

Chapter Three — Our Instincts To Survive Need To Point Us Towards Peace

There are very few instincts more important or more powerful than our instincts to survive.

Survival instincts can have a major impact on our lives whenever they are activated. We each have very powerful instincts to survive and those instincts tend to become the top priority motivation factor for our thinking and for our actions whenever those instincts are directly and situationally relevant to us.

Whenever we have a clear sense that our survival is at stake, we act in ways that can increase our chances of survival. We can set aside the other issues in our lives to focus our energy and our attention on surviving.

When our survival is at immediate risk, we trigger crisis-based energy levels and can often do important, meaningful, and even heroic things to survive.

When we collectively have the clear and believable sense that our survival is at longer-term risk, we tend to act with high levels of collective intelligence in ways that are aimed at reducing or eliminating that long-term risk.

Whenever we believe that our group survival is at risk, that belief can create and drive aligned behavior and aligned activity as a group in ways that are perceived to be integral and needed to help our group survive.

In any situation or setting where our actual survival instincts are activated, they tend to channel our thinking and structure our priorities.

It is nearly impossible to ignore those instincts when they are activated.

We actually share that specific set of instincts with a wide range of other living things. Survival instincts drive behaviors at significant levels for many kinds of living beings.

We are no exception. Survival instincts clearly exist for people today in every setting and those instincts have obviously been relevant to us for our entire history.

Our Survival Instincts Are Relevant To Peace

Our survival instincts are relevant to a book about the instincts that affect intergroup interactions and intergroup Peace for three main reasons.

One reason for those instincts to be included in this book is that it actually makes strategic sense for us to activate our long-range survival instincts now in the interest of intergroup Peace.

We are becoming much more diverse at a rapid rate — and we will need to deal well with that increasing diversity or it could destroy us — or at least damage us badly in a wide variety of settings and ways.

That is a very real and very immediate risk to us as a country at this point in our history.

We need to have people in our country understand and appreciate the fact that our survival and our future chance of success are both actually at risk at several levels today because of our basic us/them packages of instincts. We need people to understand that our chances of survival will be enhanced by achieving intergroup Peace and by keeping our most negative intergroup instincts from being activated in dangerous, dysfunctional, and destructive ways by our increased diversity.

We need to use our most positive “us” instincts to help bring us together in intergroup settings in ways where we need to be aligned in the interest of intergroup Peace, and we need to keep our “Them” instincts from defining how we interact with one another.

We Need To Not Damage Other People Based On Survival

Instincts

The second reason for us to understand those sets of instincts at this point in our history is that we need to be very careful to not activate our survival instincts in ways that cause us to damage other people in any setting.

We are at risk of having that happen in a number of settings.

If we believe that other people in any setting threaten our individual or group survival, then we are likely to have our survival instincts guide us to negative behaviors that are intended to damage the people who we perceive to put our survival at risk. We need to avoid damaging people because those survival perceptions are activated.

Intergroup Peace needs to be our collective goal as a country and it also needs to be our goal in every local setting at this point in our history.

We need to be very careful not to have our survival instincts in any situation or setting negatively affect that goal and skew our thinking and our behaviors in ways that will make it difficult or impossible for people in any setting to work together in the cause of Peace.

If we are in any intergroup situation — in any community or setting — where we have a sense that the people from another group are putting our survival or the survival of any people from our group at risk, then that

perception can cause our survival instincts to prioritize our thoughts and to guide our behaviors in damaging ways against the other group.

We need to be very sure not to activate survival instincts in our various settings when intergroup incidents occur that create intergroup division at an intense and threatening level.

The third main reason why our survival instincts are directly relevant to intergroup Peace is that those particular instincts — when they are situationally activated — can both cloud our minds and have us fall from an enlightened perception of who we are and how we should behave to a more primal and divided sense of ourselves and our most appropriate behavior.

It can be a short and slippery slope from perceiving other people in a setting to be part of an us and having an incident or event occur that seems to tell us that the other group is actually — at their core — a dangerous and threatening “Them.”

When that happens, we can very easily fall back into both thought processes and behaviors that are aimed against the other group as opposed to thought processes and behaviors that support that group.

Inflammatory trigger events can activate our group survival instincts at dangerous levels — and we need to be very careful not to allow that to happen.

Economic setbacks or environmental crisis can trigger similar risk factors.

There are each very real and valid concerns and opportunities.

We Need Survival Instincts To Unite Us — Not Divide Us

We need our survival instincts to unite us — not divide us.

We are, in fact, in danger and at risk at a very real level for serious intergroup anger and significant intergroup damage as a country — and we need to use a shared understanding of that very real danger in ways that can help us mutually activate our long-term survival instincts in the cause of Peace.

The danger we face from intergroup interactions that trigger negative intergroup instincts is very real. This book explains that danger in more detail in multiple places.

Our growing diversity both puts us at survival risk at multiple levels — and our growing diversity also gives us an opportunity for collective

safety and collective gain if we act in aligned ways to help each other succeed in meaningful ways.

We all need to clearly recognize that we are becoming significantly more diverse as a country and we are becoming much more diverse at a very rapid rate. That diversity can trigger some very negative instinctive behaviors if we let it pursue some very natural intergroup channels.

We need to respond well to our growing diversity or we will find ourselves in multiple intergroup situations where our survival instincts will be activated and will be extremely relevant in a very negative and damaging way to our thinking, our values, and our behaviors.

Our growing levels of diversity can all too easily lead us to very real situations where people are at clear risk of threatened survival and where we could end up damaging each other as groups in multiple settings.

Our Survival Is Threatened By Becoming A Tribalized

Country

The risk is real.

The truth is — we will either achieve intergroup Peace in America or we will become just another tribalized and divided country at war with itself.

That is not a theoretical or hypothetical concern for our world today.

Other multi-ethnic, multi-tribal countries across the planet have major and damaging internal intergroup wars now. Civil wars have killed millions of people in intergroup conflicts. More than 50 million people are displaced today by the growing array of internal intergroup conflicts that are happening in many multi-ethnic countries today.

Most countries do not deal well with internal diversity. Many countries who did deal well with internal diversity in the past are finding themselves facing increasing levels of internal conflict today.

Immigration is a key cause for that concern.

Many other countries who were not very diverse in the past are finding that immigration into their countries by people from other ethnic groups is creating major categories of intergroup difficulties, intergroup stress, and even direct intergroup conflict.

Our Diversity Can Be An Asset Or A Threat

In our own situation, we are rapidly becoming one of the most diverse countries in the world. The majority of births in this country last year was from our minority families. We are very diverse now and we are accelerating our level of diversity.

Our growing diversity will either become a great strength for us all — as we benefit from including more people in the American Dream — or it will become a source of division and a trigger for intergroup conflict and intergroup anger.

If we do not know how to deal with those issues in an intentional and strategic way, we are in real danger of having our instinctive behaviors steer us into a pathway that will effectively threaten both our success and our survival as a country.

We very much need to avoid activating our us/them instincts in a negative way that will lead us to the worst sets of “Them” related behaviors.

We need to focus now on the question of how we can use our instincts to be an “us” to avoid war and conflict and how we can use our “us” linked instincts to create and protect a functioning level of intergroup Peace in America.

To achieve that strategy for intergroup Peace in the interest of our success and our survival, we need to deal effectively now with the various subsets of our instincts that have the greatest impact on our behaviors and on our thoughts relative to other groups of people.

We Need To Understand Our Basic Packages Of Instincts To

Succeed And Survive

The next several chapters of this book are intended to improve our chances of both survival and success by addressing, describing, explaining, and outlining 12 of those key sets of relevant instincts. This chapter deals most directly with our need to activate our survival instincts in the interest of Peace and to avoid activating our survival instincts in ways that divide us and destroy both Peace and the opportunity to create Peace.

The previous chapter of this book — Chapter Two — dealt with our very powerful packages of instincts to tribalize, to split the world into us and them and then to do evil and damaging things to them. Those specific sets of instincts clearly threaten our survival... both as individuals and as a country.

Those instincts drive intergroup thinking and they drive intergroup behaviors very directly — both in our country and in every other country in the world.

Those instincts to love and protect “us” and to hate and damage “them” are clearly sets of instincts we need to understand and manage in order both to assure our survival and to create intergroup Peace.

The other chapters that deal with our problematic instincts deal with our instincts to detest traitors, to build cultures, to construct paradigms, to define and defend turf, to build hierarchies, to innovate, and to function as both teams and mobs.

Turf, hierarchies, Alpha and Beta behaviors, and the instinct-aligned behaviors that are created when we function as either teams or mobs all have very direct impacts on intergroup interactions in ways that are very relevant to both individual and group survival and to both intergroup Peace and to our survival as a thinking people.

Our instincts to innovate and to decorate — and to be collectively and individually inventive and creative — are actually also functionally relevant for — and useful to understand — relative to our intergroup behaviors and to intergroup Peace.

We will be well served — and our chance of survival as a country will be increased — if we use our creative instincts to create a set of shared behaviors and intergroup communication approaches that can help bring us together at multiple levels to be a nation at Peace with itself.

We can reduce intergroup risk by increasing intergroup understanding — and we need our best creative minds and our best communication tools to help with that process.

We Need To End Discrimination Against Women, As Well

The first addendum section in this book deals very directly with our unfortunate packages of instincts and our very dysfunctional and damaging culture-based rule sets and behavioral expectations that have caused us to discriminate far too consistently and far too negatively against women in far too many settings.

That particular package of unfortunate, dysfunctional, and damaging “sexism” oriented behaviors that we see in so many areas and in so many ways is important enough to deserve its own addendum section for this book and to merit its own set of proactive strategic, tactical, and functional responses, insights, and goals.

We have made significant progress in this country on many of those sets of issues. But we need to continue further down our most enlightened pathways relative to key issues of gender related discrimination and oppression if we want to benefit most completely and universally from being

an inclusive country at Peace with itself that is stronger and more successful because more of us are successes.

Other chapters of this book explain how our instincts do their work and explain our history as a country in the context of our instinctive behaviors.

Our survival chances are enhanced if people understand both our current realities and our historic realities — and if we have a clear sense of what we need to do now to harness our instinctive behaviors, our cultures, and our paradigms in the service of our success, our survival, and intergroup Peace.

All Saints/All Sinners And All Capable Of Choice

That entire set and array of instinctive intergroup behaviors can guide us to positive, beneficial, and enlightened behaviors relative to one another.

That same set of instincts can create real risk and can steer us to ugly, evil, cruel, and intentionally damaging interactions with one another. Those negative behaviors and those negative thought processes are relevant to our survival instincts because they can put both individual and group survival at risk.

Each package of intergroup-relevant instincts has the ability to generate damaging, destructive, divisive, and dysfunctional value sets and behaviors, and each set of intergroup-relevant instincts has components that can help us to act in enlightened, progressive, positive, collaborative, and mutually supportive ways with one another.

At this point in our history — to both succeed and survive — we need to understand all of those instincts and what they do to and for us — both individually and collectively.

We will increase our chances of survival and of success in those areas when more people have clear and significant understanding of the role and the impact of our instincts on our behavior and thought processes today. Our instincts usually do their work and have their impact on our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors without us being clearly and intellectually aware of their influence or cognitively aware of their impact on us as a relevant factor, function, or issue.

We are more likely to avoid the risk created by those instincts when we each understand those instincts and the risk they create.

Our risk is higher today because we each tend to very simply do what our instincts guide us to do in each setting and in each situation. We do that

because we don't know instincts are involved and because it "feels right" to follow and do our instinct-aligned behaviors.

When We Understand Instinctive Thinking, We Can Make

Intellectual Choices

Our interactions with other people tend to be choreographed by our intergroup instincts without us having any sense that the choreography is actually happening. We need to each have a much clearer sense of that process and the choreography involved so that we can be our own choreographers.

We need to better understand that whole process, so that we can make it serve as a tool for our values and our beliefs.

We will not free ourselves from having lives that are influenced and guided by our instincts. We will always have our instincts. No one can become instinct-free.

Our instincts will always be at the heart of our interactions with people and with groups of people.

In the interest of our long-term survival, we can choose, however, exactly how we will allow those sets of instincts to influence us.

The choices we get to make are very real. We can choose to use each package of instincts for good or we can choose to use those instincts for evil.

Those instincts can create safety, and they can put us at real risk. Those instincts can create alignment, or they can create division.

Those instincts can trigger humane behavior, or they can enable and empower inhumanity.

At an intellectual level, when we understand the mechanics and the consequences of our key choices — we can choose to be saints or we can choose to be sinners.

We need to make conscious and enlightened choices about which path we will take, and we need to make those conscious and enlightened choices now because our increasing diversity as a country is making those choices very relevant to us all today.

We Need A Values-Based Sense Of “Us” To Survive

This book believes that we each should make the intellect-based, ethical, and enlightened choice to intentionally align with the specific instinctive behavior patterns and with the specific cultural value sets that will help us create both intergroup Peace and build and protect a society

where being mutually supportive is both a key shared value, a survival tool, and a shared skill set.

We can do heroic things when that is needed to ensure our survival. We can work extremely hard when our survival is at stake and when working hard can save our lives. We can do hard and substantial things to help both ourselves and the people we care the most about to survive.

We all have seen the usual and customary impact of our survival instincts in multiple settings. Film, literature, and history books are full of heroic survival stories.

There is no doubt that survival instincts exist and there is no doubt that we act and decide in the context of those instincts when they are activated. We need to now do intelligent things in the context of those instincts to create intergroup Peace and we need to be ready to face the various kinds of crisis that can damage us as a country in a number of ways if they occur and we let those crisis divide us rather than unite us.

Survival Instincts Create Both Conflicts And Alignment When

Disasters Strike

Our basic survival instincts can clearly cause us to make decisions about ourselves and about other people that are aimed at increasing our own chances of surviving.

There is no doubt that we will face future situations that will create a sense of risk and danger for us all. Floods, droughts, hurricanes, and other natural disasters will put people at risk. Environmental crisis will put people at risk.

We know that we can expect various levels of economic crisis that will put people at risk.

Our infrastructure has many key components that are fragile and we can expect that some aspects of our infrastructure will either fail or be damaged in meaningful ways by people who want to do us harm.

Each of those risks has the ability to trigger our survival instincts in ways that could either pull us together or tear us apart.

We need to be ready to function as an “us” when our infrastructure breaks or our environment goes into crisis.

Any major immediate threat in any setting can cause us to act in that moment of crisis in whatever ways we feel can help us survive in that moment. Survival tends to trump our other priorities at any time when survival is relevant.

We can and will do frantic, immediate, and even heroic things to avoid being stabbed or cut or shot. We do heroic things to avoid a flood or to flee a fire. We can do highly motivated things to avoid being murdered or to avoid having our food supply stolen.

If we are attacked, we can generally feel very right in defending ourselves in various ways if the things we do to defend ourselves will increase the risk of our survival. Our personal rules for our own personal and on-going behavior relative to other people can change significantly when we are threatened.

We need to be very sure that we avoid situations where people act in unethical ways — either as individuals or as groups — toward other people in response to either survival instincts or fear.

The best way of resisting the temptation to do an evil thing is to make sure that the triggers for that temptation to do evil do not exist. We need to think strategically in terms of not putting people into settings and situations where either survival or fear trigger our most negative intergroup reactions and our most damaging intergroup behaviors.

The Art of Intergroup Peace book explains both how we can bring ourselves into intergroup alignments and how we can prevent or soften the activation of our most damaging instinctive beliefs and behaviors. *Peace In*

Our Time also points us to aligned sets of behaviors that keep our survival instincts working for us collectively rather than having them divide us.

Both Immediate And Long-Term Danger Can Motivate

Chapter Twelve of this book also outlines the basic set of very effective motivation triggers that we can use to cause people in any setting to come into alignment as a group and to function in group-like ways.

Danger is the most powerful motivator for people shown on that alignment trigger pyramid — followed at the next level up the continuum by the sense of having a common enemy.

Creating a sense of danger or a sense that a common enemy exists can trigger aligned behaviors for people with a high level of power and consistency.

Both immediate and longer-term threats to our survival can generate instinctive survival responses that affect how we interact with other people and with other groups of people.

We will clearly face some significant challenges in the years ahead relative to environmental issues, economic issues, or infrastructure incapacity or failure. If we have problems with our water supplies, our power grid, or our communications linkage tools, then we could find

ourselves with survival instincts very legitimately activated in at least some settings.

We need to respond to those challenges as an “us” and not let “them” divide us into groups that are each aiming to optimize their own group’s survival potential and status.

We can do very negative things to other people individually and collectively when we feel that the other people threaten either our individual or collective survival.

Those negative responses to other people tend to “feel right” if they are aligned with our survival instinct. Those negative intergroup behaviors can feel particularly “right” if they are activated in the context of us perceiving the other relevant group in the most negative context of the “Us/Them” instinct packages that are outlined in the next chapter of this book.

Our very powerful instincts to divide the world into us and them very consistently create behaviors, perceptions, thought processes, and values that can exacerbate and reinforce our survival responses.

We Need To Use Survival Instincts To Build The Cultures We

Need For America

We need to build a culture of Peace for America that will help us all survive our worst and most dangerous us/them instincts and to capitalize on the best features of being “us.”

We build cultures in every setting to help us achieve both our instinctive goals and our intellectual goals. We need to use the culture building tool kit well to give us the best chance of both thriving and surviving as a country.

Our cultures have the potential to be a key survival tool for us as a country — and we need to use that tool well.