

Round Table 2 - How can the notion of humiliation be useful for public policy planning and for cultivating positive social change?

Comments from Participants:

Beth Fisher-Yoshida: First, I'm going to talk about television and soap operas around the world, and my experience working in Asia – the idea of face, a little about shame and guilt. Looking toward transformation on an individual and social level.

I figure out which lens I'm looking from – a cultural lens. In the TV show, "Ugly Betty," they create this woman who's physically ugly but beautiful inside. She works for a fashion magazine and is humiliated, but she comes through. A situation in Baltimore – disparity, kids selling drugs, humiliated. In Lebanon and Bombay, watching soap operas – always typical mother-in-law who humiliates her daughter-in-law; she's perpetually humiliated. Humiliation takes different forms in different cultures. In Japan, one show really impacted me, and it was very subtle. In a traditional situation a man has the power in the home, even with his language – he grunts, and his wife responds. About 10-15 years ago, many middle managers were let go from their companies, which was not what was done. This man, about 55, lost his job and had no life, no hobbies. "Who am I?" He came home, and there was a subtle shift in the kitchen. His wife looked at him and said, "Get it yourself." He had lost his power; she could humiliate him and did.

Working in Japan, ideas differ coming from this educational and business system. We have an individualistic society; people want self-recognition. In Japan it's more collective, with conformity. When I was in classrooms doing trainings, people didn't respond. I could call on somebody, give them permission to say what they were dying to say but couldn't because of rules. Here, they'll raise hands, and I don't have to acknowledge them. In Japan, they needed that permission from me, or else they'd be humiliated among their peers. Japanese movie – hierarchy, follow suit.

The whole idea is about face management, face saving, conflict resolution. Grid: relationship of face, shame, guilt, humiliation in terms of conflict. Concern for self and own face, and possibly the other. Positive – inclusion. Negative – autonomy. In high context cultures, people are collective, face giving – don't care about self as much. In more low context – people act toward face restoration, take care of selves, save own face. This relates to the idea on shame and guilt.

Doing searches on the Internet, I found that shame was a synonym for humiliation. Shame – something wrong with me. Shame – I am a mistake. Guilt – I made a mistake. Shame – absence of love, loss of love, leads to destruction of self-esteem. Guilt – everyone's familiar with, a feeling of culpability for offenses, feeling responsible for something we regret. Shame – painful emotion, consciousness of guilt. We feel guilty for what we do; we feel shame for what we are.

Shame cultures versus guilt cultures: In both, we all believe it's no problem if we did nothing wrong. An issue arises when there's disagreement. In a guilt culture, I may have secret guilt, which could be sense of humiliation. In a shame culture, what others believe is more powerful. Being shamed in front of others, we work to preserve honor and avoid shame. We may have a license to abuse, engage in secret wrongdoing, but after we may have internal guilt.

Viktor Frankl said even if one is dehumanized, life has potential meaning. It's about looking at transformation, preserving a sense of self. We can take humiliating experiences as

sources of growth – a double-loop learning reflection to understand where others are coming from and gain a deeper understanding of self, use it as a learning opportunity.

Maria Volpe: I was thinking about the conflict resolution field. We often hear about the need to be compensated for our work. Those who are frustrated are those who are trained as mediators and can't make a living. It's a fairly universal condition for those in that field. Everyone trained as a mediator seems to love it. As I've been thinking about humiliation, the field also humiliates people; they can't figure out in our culture how to make a living.

That brings me to the research we're doing on the barriers to minority participation in dispute resolution. We've talked about these barriers, and we have a diverse research team conducting small group interviews with people of color in New York City. The term "humiliation" hasn't come up. It particularly humiliates those who experience the barriers the most, yet we don't use the language there. We haven't made visible the invisible. In a different context, we'd talk about humiliation and find ways of dealing with it.

In social policy and the types of things coming out of our research, most of the remedies involve what individuals can do themselves to change barriers, bring them down. One of the initial challenges was how to talk about what they were researching – the language. We initially framed it as "barriers to minority participation in the dispute resolution field," but we struggled with the term "minority." We found out how humiliating "minority" is. We could come up with more terms to characterize what it is we're working with. "Minority" is offensive, with connotations of less, minor, degrading. Yet in our culture, we use this term as an easy way of framing, and it conveys a certain image of what we're talking about. We wanted to study "people of color," and others were offended by that term. "Underrepresented groups" made sense in some contexts, but it didn't always resonate. "Diverse groups," "racial and ethnic groups"... Thinking through what language worked, we found out how humiliating "minority" was. We've been skittish, so we've alternated between terms trying not to offend one another.

It's hard. It's a field we love, but it humiliates individuals who have a hard time making a living. All the barriers experienced by those in the field are exaggerated by those we're representing. How do we come up with social policy to deal with those issues, along with a language that makes people feel comfortable, helps people feel not humiliated? How do we get beyond the humiliation the field creates, that creates more for some of those in the field?

Arie Nadler: I'm a social psychologist by training at Tel Aviv University. My perspective on social relations is that I'm very interested in power relations. The power dimension and reconciliation between groups and individuals. It's an issue of assistance/helping – there's a different perspective for the powerless and powerful.

When we talk about helping others, there's a double message. As Walt Whitman said, "It's helping every human neighbor, seeking need from none." Helping others means being willing to give help. Receiving help has a power dimension to it and creates social relationships between the giver and receiver. It creates social asymmetry and reflective power issues between individuals or groups. The issue of humiliation is poignant. Help can be humiliating or empowering. This is what I'd like to center my comments on.

In a sense, giving help can be a benevolent force of social control, dominance, a flow from haves to have nots. The social structure is unstable, unchangeable. It tends to strengthen and solidify social inequality.

The link between social identity theory in social psychology: there are two basic social situations – power relations that are legitimate or those that are illegitimate/unstable. For example, gender relations 200 years ago were legitimate and stable; it was the way things were done and wasn't going to change. But they can be perceived as unstable and illegitimate. Helping relations have a special quality during the case when the power is perceived as illegitimate and when disadvantaged groups would be very resistant. That's not the case when power relations are legitimate – giving without returning is behavioral affirmation of being subservient. Being receptive to help is being lower in social level. That's not the case when power relations are illegitimate and people may be hesitant to accept help.

There is help that humiliates. In our work we've identified dimensions that are relevant: 1) whether helping relations are autonomy-oriented or dependency-oriented (being handed fish or taught to fish); 2) whether help is assumptive or responsive – whether you are asked to give help or if you assume someone needs it; 3) whether helping interaction is didactical negotiating style – interaction between helper and helpee, who meet and discuss best arrangements, thus help is not being didactically given from one side to another (negotiation first, then help is given).

Dependency, assumptive and didactic all give a social perception of chronic dependence and humiliate, putting recipients in a lowly place. Autonomy, negotiated and responsive all transmit a social perception of transient dependency – you can easily get out of the situation and become dependent in future. First – chronic dependency and humiliation. Second – transient, pride. In a recent chapter for our book, we thought about applying this model to real-world examples: affirmative action programs (perceived as being used as pain inequality, not enabling); the way the Western world is giving help to HIV-stricken countries in Africa (helping arrangements, why they're not effective; the way peace-building projects fail because of lack of sensitivity, ways of giving and power). The powerless view it as degrading dependency; the powerful see it as helping. This brings a danger of faltering and collapsing.

Robert Kolodny: We speak about the humiliation of making a social faux pas, and we refer to the humiliation suffered by a whole people from a century of brutal colonial rule. Intuitively we know that these two situations are tapping into the same human emotion, but it is not altogether clear that we have a way of understanding this emotion that encompasses such extremes. I am going to use the word **shame** to refer to the family of emotions that includes humiliation, along with embarrassment, chagrin, and mortification. Gestalt theory has a way of understanding shame which I find particularly useful for working with people in groups, organizations and civic communities (these are the main arenas of my practice). According to this perspective, shame is the experience of not being received or treated as we would like to be by the social field. (That field can range in size from one other person to the global community.)

I feel shame when I put some part of myself forward – an actual request for something, a point of view or belief, a wish to be included and liked, or the simple desire to be acknowledged and treated as an inherently valuable human being – and what I put out is ignored, belittled or punished, particularly by others who are important to me. But only if I then believe that the inadequacy of the response – the shortfall in support coming from others – is my fault. There is a critical step in meaning-making here – seeing the insufficient support as a statement about my own self-worth – as contrasted with seeing the shortfall as a function of the social field with which I am engaged.

There are two conditions that need to be present for this experience to register as shame:

- The people/group/institution need to be important to me. The more important, the more potential for my shame to be activated.
- At some level, which may be out of full awareness, I need to see the not-being-received as my fault, as a statement about my fundamental lack of worth.

Shame is such an unpleasant emotion that we go to great lengths to avoid it. Indeed, the strength of its impact makes it a prime regulator of the social field. Much of our inter-active life is orchestrated to avoid shame (prompted by so-called shame anxiety or the "dread" of shame). Indeed the anger and impulse to retaliate and strike back that is so closely associated with humiliation can be seen as a defense against experiencing (or continuing to experience) this devastating emotion. At the same time, in Western culture it is shameful to feel shame, so it is one of the least acknowledged emotions. Because we don't speak about it, we often don't even recognize it as the emotion we are experiencing, and we have no established discourse that would help us to see how much influence it is having in our domestic, workplace and civic lives.

Here are summary versions of some observations on shame made by Gestalt theorist and psychotherapist Gordon Wheeler:

Shame is the affect of an important loss of connectedness in the social field—the experience of not belonging...of being excluded.

A significant break in the field—a loss of receptiveness in some important area—threatens not just my practical well being, but my reliable feeling of self-cohesion and self-process. A feeling that cannot be ignored and must be addressed in some way.

Of all the emotions, the greatest potential to trigger (1) disintegration of our usual personality supports and organization; and (2) outbursts of self- and other-destructive behavior (from lengthy and obsessive private bouts of punitive and undermining self-recrimination to elaborate life devotion to retaliation and revenge that can be sustained over generations)

I find it useful to look at shame's everyday manifestations—particularly the way it manifests in me and the way it organizes the social field. This helps me better see the extreme cases as the everyday highly magnified. It is an ever-present ground condition in all human relations. The potential to get activated is always there.

I don't think others can actually *make* me feel humiliated, but others certainly can massively contribute to the field conditions in which my humiliation will get activated.

Taking Don Klein's example, I experience: 1) shame if I cheat on my wife; 2) humiliation if she cheats on me. The common element is not being seen/held – by myself or by others – as I would like to be seen/held. In my view, the commonality between these is more significant than the differentiation Don has made.

I also find it useful to understand the functional side of shame—feelings of anticipated shame can function to protect me from a dangerous loss of approval, affection or belongingness in the world of relationships with others. When I move too quickly, for example. Shame is the affect par excellence of interpersonal sensitivity and relational competence (some of the phrasing borrowed from Gordon Wheeler).

I am not sure that this way of understanding reconciles all the dimensions and aspects that many of you have mentioned and written about, but I am interested in Don's criteria, not what is the right, final definition, but what is useful. I find this way very useful in a practical sense. One of the first things I think of in my work consulting with organizations, doing conflict resolution, etc. is: how can I help de-shame this field. Also, understanding that shame/humiliation is a product of lack of support in the field points to the healing opposite—the antidote, which is providing **support**, and the importance of calibrating as best I can, knowing that offering too much can be as shaming as not providing any.

Shame is closely related to power and the greatest potential for shaming is at a place of power difference or across a hierarchical boundary. Gestalt understands both shame and power as relational phenomena and as ever-present ground conditions in all human relations. Their potential to get activated is always there.

Gay Rosenblum-Kumar: I'm going from the interpersonal to the social level. When I was coming here today, I dropped off my kids early and explained this meeting. My daughter said, "That's a downer." It looks at what causes people to act, how to eliminate it, especially governments. I have seen several movies. "The Secret" – When my kids saw it, they were empowered. Life gives us experiences to feel shame, humiliation, have self-doubt, but there are ways out of it. We can change our focus and find bliss and power. "What the Bleep Do We Know?" shows how we are habituated, even our biological cells, to a pattern of blasting out. There are grooves we can unlearn. This reminded me of face management. So often we feel we've lost face, and how we turn it around is tied to my work.

On another note, I was involved in the UN Search for Common Ground, a conflict-resolution film series. We used documentaries from around the world to show the most extraordinary situations, the roots in communities. In "Counterpoint," Jews and Palestinians talked to their own communities. There is a series of films that can help people deal with this.

"Talk Mogadishu" is a program for ex-pat Somalis to no longer feel humiliated. They can go on the radio and have some autonomy over warlords. "Echoes Across the Divide" is a Cypriot film with the message "don't judge what's too sweet," unintentional humiliation. Media is an extremely powerful tool for dealing with humiliation, shame and face management.

NY *Times* columnist Daniel Goleman is a psychology correspondent, and we should invite him next year.

A South African peace-builder sent me a story about how he worked with black and white members from the church – progressive to traditional – in a meeting on forgiveness. A young black man took the microphone and said, "I admit that I have hated you white people, and you've created humiliating system. Thanks to Christianity, I don't hate anymore. Please forgive me for my hatred." The leader said, "He's asked for something; is there a response?" One man said, "You've shamed me. We've done so much to humiliate you, and you're asking me for forgiveness?" The humiliation aspect – it's hard to admit you've humiliated someone. Mandela said you took away my equality, and they could deal with that more. The way we address humiliation can be constructive or destructive in a society.

Part of governance work is that conflict is a part of day-to-day government. Conflict management/capacity-building work is not like sending in special mediator. We can't solve your problem, and outsiders can't understand, but perhaps we can create space, awareness, skills, situation for more trust so that you can find your own solutions to your problems. Arie made some good points. It applies to development work: if the UN has countries giving aid that's

assumptive and dependency-oriented, it's unfulfilling. We develop a plan knowing it's a façade and realize that situations are fluid. Countries need to decide and allow people to do what they need to do after we get the money for them. I just came back from Bangladesh, and a leader was expressing frustration about not being able to deliver anything for a program 10 years ago. It's not about money; it's about face management, getting people to deal with one another again on an intuitive level. This is hard to convey to political types and others I have to deal with.

Charles Knight: A friend of mine told me a story: Native American tribes often had more than two genders, sometimes up to eight genders in their societies. I looked further and found a case of the Navajo people, who understood gender as a fluid category. Spirits could move through people of either sex and lead to different genders or gendered behavior. The most important thing I noticed of this culture was that these varied manifestations were all honored and respected in their culture. This struck me as extraordinary. That aspect has been wiped out in the past 100 years.

I took this learning, along with feminist theory, that gender, which is distinct from sex, is socially constructed. Transgender people had deconstructed and reconstructed gender, showing plasticity in humans. This leads to the following:

- More possibilities for male behavior, gender characteristics that we're aware of – bring them into existence, teach around them. This could reduce violence domestically and internationally.
- Dominant masculinity – hegemonic – dominant role in patriarchy. Men are expected to use violence to protect their home or country against others, who are usually male. Authority comes from this use of violence. A “real man” is ready to use violence in domestic dominance and defending against foreign males.
- War – Bush and bin Laden are warring with a lot of gender aspects. We see how this system perpetuates. Patriarchy is dependent on the construction of man and woman.
- Subordinate masculinities that await liberation – affinity to violence, nurturance and affection. The construct of a feminine man leads to gender possibilities. Varied male and complex/varied female – discourse on qualities that are useful to our nations and communities and those that are harmful. Other masculinities already exist in the population but are currently subordinated and suppressed. It's easy to pull most males into a hegemonic war consensus.

We can create security policies less reliant on violence. We need to establish strong points in males to make them less reliant on violence. If men are in the confines of conventional masculinity by shaming, they are either a “real man” or not a man. Humiliation of boys and men who aren't conventional is an instrument in enforcing conventional masculinity and is perhaps the most crucial underpinning of social relations of dominance.

Judi Kuriansky: How did a psychologist who just wrote a book on tantric sex publish a book now called *Terror in the Holy Land*? What does war have to do with sex? A lot. The issue of power and dominance – who's on top – is very relevant. I agree with psychoanalytic theory that there are two major drives: sex and love on one side and aggression and war on the other.

My current immersion in the Middle East actually traces back several decades, to my honeymoon when we went to Israel and Greece. It was calm then. The next time I was exposed

to the issues of the region was in 1972 when I went to the Olympics in Germany. You all know what happened. We arrived the day of the massacre of the Israeli athletes, and the trip was no longer about sports but about the conflict. Over many years, besides being a relationship therapist, I have been doing peace work, disaster relief, and workshops about peace throughout the world.

Evelin's concept of humiliation is very relevant to the region. The New York Times' reporter, Thomas Friedman, mentioned humiliation specifically as the source of the problems that led to 9-11 in his TV special on the subject. Palestinians mention humiliation as fundamentally affecting their psychology, relations, society, and even family relations. Domestic violence is prevalent, and at its basis is the humiliation of the men and the children who watch their fathers being humiliated, creating a generational inculcation of humiliation. It's a major issue and obviously an underpinning of the conflict. Palestinian psychologists have contributed chapters to my book, *Terror in the Holy Land: Inside the Anguish of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, elaborating on this dynamic. Evelin has also contributed a chapter about the role of humiliation – and dignity – on both sides. It is important to note that there's a balance – Israelis have felt humiliation as well, though we usually associate this dynamic with the Palestinian situation. Jewish Israelis emphasize security, but humiliation plays an important role in their psychology as well. I have been to Israel many times, as well as to Palestine and other Arab lands – even Tehran – and have talked to people on both sides. While there are differences, there are also similarities in fundamental emotions.

Fear also plays a major role. Humiliation can lead to fear. Fear has silenced some moderates. This fear is not unwarranted. A woman – who also contributed a chapter to my book – who organizes Arabs for Israel got death threats for her efforts toward reconciliation. She doesn't want to kill Jews but is being stopped from speaking on campuses. Another contributor wrote about female suicide bombers; there are eight profiles of them in my book. In a story on TV the other night about the psychology of terrorists, I disagreed on their conclusions; I believe there's a psychological dynamic, including humiliation. Fundamental is some sense of humiliation. One female bomber was distressed that her husband left her; she had a miscarriage and couldn't have a baby. Shame underlies her psyche. Another witnessed the humiliation of her brother and father.

There are many groups attempting peace-building. Search for Common Ground is one. Another is the Parents' Circle, for those on both sides who've lost loved ones. Even Judo for Kids uses that particular sport to attempt to establish self-respect, an antidote to feelings of humiliation. This shows how important the concept of humiliation is, as a cause and also how undoing it is an antidote to what is considered an intractable conflict.

Andrea Bartoli: The notion for humiliation for public policy planning – yes, it's very important. These ideas are very important to understand the life we have, the life we're going to have. It's important to work on these experiences to allow the level of learning Beth spoke about. Collectively this is what we want and need: to understand better humiliation and to learn from humiliation.

Gandhi, King and Mandela's responses to humiliation: they supposed victims were able to overcome the imbalance of power. The incapacity of the perpetrator to understand victims as human beings means hurting him/herself by avoiding the possibility of something emerging from the victim's side. Gingrich thanks blacks for freeing whites in south from burden of slavery; it came from black leadership and excluded whites from power of humiliating.

Take the narratives of those who went through humiliation very seriously and those from perpetrators who didn't understand or perhaps didn't see it at the time. I have two stories. One is funny: When I came to this country, I was speaking French and Italian, and I wanted to learn English. I went to Michigan and met a new-agey female Californian woman teaching English. "We're going to have a pow-wow." "What's that?" "A meeting to get to the heart of the matter, to share feelings." (This meeting is a social pow-wow.) I went to the State Department and said, "We need to have a pow-wow." I saw jaws dropping. The beauty of the story is that it could have been humiliating, but it's just funny. I was able to tell a story to them about Mozambique and talked about the emergence of peace with them and my need to find words I didn't have.

I now have a serious story about a man who was very good, very serious, a little odd and not perceived as being completely there. The problem was that he was having some strange thinking about baptizing children when they were not children. He was different; this was in the Netherlands, the low land in Europe in the 16th century. He was a Mennonite. He was a heretic. (I am a devout Catholic.) This story was cherished in families for centuries. When he was accused of being heretic, the guards had legal power and wanted to arrest him, save him from his own mistake. He saw them coming, left all he had, and fled. He went through canals and saw something he didn't want to see, didn't choose to see; he saw that one of guards had fallen into a canal and the ice broke. The man could flee and save his life, be happy with his family, but he turned around, went back and saved that man. The other guards came, and he was taken to prison and executed legally in Europe as a heretic. The reason I tell the story is that as a Catholic, I have no choice today after Vatican II, after the changes in my church, but to appreciate the gift that a tiny church, the Mennonites, have been saying to all Christians and humans: It's better not to be violent, not to humiliate, not to engage in power struggle. It's better to live in harmony.

I wonder if breaking the cycle of humiliation, for public policy, we should take these stories seriously, in which the human spirit is able to break free, care less about life and everything. I don't accept being humiliated and I will never be.

Philip Brown: If you look at Jennifer Goldman's paper, it looks at emotions and cycles of conflict. It relates to what we discussed yesterday, and it's available on the website. She couldn't be here with us.

You may remember that Clark created an undercurrent with how he described emotions. I realized there was a key to what he said, which unlocked something for me, 20 years ago. Governor Thomas Kean, in face of the Iran-Contra conflict, decided that New Jersey educators should look at set of core values that would represent what students should believe and take on as the basis of character development. The Commissioner of Education developed a group to take on that task. It was a diverse group of people, and I was a staff member to this group. A wise attorney, after three sessions, said it was unclear if a consensus was possible on what core values represented civil society. We had been making some progress, but what changed? When someone brought up love. It enables us to understand these other virtues and values. The group decided it could not recommend core values and said every board of education should go through this process because the role of discussion played a big role. They didn't articulate what that was. Love is not really an emotion – it's an intense, strong identification with the other. That's it. What we learned – the power of love. We can identify with the humanness in each other, and a sense of humanity needs to be engaged before these virtues and values can be established.

Additional Comments from Supporters:

Rosita Albert: I come to say thank you. There are so many provocative ideas, wonderful and sad emotions, in me and in the other participants. In the spirit of appreciative inquiry, thanks for so much food for thought. There is so much we need to process. Is there a way in the future to build in more time for processing and dealing with it?

Olga Botcharova: I would like to make two points. First, I want to emphasize the importance of language. The words and terms that we use, particularly in conflict situations, often identify us as victims or offenders, as the humiliator or the humiliated. Sometimes, we may humiliate others while thinking that we are doing our best at engaging in an open dialogue with them.

A few years ago I was working with a group of young community leaders, Jews and Palestinians from the Middle East. The group members had already made significant progress in developing trust and recognizing their essential needs. In fact, they began to pre-negotiate some crucial conditions of a possible peace agreement. However, as soon as one side said something like “OK, if *we give you* that piece of land, then you will ...,” or “*We can allow your* refugees to return ...”, the other side responded very aggressively and the negotiations abruptly shut down, even though the content, substance, of the suggestions didn’t contradict the previously articulated interests of the party making the proposal. The language used reflected an attitude of “dominance and power,” associated with humiliation which provoked a response using either language of “submissiveness” or “aggressive resistance.” In other words, familiar terminology of humiliation can easily undermine carefully crafted process of developing dignity in communication. Each party, as it typically happens, blamed the other for failing respectful communication and the peace talks. At this point, defending against humiliation and preserving pride were driving the dynamics of the interaction. To resume the constructive dialogue, we had to return to the beginning, reflecting together upon the language that the people choose to use. While working with parties in conflict, groups or individuals, I find that it helps to have them develop and discuss a list of words and phrases, relevant to their context, that reflects a language of “dominance and power.” The process itself helps to create an awareness of the choices we make and the purposes those choices serve. Such list can often be used as good reference and as a thoughtful tool of prevention when a dialogue begins to turn into a battle.

The second point that I want to make here relates to some practical support that we can provide now. I want to introduce a book both titled “Darfur Diaries,” by my dear friend and colleague, Jen Marlow, who together with two colleagues traveled to Darfur, entering the country with the assistance of the rebels. The team shot the documentary film using many interviews with the victims of genocide – children, women, members of displaced and separated families – who talked about their recent tragic experiences and current life. When asked what they needed to survive besides water and food, most talked about schools and education for their children. These Darfurians strongly believe that to survive means to preserve their dignity, and that the education for their children, which they are currently deprived of, is essential to life without humiliation. A portion of the proceeds received from selling the book and documentary is dedicated to the restoration of a school in one of the Darfur villages from which many of the interviewed people had come. So, we can, at least, buy a copy of this book and documentary in order to educate ourselves and others about the struggle for survival and human dignity of the Darfur people, as seen through their eyes.

Ben Alexander: A lot of emotion popped up for me. In the commentary about respect, handouts, affirmative action, so forth – things came together for me. I belong to the integration generation of African Americans, born when segregation was a system. It changed in my adult life. At the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, I en route to Southeast Asia. At that point, I didn't feel my life would be determined by the voting of the American people on these things. I met my obligation. I left the military even after I got notice that I was being considered for Air Force officer's training. Later, affirmative action came along, and I became a beneficiary in many ways. I didn't understand it. I dealt with unpleasant feelings, working with people who thought I was there because of it. I struck back to let the world know that I was as good as everyone else. I didn't win popularity contests, and sometimes I couldn't stand myself. The war was personal and on the level of race. I needed victims daily. The problem was that sometimes I was a victim. I did stupid, unnecessary things. The battlefield was littered with what could have been great relationships. For me there was sometimes shame and guilt and lots of dysfunctional behavior.

Much has shifted in the past 10 years. I think about what Don said, doing consulting and the professional side – I am an organizational development consultant. Yesterday, I was with a group of 60 or so white men, a building management company, working on diversity. They know it's because they had a racial incident, rather than for the reasons given by their organization. One said, "We white guys, we're just trucks driving down a road, they don't care about us, but if something happens to a woman or minority, they have to do something."

So why are people creating special systems for minorities when they haven't done it for the majority yet? Organizationally, it's a buffer against something worse. Not having to go through a major change, we'll take measured amounts of you and you... It's a sham. It's been a profitable sham for me, and I feel a little ashamed for being part of it. It takes me to a statement made by an African professor at Harvard: "I don't want to be treated as anything different because I am a black man, but I do want to be respected for my experience as a black man."

Nora Femenia: I was born in Argentina and am now an American citizen. We have stories of survival. If in this circle, if we have courage to share with everybody, how have you survived in situations of extreme humiliation? That is the key. For people in Argentina, it was so damaging; those who used to do business with you are now beating you to death. "I know who I am, I'm not who they say I am. I know my dignity." That mantra kept so many people alive. I'm asking you, what did you tell yourself when you were under pressure? I don't have the general answer. But I leave you with the question.

Alison Anthoine: I come from the private sector. I bring a few random observations. It's not war but litigation that people engage in. As a lawyer in firms and general counsel in companies, and in the first few months, I realized that litigation is not the way to solve a dispute. People rely on lawyers to make decisions that are theirs, and they disempower themselves. Through that I came to mediation. There's no dispute that cannot be more readily resolved by bringing parties together with a neutral person. It also works on the group level. The role of mediator is to be egoless. In American culture, particularly in New York City, ego drives attention. How can you say, "Hire me, and I'll be self-effacing"? In our culture, you are what you say you are. You have to sell yourself.

Comments on literary and film: There's a Dr. Seuss story, which is perfect to bring to a merged company when dealing with egos – *The Sneetches*. There are star-bellied (superior) and

plain-bellied (miserable) Sneetches. A creature comes to put stars on the plain-bellied, then takes the stars off the others. They paid him a lot, and in the end everyone is the same. It worked so well with these companies.

Bessie Head, a South African writer and refugee in Botswana, died young. In a series of books, including *When Rain Clouds Gather*, she addresses what we talked about here.

My son, who lives by movies, reminded me of a phrase from Yoda, “Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, and hate leads to suffering.”