

...it is how we work together.

Appreciation as humiliation prevention
Appreciation to create a culture of connection

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From Appreciative Inquiry…
to “Appreciative Theory”

App-pre'ciate, v.,
Valuing others…
Recognizing the best in people or the world around us…
Affirming and present strengths…

In-quire', v.,
The act of exploration and discovery…
To ask questions; to open to seeing new potentials and possibilities…

Suresh Srivastva & David Cooperrider, Appreciative Management (1990)
Creating an Appreciative Frame

- Relational-Cultural Awareness
- Listening Each Other into Voice
- Waging Good Conflict
- Meeting in Mutual Respect
- Taking Ourselves Lightly
Working with Appreciation

- Symptoms of Lack of Appreciation...
  - Fewer than 1 in 3 employees received some form of praise in the last week.

- Signs of Appreciation...Valuing People at Work
  “Engaged Employees” — Those who were more likely to stay with the organization, have more engaged customers, and were more productive — were most likely to agree:
  - They have a supervisor, or someone at work, who seems to care about them as a person.
  - There is someone at work who encourages their development.
  - Their opinions seem to count at work.
  - They have had opportunities at work to learn and grow in the last year.

Gallup Organization
1.5 million employees
Putting Theory into Practice...

From humiliation to appreciation...

...making work work better
Work Cultures of Disconnection

Traditional Hierarchical Cultures

Pseudo-Relational Cultures

Relational-Cultural Practice: Working in a Nonrelational World.
WP, 97.
Linda Hartling & Elizabeth Sparks (2002)

Survival Cultures
Traditional Hierarchy

Appreciation is relational work
— it encourages feelings of worth, being valued —
which is often overlooked and undervalued

Joyce Fletcher, 1999, Disappearing Acts
Pseudo-Relational Cultures

Mixed Relational Messages
— not walking the talk —
You’re valued (words); You’re not valued (deeds)
Survival Cultures

Doing too much with too little for too long
— Not enough time or resources to do relational work —
Relational Deprivation
Mini Appreciative Inquiry: What Works at Work?

With a partner, reflect on your experience in different work settings (paid or unpaid):

- Identify and begin to describe creative or effective ways to help people feel valued and appreciated.
  - In small ways…big ways?
  - In brief ways…ongoing ways?
  - With words…with deeds?
  - With time…with energy…with other resources?
Appreciation Prevents and Repairs Humiliation When...

...Six Signs of Effective Appreciation

1. When it is true — words & deeds.
2. When it is specific & generalized (in the air).
3. When it is timely & timeless.
4. When it is part of the process of negotiating difference & conflict.
5. When it is seen as important relational work, when it is part of the culture, the “real” work.
6. When it becomes part of walking the talk.

Linda Hartling, Ph.D., Jean Baker Miller Training Institute
Wellesley Centers for Women, 2007
Appreciation is a great thing...

...It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.

French Philosopher
Voltaire
Integrating 3 Emerging Theories…

Walking toward a talk of relational appreciation prevents and repairs humiliation (and promotes human dignity)

One more important point…

Walking toward our talk works best whenever we can do it together…
Closing

Question:

What is not quite right about this picture?
Walking Toward the Talk
...an example

Mt. Everest
May 29, 1953
Edmund Hillary
Tenzing Norgay
29,028 ft.

...Walking a Talk of Appreciation Together
We must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words...

...but to live by them.

John F. Kennedy, Jr.
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