

Chapter Seventeen — The American Dream And Our Core

Values Can And Should Unite Us All And Help Create Peace

We can achieve a culture of Peace for America.

We can — if we come together to be a people united by our values and our core beliefs — create an America that succeeds and thrives going into the challenging years that lie ahead.

We can help all Americans have the opportunity that we all should have to achieve the American Dream.

We can build a future where we all do well and where our country is strong, safe, and successful because we are all doing well.

To succeed in creating Peace for our country, we need to very intentionally build and use a shared set of values as a country that can bring us together as a people. We need an explicit set of shared values and shared beliefs that can both help guide our collective behavior and shape our collective sense of right and wrong going forward, so that we can work together in aligned ways to create a new culture of Peace and inclusion for America.

To succeed as a nation and as a people, we need to agree to be united

as an American people by our shared values and by our shared beliefs and we need to commit as individuals, and collectively, to act in accordance with those beliefs.

We need to recognize that when we are aligned as a people by an enlightened belief system, and by a clear intergroup mutual support commitment, that we can be the greatest country on the planet, and we can continue to be the country on the planet that is most likely to succeed.

We need to understand that we will all benefit from being on that path, united by those behaviors and aligned by those beliefs.

We Will All Do Well When We All Do Well

We are all in this together. We need to recognize that fact to be true.

In very practical and important ways, we will all do well when everyone does well. We will do badly collectively as a society and as an economy, and we will do badly as a country if major subsets of our population do badly or fail.

We need to understand and recognize the fact that failures by any significant subsets of our population will not have a neutral, irrelevant, or

insignificant impact on our overall economy and on our individual and collective safety.

Significant failures for any group in this country will create a purely functional economic and societal drag at multiple levels that will ultimately pull the whole country into economic and functional distress and failure.

A significant failure by any major portion of our people can put us all at collective risk of intergroup anger, intergroup division, and highly dysfunctional negative and damaging intergroup behaviors at multiple levels that will and can continue to damage us in increasingly significant ways for a very long time.

The anger levels, alone, that can be triggered in groups and individuals when any group feels it is being damaged by other groups, can result in unsafe neighborhoods, physical violence at intergroup levels, and even shootings and bombings of various kinds.

We are very clearly not immune from the kinds of behaviors those sets of instincts trigger in people who feel their group is being threatened or actually damaged. Those kinds of actions create both direct damage and backlash damage — and those actions and reactions can far too easily put

us on a very dangerous road to intergroup division and to the clear failure of intergroup Peace as our future as a country.

We need to understand that reality, and we need to act accordingly. We need to succeed in our collective alignment as a values-driven American “Us.” We should make success for all groups a goal for all groups, and we should understand our real problems and real challenges at levels that will help us succeed in creating the future we need for our collective success.

We need to very openly and very publicly align to do the key things we need to do relative to education, early childhood development, good health, safe communities, full access to jobs, and clear and inclusive functional and economic opportunities for all groups of people in ways that will make us strong across our entire population.

We can’t afford to have some subsets of our nation doing well and prospering while other segments of our population are damaged, disproportionately disadvantaged, dangerously dysfunctional, angrily and deliberately divisive, and increasingly and intentionally damaging and dangerous to other people and to our communities because that damaged portion of our people is fueled by a collective and functionally justified sense of basic intergroup anger that creates, and then amplifies and

exacerbates intergroup hate.

Anger is the wrong status and the wrong outcome for any portion of people of America. Collective success is the outcome we need for all of us at this point in our lives and history.

We All Gain When We All Gain

There is great group gain to be had from having everyone being able to gain. When all parts of our country prosper, that full and shared national success obviously will create prosperity for all of us.

If we bring all of our people into the full benefits of the American Dream, the positive consequences of including everyone in the American Dream will make us richer, stronger, and safer as a country.

We need to do that work. We need to achieve those benefits. We need to all succeed, because the consequences of failure for any of us will damage all of us.

There is no future possibility for us as an extremely and increasingly diverse country where an insulated subset of our population continues to be successful while the communities they are in fail around them.

Walled cities and armed enclaves for subsets of our population are the

wrong future for us as a country, and the people who would live in those enclaves will have lives that are hugely inferior to the lives we all can live when all groups in this country succeed and those walls are not needed.

We need to choose future paths where we all succeed — and we need to anchor those futures on a clear understanding of the issues we face and an absolutely clear intent to have success extend to all of us.

To anchor our key strategies of full inclusion and mutual success, we need to begin with a very clear sense of what we believe in as a country.

We need to be united in our shared beliefs and in our shared vision of who we are.

We should know, from the beginning, what we hate.

We should all hate discrimination, hate prejudice, hate behaviors that damage other groups of people, and we should all hate, reject, and oppose any behaviors that undermine the dignity, freedom, and personal value of each of us.

We Need To Know Exactly What We All Collectively Believe

In As An American “Us”

Those core beliefs about what we hate should be clear. They should be explicit and they should be shared by all of us.

It is not, however, enough for us to be just against racism, and against ethnic, cultural or gender-based discrimination. We need to know more than what we oppose. We need to know exactly what we endorse and support, and we need to know clearly and explicitly what we will work together to create and defend.

We all very much need to know very specifically what we are for — what we support — and we all need to know exactly and explicitly what we collectively believe in as the core beliefs of our shared and collectively supported American “Us.”

It is not enough to have a generic, collective, or individual commitment to vague and basically positive American values. Generic, positive aspirations and undefined, but definitely positive, collective good will are all very good things, but they are insufficient, and functionally and operationally inadequate to give us the tools and approaches we actually need to truly align and succeed as a people.

We need to go beyond good will and generically-positive patriotic leanings. We need a clear and explicit set of shared and universally

supported core values we can use in a number of important and functional ways to anchor who we are as a country and as a people.

We need to all agree that we each believe in our clearly understood basic sets of core values and we all need to agree both that we are each individually committed, and that we are all collectively committed to having those core values define what we do, and shape both how and why we do it.

To get that process to the next step, this chapter lists the basic set of values we use as a country now. This list is based on our history, on our structures, and our agreements of various kinds that we have in place today — and it pulls exactly a dozen key values into a single set of shared beliefs to give us a starting point for making our explicit collective commitments as a people to one another going forward into our immediate future.

The basic list of key values proposed and outlined below isn't a long list. But it is a very familiar list. This list includes a dozen key beliefs that we all share, and that we use now in various ways to govern our country and guide our lives.

We all know each of these values, because we use them in various ways now, but we have not set those values up as a package, or used them

as an intentional collective alignment-structuring tool. We did not need that kind of explicit aligning tool in the past, but we do need it now, and so we do need to build it now.

At this point of rapidly increasing diversity as a country along racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, and even economic lines, we need to basically commit very clearly and very explicitly to collectively and individually use a very specific set of core beliefs now, to guide us into our future — because to build trust and in order, to build and maintain a collective sense of being Us, we now need a clear commitment from all of us to each of us about how we will live, and how we will collectively and individually act in key ways in our communities and our lives.

We need to be united by our beliefs. In order for that to happen, we need to know what beliefs unite us.

We Believe In These Values Now

The list outlined below to help tee up that collective alignment process is not, in fact, a new list of values and core beliefs. These are our current and existing basic core beliefs compiled into a single working list so that we can use them to guide us in understood and mutually agreed ways in

each of our communities and settings.

This is basically what we believe in now. This list is a compilation of basic and foundational core beliefs that have anchored “Us” as a nation in the past and that should have the ability to continue to guide us and anchor us in the future.

These individual beliefs have each guided us in various ways for a very long time — but they have not officially and explicitly committed us as a structured and organized package of values and beliefs.

We need to go the next step now. We need explicit, clear, and understood agreements, and we need direct and clear commitment statements that exist as a single set of shared beliefs. We need, at this point in time, to be very explicit about each of those values and we need to be explicit about our individual and collective support for, and commitment to, all of those core values as a package in order to create alignment, intergroup, and interpersonal trust about future behaviors and expectations.

The reason to be explicit and intentional about these commitments as a package at this point in time, is that we currently have a generic set of shared beliefs that we use now in various non-specific ways to define what we

believe in, but we don't each know for a fact if other people who believe in American values actually believe in the same list of values that we believe in.

We can't use the current array and the generically understood list of shared beliefs to unify us in a clear way if we don't actually have a clear list.

So this book proposes we agree to use this explicit set of beliefs and values at this point in time as a package to commit to as a full and explicit package, because we clearly have been using each of these 12 values on their own power to guide who we are, and to structure and guide what we have believed in the past. This is a compilation — not a new list.

You can make up your own mind as you read the list whether or not it is, in fact, simply the compilation of the core beliefs we already use, and you can think about whether there might be other values and beliefs that should be added.

We can and should create a process to use in the future to enhance this list. We clearly can improve on this list — and we should work in a wide variety of participative and inclusive ways to make this list better.

But starting with a broad process instead of a proposed list isn't practical as the starting point for this particular alignment approach, because

any of the kinds of group involvement approaches that could create an initial list from scratch might take years. We need a list now. We have too many conflicts and divisions, in very real and damaging settings, today to spend years building an initial official list of shared beliefs to be our alignment focus.

To build a first list with any kind of group process based “starting from scratch” approach would take a very long time, and we could easily find ourselves spending more time, simply figuring out and setting up the process, than we might want to take at a time in our history when we really need a tool to identify our core beliefs now.

Because this list is actually a compilation of prior and current beliefs, the functional truth is that we actually have already gone through centuries of participative processes to build this specific list.

As a result of those realities, until we figure out a better process for enhancing the list, the suggestion is that we use this list until we get something better — and that we do, in fact, agree with each other that these are, in fact, the basic values and beliefs we share, and will commit to as a people and as individual people.

Read the actual proposed list and think about the contents before deciding whether or not that approach can work for you.

So what are the core beliefs that we have developed over the centuries as a nation and a people?

Democracy Leads Our List Of Beliefs

Democracy absolutely needs to be at the top of the list of our core and foundational beliefs. Democracy is key. Democracy defines us.

We need to anchor our shared belief system for all Americans on a belief in democracy as a shared value and as a shared and collective commitment that we all make to one another.

We need to be fully committed to the democratic process — to having each and all of us with the full rights and the responsibilities that are embedded in using the democratic approach to running our country and running our various political leadership settings and infrastructures.

People have died to defend democracy, and those deaths reflect how extremely important democracy is as a value and a defining principal.

Those of us who collectively believe in the American “Us” need to

have democracy as a shared core belief. We can and should all agree that we will use democracy as the foundation for the new American “Us” belief system and commitment to one another.

We Need to Believe In Equality

That belief needs to be accompanied by an equally strong commitment to equality.

Equality is absolutely foundational to our belief system. No one is higher in any way than any of the rest of us. We need to be equal under the law. We need to be equal in our political status, and we need to all be equal in our ability to participate in the democratic processes that govern us.

Our nation was founded on democratic principals. The people who founded our country were not, unfortunately, all full believers in full equality back in the very first days of this country.

Some people limited their use of equality as a value and a practice to a subset of our population. Equality did not functionally apply to everyone when this country began. White males ran the country, and there was significant discrimination against both women and all people from groups that were not White males.

That inconsistent support for equality in our founding days was a problem for many people at a number of levels.

We had multiple layers of inequality in those early years, and those layers of inequality were built into our cultures, our behaviors, and our laws. We have since grown in our wisdom and in our enlightenment, and we now have reached the levels of believing in legally defined and explicitly inclusive equality for all of us, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, culture, or beliefs.

That commitment to full and inclusive equality for all of us needs to define us going forward, and it needs to be a foundation for all of the values we share and mutually support. We all need to commit to equality as a core and foundational belief, and as a guide for our laws and our behaviors.

We Believe In Inclusion

That value is directly linked to our commitment to inclusion. We need to believe in the value of being inclusive to all groups of people who are part of the great and diverse fabric of this country.

Inclusion should be our commitment, our practice, our philosophy,

and our reality.

Inclusion can't be sporadic or inconsistent or provisional or situational.

We need to be deliberately, absolutely, intentionally, functionally, successfully, and universally inclusive — and that approach of being inclusive needs to be a key component and anchor for our shared beliefs. We need to include people from all groups who believe in our American ideals to be full members of the American “Us” — and we need to reach out to make inclusion a thing we do well in all settings.

We Believe In Freedom

We also need to believe in freedom.

America is “the land of the free and the brave.” Freedom is also an anchor attribute.

We are not owned by — or subject to subjugation by — any other people or any other groups of people.

Slavery doesn't exist. It did exist — and it ended.

We are all free people, each able to think freely, act freely, and to believe freely in whatever beliefs we choose to believe in — with no one

telling us how to act, how to think, or what we should believe. We need to be free in our thoughts and beliefs, and we need to be able to pursue life, liberty, and happiness in ways that we each choose for our own lives.

We don't have the freedom to harm other people, or take the property or possessions of other people. We don't have the freedom to order other people to do what we want them to do, or to tell other people how to think. Our freedom is not unlimited.

We have very appropriate constraints on some aspects of our behavior that relate to other people.

But other than those constraints, we are each free people, and we each can and should enjoy the blessings of freedom as a key part of who we are and what we do.

Freedom is a core belief and it needs to be defended and supported by us all.

We Believe In Religious Freedom

We particularly need to support and protect our religious freedom. We treasure our freedom of religion.

In far too many settings in the world, people with religious beliefs have imposed those beliefs on other people in those settings against their will.

At the other extreme, in some settings, some governments in power have actually made all religions illegal.

Both of those approaches are wrong.

We need freedom of religion. We believe in our religious freedom at a very basic level.

We respect religious beliefs. We honor religious beliefs. We are all allowed to celebrate whatever religious beliefs we each choose to hold.

We each need to protect the right for each of us to have and to hold religious beliefs or to choose not to have religious beliefs — and we absolutely do not allow anyone to impose his or her religious beliefs, or his or her lack of religious beliefs on any other person against the will of that other person.

Religion, itself, benefits from that approach to the legal status of religion.

Religion, itself, is better protected when that clear approach to religious freedom is used — because each religion has the full protection of the law, and each religion is not subjected to the whims, dictates, edicts, or beliefs of any government official, government body, or of any proponents or advocates for any other set of either religious or anti-religious beliefs.

We Believe In Justice

Justice is another core belief that needs to anchor the shared belief system for the American “Us”.

We need to collectively agree that justice is our value, our commitment, and our foundational approach for each of our people.

We need full justice under the law for all of us — with full protection of the law, and with objective justice used to interpret the law and our accountability under the law.

Freedom and justice for all both need to be anchor beliefs.

We Believe In Accountability

Accountability at a personal level needs to be another core belief. We each need to be accountable for our own behaviors and for our lives.

Our first ethical responsibility to the others in America is to be

personally accountable for doing our share of what needs to be done, and for accepting accountability as individuals for what we have each individually done.

It is a good, ethical, and even noble thing to be accountable at a personal level.

At the same time, we need to provide each other with a safety net so that if any of us are in need at a basic level, we are collectively accountable for making sure those needs are met.

We have a shared accountability for putting out fires, saving other people's lives when action is needed to save lives, and for creating the infrastructure that is needed so that the people who need our collective support can and will receive our collective support when that support is needed.

We Believe In Merit

We also believe in merit as a core value.

When people work hard and achieve success and build things and do things that create value for others, we believe in being a culture and a society where the person who has achieved and who has created that value

then merits, benefits, and can receive both recognition, and reward for that achievement.

In too many settings around the world, various levels of discrimination and functionally and intentionally unfair processes undermine, erode, and damage merit as a consequence for doing well.

That damage to merit in those settings cripples future progress and weakens each country's overall success levels as a country and as a people. Countries that follow the kinds of approaches that undermine merit are much less successful as a country than we are as Americans — where merit is recognized and accepted.

We need to acknowledge both merit and relevant reward if and when reward is appropriate to the success and the accomplishment of our people.

We can build a society anchored on success when we reward and encourage success.

We Believe In Creativity, Invention, Innovation, And

Continuous Improvement

In that same vein, we need to be a country, a culture, and a society

that celebrates, encourages, empowers, and enables creativity and innovation. We want our world to get continuously better.

The world we live in can only get continuously better if we have people in it who are continuously making it better.

That is a basic fact of life. We need innovation to be a defining part of who we are and what we do.

Far too many settings in the world make various elements of innovation illegal and some settings penalize various levels of creativity. Some countries make change and improvement illegal.

We have been one of the most successful countries on the planet for many years because we have been innovative and creative in multiple ways, and because we both allow, encourage, and reward innovation in a wide range of areas.

Yankee Ingenuity was a foundational skill set and highly acclaimed virtue for our Founders. The rest of the world has respected and envied Yankee Ingenuity.

We need to build on that strength and that capability. We need to make our endorsement and our support for those areas to be a key part of

our collective commitment to each other, and to the new and continuously improving American “Us.”

We Believe In Honesty

Honesty also needs to be a key value and a core belief for us as a people and as a culture. That value needs to be stated because it is not automatically included in behavioral expectations in all settings. Some cultures enable and allow dishonesty, and expect and even enable varying and inconsistent levels of honesty.

For us to successfully bring all of our groups together, we need to have intergroup trust, and we need positive, beneficial, and trustworthy intergroup and interpersonal interactions.

Our basic intergroup interactions need to be anchored on trust or they will deteriorate in dysfunctional ways. Situations and interactions can far too easily explode, implode, or erode when trust is violated in any real or perceived way.

We need interpersonal honesty to be a core behavior that we both expect and celebrate. Honesty needs to be a standard behavior and a source of individual and collective pride.

We need honesty to build intergroup and interpersonal trust.

We need to be a culture where we can rely on the truth of our key interactions and where we can trust that the agreements we make are the agreements we honor.

We Believe In Human Dignity

We also need to clearly support human dignity. Each of us needs to respect each of us.

Doing demeaning things to people needs to be something that does not happen to people in our society or in our nation.

We need to celebrate each other's personal worth, and we need to support and show respect for each of us as human beings.

The protection of our dignity in various interactions should be an expectation held by each of us at a fundamental level.

We Believe In Win/Win Outcomes For All People

Our overall agenda — to succeed in *The Art of InterGroup Peace* — needs to be anchored on win/win outcomes and on win/win belief systems.

We need win/win behaviors for all groups and we need to commit to win/win approaches and outcomes for all groups. We have been moving very directly but slowly to that shared belief over the past century, and we need to take that belief and commitment to the next level now in order to succeed as a country and as a people.

We all need to support each other. We all need to be pleased when we each and all win. We need to make having everyone win a strategy, a commitment, a skill set and a goal.

When we all win, everyone benefits. When we all win, we each end up with the outcomes we need.

When we all win, no one is on the outside looking in, wanting to upset the Peace in a setting in order to get revenge, to avenge a set of intergroup wrong doings, or to do damage to another group in order to keep them from winning in some way in the future.

This book and its sister *InterGroup* books explain and demonstrate how to achieve win/win outcomes. Those outcomes are central to *The Art of InterGroup Peace*. We need to be a country where everybody wins ... And that will only happen if we make that commitment to one another and then do the right things

to make it happen.

As the win/win chapter of this book explains, we all need to be good at defining our own desired wins, and we all need to be good at understanding, supporting, encouraging, and facilitating wins for all groups.

All Groups Should Benefit From And Use The Core Values

A highly foundational and highly functional part of that win/win process is to use the 12 core values and shared beliefs outlined in this chapter to help every group succeed and win.

Those basic, positive, time-honored, enlightened, wise, ethical, inspirational, and highly inclusive values create benefit for us all. We need every group to be able to participate receiving the full benefits of each value.

Those values give us a clear context for our commitment to one another as Americans. Those values articulate clearly what we believe, and they state clearly what our expectations are for each other as a country and an American People.

Those values give us a functional, visible, inspirational, and credible

safety net for our interactions with each other and they give us a clear direction to steer our country in the most enlightened ways into the increasingly challenging years that lie ahead.

We need those values to be actualized, and we need those values to be real — and we need those values to be shared, understood, clearly articulated, supported, defended, honored, treasured, and celebrated as our expected behaviors and as our collective core beliefs.

**We Need To Build On Our Wonderful Diversity — Not
Eliminate It**

The Art of InterGroup Peace does not call for people from all of the diverse groups who make up the fabric of America to abandon their old group affiliations, or to give up or eliminate their old group allegiances or identities.

We need to build on our diversity — not erase it. It is a strength and an asset to be diverse. We need to appreciate and collectively relate to each of the diverse levels of who we are.

We all need to appreciate the fact that diversity creates major strengths at multiple levels. Diversity gives us wide ranges of options,

approaches, and problem-solution tools to both solve our problems and to take advantage of our opportunities.

Our lives are more interesting and our communities have layers of additional value and layers of additional choices and opportunities when our communities are more diverse. Diversity in art, music, apparel, food choices, skill sets, and thought processes make us both stronger and more interesting.

There are other countries in the world where variety is banned and where diversity is oppressed. We perform better at every level than those countries, we are a much better place to live, and we are more successful as a country and a people as a result of all of those diverse factors coming together to shape who we are.

We need to celebrate and utilize all of the diversity in creativity, functionality, and thought processes that result from our diversity as a people in order to give us the highest levels of shared success as a nation and a people. The intergroup books have multiple examples of the success that diversity can create when inclusion is used as an asset and a strength.

We need to have the cultures of our communities enjoying and appreciating the choices, options, and variations that our diversity creates in each setting. We need to enjoy being diverse at the same time we find comfort, collective strength, and support in being aligned, united, and functionally protected by our key values and our shared beliefs.

We Need A Shared Sense Of “Us”

That overarching level of alignment is crucial to our future success, and to our future state of intergroup and interpersonal Peace.

The Art of Intergroup Peace calls very directly and specifically for each of us, and all of us, to bring each and all of our old alignments consciously and intentionally into a new and additive, intellectually enlightened, philosophically and ethically unifying, intentionally and deliberately overarching, large scale intergroup and interpersonal belief based alignment levels that give us all an aligned path forward together.

We need to maintain and enjoy our old group identities, and we need to simultaneously come together to also very intentionally form a new group that is defined, united, and unified by our key shared beliefs.

We need to form a new and powerful additional level of “Us” that we create, build, support, and enjoy with the other people whose shared values and whose clear and direct commitment to intergroup Peace can create and sustain that new additive American “Us” level of us for all of us here.

We need to have that specific sense of being a values-driven “Us” sense guide our interactions with one another in every relevant aspect of our lives.

Being a values-based “Us” is the basic strategic goal of *The Art of InterGroup Peace*. That approach is, in fact, key to Peace itself.

We each need to make the individual choice to go down that path. We each need to want Peace — to value Peace — and we each need to take several key aligning steps together to create and protect Peace.

We need to use the cultures for each of our groups and communities as part of that Peace strategy. This book explains how that can be done. When we understand both cultures and instincts,

we can choose to control our cultures, rather than having our cultures control us.

As a key part of that process, we need to both celebrate and honor our cultures, and we need to very intentionally and carefully add elements of Peace to the value sets and expectations of each culture.

We need to put in place a very deliberate and very enlightened American culture of Peace. We need to be united by our beliefs in pursuit of Peace.

This approach needs to include all of us. We need to be intentionally inclusive. We need all groups to be included and part of the process and commitment to each other.

We need to solve our intergroup problems together as a people, and we need to understand, honor, appreciate, and celebrate those solutions.

We need heroes and leaders who exemplify and model those behaviors for “Us.” We need to celebrate our heroes who solve intergroup problems, and we need to honor and support our heroes and leaders who exemplify and protect Peace.

We need to avoid inflammatory situations wherever possible. When intergroup inflammations of any kind in any setting occur, we need to resolve them quickly, and we need to resolve them well.

That is an extremely important thing to do. Our basic intergroup instincts make dividing into angry groups, in various settings when trigger events occur in those settings, very easy to do.

We know from events that are happening in our world today, that we can, and do, respond quickly at very primal levels when our intergroup anger levels are triggered by any situation, event, or circumstance that reaches, touches, and activates those instincts at a fully reactive level.

We all need to recognize how vulnerable and even fragile our intergroup Peace building processes can be in a setting. We can be inflamed in deeply instinct linked ways very quickly and very deeply by both words and deeds. We tend to be on full alert for various intergroup infractions, even when we are currently in a state of Peace in any setting.

The sad truth is that we can move from Peaceful and enlightened, mutually supportive intergroup interactions, to pure anger — and to high and powerful levels of defensiveness and protectiveness for our group

based on relatively low levels of provocation ... And it too often feels very right for us to defend our group, and to obstruct or damage the other group when that happens.

We each need to know and understand at a purely intellectual level how vulnerable and susceptible we each are to having those thought processes, values, emotions, and behaviors take over our lives in very damaging ways whenever they are situationally activated. We are all at risk. We need to understand that risk clearly.

We each need to understand and know with great clarity of understanding that those divisive and instinctive thought processes and responses can far too easily create risk for each of us.

We need to use our intellectual powers and our most enlightened understandings of ourselves and of those instinctive influences — and we each need to use that knowledge, and that insight about those processes, to make wisdom based and insightful life choices for ourselves when we feel those instincts being activated.

We need our carefully learned and intentionally developed levels of enlightenment to come to the rescue and offset those negative and

inflammatory instincts whenever they are triggered — in us — in ways that put us at risk of having them run our lives in damaging and destructive ways.

To give ourselves the strength and the emotional support to withstand those powerful and highly seductive and negative instinctive influences, we need to be very successful in being diverse. We need to make being diverse a strength, and we need to make being diverse an asset in very intentional and influential ways.

We need to make the intellectual choice to create an overarching alignment level of shared beliefs that includes us all, and we need to embrace, celebrate, and benefit from our growing diversity as we simultaneously embrace and celebrate all of the factors and all of the shared and enlightened beliefs that make us an American “Us.”

We Have Achieved That Sense Of Us Before

We can go down that path of being an American “Us.” It can be done. It has been done. We were there in a very powerful way for a couple of weeks after the terrorists flew their planes into the World Trade Center.

We all saw, collectively, how much we appreciated and valued the best parts and the best components of who we collectively are as Americans.

At that moment, when those planes crashed into those buildings, we felt that sense of “Us” very clearly. We knew exactly who we were in that moment, and we very much liked being who we were. It was good to be American in the light of those enlightening events.

But we did not know how to turn that brief and shining coalescing time for us all into an ongoing collective sense of “Us.”

As a result, much of that coalescing energy naturally faded. The underlying value set that directly and clearly bonded us together in that moment is still there, however, and we need to use it now to give us the shining future we all should have.

To realize Peace in our time, we now need to be very intentionally clear and more explicit about what those actual shared values that bind us together are.

We need an intentional and values-based culture of Peace and we need functional processes of Peace that can make those values accessible to us all in each of the settings where we need those values to be real.

Those processes are each explained in more details in the four sister books to this book. The books *Cusp of Chaos*, *Primal Pathways*, and *Peace In Our Time* all explain our instinctive behaviors and the problems and opportunities they create.

The fifth sister book to the four *InterGroup* books — *Three Key Years* — explains in practical and functional ways what we need to do, and what we clearly should do, to create success for the children from every group in America. A major chapter of this book explains those processes, needs, and opportunities for our children.

Please use these books to help us achieve all of those goals. Each of those books is intended to be used to help build understanding, and to help create and defend Peace in America.

We Need Leaders Who Want Peace

Leaders will very obviously be key to that Peace building process. To build the future we want and need, we need to select and support leaders who are committed to achieving intergroup Peace as a major part of their leadership agenda. That support for leaders who support Peace is a key component of *The Art of InterGroup Peace* strategy.

We need our leaders to be explicit in their support for InterGroup Peace, and to be clear in their support of win/win outcomes for us all. We need leaders who embrace the values that are outlined and listed above in this chapter.

We need leaders who see their mission and role to be the makers and defenders of Peace — and not instigators of intergroup anger and violence — and we need to support our leaders in their Peacemaker functions and roles.

We also need laws and a culture that all make that level of mutual benefit a reality. We need expectations supported by both enforcement and reinforcement, and we need the basic celebrations and the hero recognitions for all of the successes that will occur as we go down this path to be part of the way we communicate with each other about our shared commitment to *The Art of InterGroup Peace*.

The chapter of this book that describes the tool kit for building and reinforcing our cultures describes those tools in more detail. We need to use those culture-building tools now for us all to benefit.

All of the intergroup books make the point that we need Peace to be embedded in each of our cultures.

The books also state that we need collective and individual understanding of the value of Peace.

To anchor that process, we need both individual and group self-awareness about our own behaviors and thoughts relative to Peace.

We Need To Persuade People To Give Peace A Chance

A key step in getting support for the overall *Art of InterGroup Peace* goal set and strategy is to help other people understand and believe that creating and defending Peace is the right thing to do, and that this is the right time to do exactly that. Each of us who believes in Peace as a higher calling needs to help persuade other people that Peace should be a goal and a commitment for us all.

We each need to persuade people in our own groups to give Peace a chance — and we all need to reach out to people from other groups to create relationships, understanding, and trust at levels that will support and facilitate intergroup Peace.

We need all of us to commit to comply with the key values, the shared commitments, and the preferred and enlightened behaviors that are outlined in *The Art of InterGroup Peace* strategies in order to make those values real,

and to have them shape our lives together in ways that create security, trust, and mutual support at multiple levels.

Success in creating the needed levels of Peace will only happen if we take the time to understand what those commitments that we make to each other are, and if we take the time and make the effort to understand what we need to do individually and collectively to make those commitments real.

This book is intended to help with that process. This book is intended to both explain and help people understand the key issues in a very basic way — to help create a sense that Peace is possible and desirable, and to help create a shared sense that Peace should be collectively and individually supported.

**We Need Honesty, Understanding, Insight, Courage,
Wisdom, Conviction And Commitment To Make Peace Real**

We need to do several very important things as part of that process. We each need to understand our instinctive behavior and we all need to be very honest with ourselves and with each other about how those instincts have shaped our thinking, our behaviors, and our lives.

We need to recognize that we each have the mental and emotional components, and instinct linked functions, that can make us saints — and we each also very definitely have the fully wired ability to be sinners — and we all need to clearly understand that our instincts can cause each of those very positive and very negative behavior packages to feel very right in the settings, situations, and contexts where they are each activated, and when they are each guiding our lives.

As part of that understanding, we need to see, acknowledge, recognize and, where appropriate, admit to the sins of our past — and we need to all acknowledge the damage that has been done in sinful ways to people in the places, times, and settings where those instincts have been activated.

We need to regret and condemn our past sins — and we need to act now in ways that will keep those sins from reoccurring and from running and potentially damaging and even ruining our lives in the future. We need honesty — painful honesty — about all of those factors and actions, and we need a new beginning that is anchored in that honesty because we clearly need to begin again in some key areas if we want to get to where we need to go.

We need to commit to one another that we understand what we have

done and why we have done it — and we need to commit now to each other and to ourselves that we will do the right things for the right reasons in the right ways to shape our future.

One of our highest levels of ethical achievement is when we commit to ourselves to act in enlightened ways, and then keep that commitment to ourselves. Keeping an explicit and enlightened commitment to ourselves is one of the most effective and solid foundations for self respect, and it is an extremely reinforcing behavior and life choice relative to meeting and honoring the expectations of other people who have also been the recipient of that commitment.

We need to do exactly that with this set of shared beliefs.

The values listed at the beginning of this chapter are intended to function as compass points, guidelines, personal and group commitments, and functional keys and anchors for that process of doing the right things in the right ways for the right reasons. We clearly now need values and beliefs that we trust and understand, and even love, to bring us together and keep us together — and that list is intended to fill that need.

We either need to use the values listed in this chapter — or we need to build another list very much like it — in order to functionally anchor the

process of creating a new “Us” here in America.

The list embedded in this chapter isn’t perfect, but it is perfectly functional, and it is historically accurate and correct — and that level of collective correctness and practical and operational functionality should be sufficient to meet the needs we have today for a specific and explicit set of aligning beliefs..

We should and can improve that list over time. Other values and beliefs can be added to make the set of core beliefs even more robust and useful. Ideally, we can create a process and develop an ongoing open dialogue for all of us about our core values and foundational beliefs that will help us to enhance, and even expand, this list over time.

Until we have that enhancement process in place, however, this list is available now and it should be functionally good enough to do what it needs to do. Good enough is not perfect — but good enough literally can be good enough.

Other countries that want to use a similar values and core belief alignment process to build internal Peace between their own people who are internally divided in each of their settings should take the time to

create their own basic set of core beliefs to use in their settings for that purpose.

They obviously could borrow and study and even use our list as a starter set, but each setting and each country should figure out what the values and beliefs are that will make them good and functional as a country ,and should use the values and beliefs that meet their specific needs.

This particular list of values and core beliefs outlined in this chapter is an anchor list for “Us” in America. It is very American — built from the actual core values that we have expressed and used in various ways as Americans since our country was founded. We are blessed as Americans with very good and fundamentally and foundationally enlightened core values, and it is a functionally appropriate thing to use them now as a package to guide us to a new and extended sense of who we are and who we need to be to succeed in the times we now face.

We Need To Be A Nation Of People Who Believe In Peace

It will be important for us as a people to truly be a people who want Peace. It will be important for us as individuals to want and commit to

Peace and to have both the insight and the personal courage to do the things that need to be done to make Peace possible.

We need a strong sense of our shared humanity. We need our sense of shared humanity to be a higher calling, respected in every culture and setting, and believed with enough conviction and energy to use that sense of shared humanity to offset and neutralize the seductive primal pull of our powerful instincts that have the constant power to divide us, and to have people in various settings feel great energy doing divisive and damaging things to other people.

To make Peace real, we need all of our people to accept, endorse, agree to, and embrace the highest callings of our common humanity — and we need to commit individually, through our hearts and our heads to Peace.

We need to build Peace everywhere.

Each setting and each community in this country needs to build its own Peace. This book is written to help in every setting—and to be a culture-building and culture enhancement and group support tool for people who believe in those values and those beliefs, and who want to build and protect Peace wherever they are.

We need to make individual commitments to share these values and beliefs, and then we need to act in very clearly focused ways to achieve intergroup understanding and Peace in the settings and situations we are each in.

We need to be able to count on each other to make Peace real. We need the other people who join us in our path to Peace to know that we can each count on each other at a core, fully dependable, full-hearted, highly principled, and explicitly ethical level to support inclusion, democracy, equality, freedom, human dignity, continuous improvement, personal accountability, ethical and intellectual enlightenment, and win/win outcomes for all of us — beginning with creating needed support for all of our children on their paths to personal and collective success.

We Do Need Peace

We do need Peace. It will not happen if we don't do what needs to be done to make it a reality.

Our growing diversity — coupled with our very basic sets of instinctive behaviors that turn intergroup settings far too easily and far too often into intergroup conflict, intergroup anger, intergroup damaging behaviors, and intergroup war — make it very clear to us that we need to

keep ourselves from going down that very slippery slope of damaging, negative, sometimes evil instinct guided us/them behaviors, emotions, thought processes and beliefs to a very bad place for all of us in this country.

Knowledge is power.

That is never more true than it is today on this set of issues, challenges, dangers, and opportunities.

We need knowledge. We need collective good will.

We need a commitment to help create win/win outcomes for us all.

We need Peace.

This is the time to be doing that work. We who understand those issues, and we who want Peace are the people who need to do it.

No one else on the planet will somehow do this work for us — and no one else can actually do this work — other than us.

Peace.

In our time.

With each and all of us making it happen.

Is there anything that we could be doing that is more important to the future we want for our children and our grandchildren, and for the

people we love than to make Peace a reality now?