

## Chapter Twelve — America the Vulnerable

As I have been looking at the impact of our us/them instincts on our behaviors, it has been discouraging and even depressing to see how many other countries in the world are actually at war with themselves today. People in Chechnya, Syria, Sri Lanka, and an amazing number of other countries have armed groups of people who are killing other people in internal intergroup conflicts today.

It has actually been encouraging to me at one level to see that we do not have that degree and that extent of intergroup conflicts and intergroup damage happening in our country today.

We are not killing each other in groups, and we don't have armed militias representing groups in this country who hate and do damage to other groups in our country today.

We do have a small number of very unhappy people who actually do label themselves as being "militia" for a fairly obvious set of us/them instinct related reasons. But the people who call themselves militia in our country are clearly not functioning at the scale of militia groups in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, or The Ukraine. That is encouraging and good for our safety and our success as a country.

It has also, however, been very clear to me that we very obviously do have major intergroup challenges facing us right now as a country. It is also very clear that we will need to successfully and skillfully address those challenges or they will damage us and they could damage us badly for a very long time.

The truly evil intergroup and even truly evil intergender behavior that is happening in so many places in the world should serve a clear warning to us all that we are not safe from comparable evil behaviors here. It was clear to me in looking at our history and at our current status that we have done evil things to ourselves in our own past and we need to be very sure that we are not evil to ourselves in any of those ways again.

We have people who are angry today based on years of prejudice and discrimination and we have people who are unhappy today because of differences in economic status, educational status, or employment level status by group.

We have some significant differences between groups of people — and there is no reason to believe that those differences will simply be reduced or disappear as our diversity levels increase.

## **We Don't Have The Strategies To Turn Our Growing Diversity Into A Significant Asset**

We need to face some extremely important facts about our growing diversity. It is clear from looking at our population numbers that we are becoming increasingly diverse at a level where there will be no majority group in many areas of the country in the relatively near future. That new reality will create new levels of intergroup interactions in a wide range of places in this country in the immediate future.

The majority of births in this country this year were to our minority populations. The majority of students in our public school systems today are minority students.

We are not having public discussions about the likely consequences at that new level of diversity. We clearly do not have the right strategies in place that are needed to turn our increased diversity into an asset instead of having our growing diversity trigger a major and very real risk to us all.

As I have been doing the research for these books and studying those issues and demographic trends, I have been repeatedly impressed and mildly depressed by the fact that almost no one in our country in any public settings is having any kind of systemic and open discussions about any of those

issues. We have some very real intergroup interaction issues to be concerned about — and we do have periodic intergroup events and incidents that put those issues into public view — but we clearly do not have a process, a forum, or nay kind of mechanism to use to address those issues in any proactive, productive, or even preventive way.

We do not have wise people dealing collectively in various settings with the obvious challenges that will be created by our collective future of extreme diversity.

Far too many people actually very intentionally shy away from any discussions of ethnic, religious, racial, or cultural intergroup behaviors.

People tend to avoid those topics in public discourse — and when those issues do come up in various settings and circumstances, people tend to avoid any meaningful discussions of the real intergroup issues and the basic and relevant intergroup concerns that exist for groups today.

The topics are not politically correct topics in many settings and some people are afraid to discuss those issues in any direct way. My sense is that a number of people believe that other people will be angry or offended if those topics are even mentioned in many settings, so those topics are not mentioned or discussed.

## **We Shy Away From Direct Discussion In Public Discourse**

That avoidance for those topics today is partly because we actually have often been fairly inept at having those conversations in the past. We have often discussed a number of those issues badly and in clumsy and sometimes dysfunctional ways in the times and settings where they have been publically discussed.

People who have tried to discuss some of those issues and who have managed to offend someone in their efforts have sometimes been criticized or even attacked for those efforts. Most people in this country have learned to avoid our basic intergroup topics and issues entirely in public discourse.

Within groups, many of those intergroup issues are very clearly addressed by group members with themselves. Very clear intergroup anger is often expressed inside of group settings to other group members. But in mixed group settings, at very basic levels, it has been my experience that we are often afraid to say real and honest things to each other about those issues, and we don't have a safe context or a good format for those discussions.

We do not even talk explicitly and in clear fact-based terms about the pure arithmetic and mathematical realities of our growing diversity for all of our settings. We have been very careful not talk in any honest or open way

about what we believe our increasing diversity will do to us and will do for us as individual committees and as a nation.

That is all an unfortunate and highly dysfunctional communications approach.

### **The Majority Of Births This Year Are Minority Births**

We truly are becoming highly diverse at a rapid rate. We need to address that reality.

The majority of births in our nation last year actually were to our minority populations. The majority of students in our public schools this year are minority students.

Those are not long-term projections of theoretically and hypothetically possible future diversity levels. Those are today's numbers.

We actually face the reality of very real diversity today — and we need to be ready to understand and discuss that very real diversity today because that high level of diversity is happening now and it is the world we are in today.

Avoiding basic discussion of those numbers and those issues will absolutely not help us turn our diversity into a strength for America.

I have personally come to believe for many reasons that our diversity can be a huge asset to us as a country — if we are very intentional in creating the right intergroup approaches and the right intergroup directions for us all to use.

I have seen the most diverse care system in America turn its diversity into synergy and into a culture of caring that created best results in major areas of service and of quality of care. Inclusion of all groups into a shared agenda that was anchored on shared beliefs and shared values and functioned as a meritocracy can result in the best outcomes for both patients and caregivers.

I have great confidence that we can turn our growing diversity as a nation into a major asset that benefits us all — but we will not do that by ducking the issues or avoiding the key conversations we need to have about those issues.

The rights approaches and directions that will make our growing diversity an asset will not happen by themselves, however. We need to collectively and very intentionally steer ourselves to that particular right direction.

It will take honest, open, and well-intentioned discussions to get us to that place.

We clearly need to talk about those issues. We need to have those conversations in a safe and non-inflammatory way.

### **We Need Forums And A Context To Discuss Those Issues**

We need to set up both a forum and a context to have those conversations. These books — *Cusp of Chaos*, *The Art of Intergroup Peace*, *Primal Pathways*, and *Peace In Our Time* — are all written to help create a safe construct and a non-threatening context to tee up and to help frame some of those discussions about the intergroup realities in America.

Creating a level of safe dialogue and building a safe mental model that can be used to help people in various settings discuss those issues is a major goal for these books. The books each make an attempt to talk about real intergroup problems and interactions in a way that we can all both understand and discuss.

We need those discussions to happen and we need a context that can make those discussions about our various intergroup realities and issues both effective and safe.



We also need settings for those discussions to occur. We need people to come together in various community settings to talk about the issues of intergroup understanding and intergroup stress and conflict in their communities.

We also need to come together in “virtual” settings to have those dialogues and conversations.

The Internet should actually become a major asset for us in that overall communication and learning process.

## **We Need To Use The Internet Well As A Tool For**

### **Enlightenment**

We very much need to use the Internet well at this point in time to support those discussions and to enhance and enable the overall learning process that can anchor our alignment and increase our collective and individual wisdom on those issues.

We need the Internet very intentionally and explicitly to be a tool for enlightenment. That can be done. We need to set up Internet discussions of the key facts and the key issues and we need to be able to use the Internet in a collaborative way to make us all better informed and situationally smarter.

The Internet is being used extensively now by racist groups and by negative groups who want to create intergroup anger, conflict, and divisions. People who see the world in dysfunctional and angry us/them ways use the Internet now — often very skillfully — to recruit followers and to convert people to their cause.

Those people also use the Internet to plan and coordinate attacks of various kinds against the people they hate.

We need to use the Internet to achieve the exact opposite set of goals — to bring people together in Peaceful and inclusive ways to create a collective sense of values-based “us.”

Computer systems in many areas of the system world are now often developed using “open sourcing” collaborative building approaches. We actually need to do something similar to do positive-focused “open sourcing” problem reduction work on the key and current issues of intergroup conflict, intergroup alignment, and intergroup Peace.

We need a collaborative build for the strategies that create Peace. We need to address those issues directly and openly at multiple levels and we need people to understand those issues so clearly that we can all be part of the solution.

We need to use the Internet well to explain the issues and we need to use the Internet well to get people to work together to solve those sets of intergroup problems.

## **When We Understand An Issue Well — We Can All Help**

### **Solve It**

When we understand an issue well and when we have common agreement on what our overall goals are as a people, then many people who share the goals, understand the key issues, and embrace the values and the culture can jointly and collectively solve intergroup issues in each of the settings we are each in.

At a corporate leadership level, I know from years of direct, hands on experience, that when people in a setting understand the strategy, understand the culture, and feel aligned with the overall process of an organization, then management of key processes in a wide range of settings can all happen situationally by remote control.

People who make daily decisions in each organizational setting that has those underpinnings will make those decisions in the context of the strategy and the culture for the setting — and creativity can be unleashed in good, positive, and highly productive directions using that aligned approach.

People can solve problems together much more effectively when people jointly understand the problems and agree on the need for solutions.

Great creativity can occur when people understand the goal of the creative process in any setting.

I know that to be true, because I have used that strategy and that approach in several situations and settings and I know for a fact that it works.

### **We Need To Understand Where We Have Been**

We will not make sufficient progress at this point in time in dealing with the issues we face today until we all take a good and honest look at our actual history for intergroup interactions.

We need to know exactly where we have been and we need to know where we are going relative to our intergroup realities. We all need to share that knowledge and we need to be honest about those realities instead of avoiding discussion on those topics or pretending that the most challenging and most negative parts of our history did not happen.

Some people are in a state of denial about our historic realities. It is hard to make progress on intergroup understanding today if we are in state of denial about key aspects of our intergroup past.

The truth is — for the last couple of centuries — America has been a national culture with a very large single ethnic majority group that dominated the culture at every economic, functional, and legal level.

White Americans have made up the bulk of the population of this country for hundreds of years. African Americans and Hispanic Americans have had high population concentrations in some geographic areas, but have historically made up less than 10 percent of the total population. Asian Americans and Native Americans each have tended to represent less than 5 percent of the population.

Those numbers and that relative status have been true for a very long time. People with ancestors from the Middle East and Southeast Asia have also been here in functionally negligible numbers. Those people who come to this country from those specific ancestral settings tend to be widely and thinly dispersed.

Mosques and Buddhist temples have both existed in this country, but they have been rare and most were clearly anomalies for their settings — until relatively recently.

**White Americans Have Been The Dominant Majority Group**  
**— And Christianity Has Been The Dominant Religion**

Various categories of Christianity have been the primary religious belief system for the U.S. — and even those churches have had their own frequently visible history of us/them intergroup instinct activation. Church affiliation has been a significant defining category for us/them differentiation for a number of issues and behaviors in a number of American settings.

In the aggregate, however, our cities have tended to have a relatively small number of synagogues, a fairly large number of churches, and almost no mosques or temples.

White Americans — speaking English as their tribal language — have been the very large “us” group who ran the country. White Americans made the laws of the land, ran the government, and owned the vast majority of the nation’s wealth.

White Americans created a clear category of “us” and that majority “us” dealt with all other groups as various categories of “Them.”

The original founding principals of the country had some very enlightened beliefs about liberty, freedom, and equal opportunity to pursue the American Dream — but the implementation of those enlightened

principals was functionally limited for a very long time only to the category of “us” that ran the country — White Americans.

### **Freedoms Were Initially Limited To White Males**

For a very long time, the ruling group in each community and setting who benefitted from that set of freedoms was actually limited to White American males. Even White women were not allowed to vote for centuries. White Americans — with most power given to White males — were the absolute majority group for most of the history of this country and that absolute majority ran things in almost all settings very clearly in its own group self-interest.

As we look forward to our immediate future as a country, we need to recognize the fact that those sets of ethnic majority dominance are changing — and we will need to reflect those changes in our intergroup behaviors if we expect to be a country that continues to be at Peace with itself.

We also need to deal with the immediate reality that major portions of our country now have their own local ethnic concentration realities that we will need to address and recognize in order to meet our goals in each setting.

### **People Have Replaced Forced Segregation With Self-**

### **Segregation**

When I started looking at those issues two decades ago, no one anticipated the massive ethnic voluntary self-segregation we now have in all of our major cities. Our cities all have major areas of ethnic and racial population concentrations — and that concentration tends to be both historic and voluntary — with people choosing to live with other people like themselves.

That self-segregation in all of those cities actually makes complete sense when we understand instinctive behaviors but awareness of instinctive behaviors has not been an anchor for our public policy thought processes in the past. So we have been surprised and even a bit befuddled at a policy level by those sets of behaviors.

When people tend to choose for personal instinctive comfort to self-segregate our cities by race and ethnicity then we need to understand the implications of that instinct-guided reality for our public policy decision making.

### **Public Discussion Of Key Points Or Patterns Has Been**

#### **Minimal**

It was very clear to me when I started looking at those kinds of issues that our politicians had not figured out how to discuss any of those sets of



issues in a safe and non-inflammatory way. That was true in the early 1990s and that situation has not improved very much since 1990. Public discussion of those points about our intergroup issues and intergroup realities has been minimal for that entire period of time.

The riots that happened at various points in cities like Los Angeles and Oakland occasionally put very clear intergroup issues into the headlines — but those behaviors have tended to happen in very setting specific ways. The riots and demonstrations have been very local — with local people expressing local anger.

More recently, the blowups in Ferguson, Missouri, and in several other cities have created major media attention at a national level. The people who are writing news stories about Ferguson and the people who are sending us electronic news coverage from Ferguson have sometimes mentioned some of the broader issues that exist for those settings, but the primary focus of the media for those stories has been on events and incidents, and not on patterns or issues.

The primary focus of the news coverage for each of those settings has leaned more to factoids, describing specific incidents, and reporting about specific events — but not describing or discussing the underlying issues and

realities in those settings in any way that will help the overall public understanding of those sets of problems.

That reporting level is easy to understand, because our media has not been learning about or focused on the underlying issues for those communities or settings. Our media has just reacted to those events as events when they occur.

The public discussion about those intergroup issues in those settings that has happened has either been entirely situation based — with news-worthy intergroup trigger events of some kind creating event-focused public attention — or the media-linked conversations that did happen tended to be politically correct and timid to the point of people in the setting not putting real issues on the table or discussing them in any clear way.

### **We Need Better Conversations About Key Issues**

We need to do better. We need to set up a better and more grounded public and private conversations than the ones we have had up to now relative to those situations and those issues.

If we can't have that discussion in either the news media or in related settings, then we need to create Internet friendly opportunities for that communication dialogue and shared learning to happen.

This book and its sister books are intended to help create a safe context for those conversations and that shared learning to happen.

It has taken me a couple of decades to figure out how to use these books to function as a communication support tool for people who want to understand and deal with actual intergroup interactions.

This set of books is intended to be a just-in-time tool for those people. I do believe that the time for those safe conversations is now and I believe that people need a context now for those conversations so that we can have the right set of intergroup and interpersonal interactions both tomorrow and today.

### **We Need People To Reach Out As People**

Each of the books in the Intergroup trilogy is intended to help create a safe and clear context for those kinds of intergroup interaction conversation to happen.

The Intergroup books are also intended to encourage and enable individual people to reach out and make personal connections with people from other groups at a 1-to-1 level. We need to get to know people as people. We need to create trust and understanding between people as people.

We need to create friendships that reach across group lines and connect people with people as people — with the opportunity to get to know each other as people.

Those books are included to encourage and support that process.

We need people from each group who reach out to create friendships and basic understanding with people from other groups.

When we create those kinds of relationships and linkages, we can make our growing diversity a national asset.

We need people to create those relationships with a sense of the key factors, issues, and even instincts that are relevant in the process to each of us.

We need people in each setting to understand our basic us/them instincts. We need people in each setting to understand both the roles and the opportunities that those instincts create. We need people in each setting working very intentionally and deliberately to avoid triggering a sense of “Them” and we need people working to create a sense of “us” for each situation and setting.

Creating direct friendships with people from other groups can be a key part of that process.

We need people in each setting to recognize the actual intergroup history of each setting. We don't want to dwell on past behaviors in a way that rekindles anger and keeps us from positive future interactions, but we need to recognize the full context for where we are today.

We need well-intentioned and committed people to take steps now in the context we have today to build intergroup alignment and interpersonal trust with the goal of creating better overall outcomes and better interpersonal relationships for the people in each setting.

### **The Majority Of Births Were Minority Mothers Last Year**

We need to anchor those conversations by having all of us recognize the mathematical realities.

For the last half-century, a combination of a higher birth rate for minority Americans and a significant influx into this country of new minority group immigrants — both legal and illegal immigrants — has caused the minority population of this country to grow significantly.

Many cities now either have no majority group or one of the historical minority groups has become the current majority group for the city.

Most births in America this year were to our minority Americans.

It strikes me as extremely important for us all to know and understand that we have now actually reached the historical and mathematical point where the majority of new births in this country this year are from our minority populations. That actually did happen this year. That is a watershed event. It is historic.

This year, for the first time, the majority of the students in the public school system of this country will be from our minority populations. The private schools tend to have White majorities — but the public schools will now have a majority of minority students.

In less than a decade, the majority of new workers who will be getting jobs in this country will also be from our minority groups. Very soon after that, we will see a majority of all workers in this country coming from our minority populations and from our new immigrants.

That is a huge change.

White workers made up more than 80 percent of the workforce of this country just a couple of decades ago. As our older, white, majority group workers age and retire, those old White workers are being replaced by a much more diverse set of workers from multiple ethnic and racial groups.

**The Actual Diversity Numbers Are Irrefutable And Inevitable**

Again — the demographic numbers are uncontested. They are what they are. Age differences by group are also obvious and extremely important to understand.

Older Americans are overwhelmingly White. That will be true for quite a while. The new and younger workforce that will keep America functioning for the rest of the lifetime of those older Americans will very soon be less than half White.

That will create some interesting political realities and it will even create interesting societal cash flow realities as we go forward.

The taxes that will pay for the care and that will fund the benefits and the community services that will be needed by those older white retirees over the next couple of decades will come increasingly from minority taxpayers and workers.

That future is the path we are on today. There is no turning back option for us. It is exactly what it is. It will be exactly what it will be.

Most White Americans still live in neighborhoods that are overwhelmingly White and most White Americans work, today, in work settings that are also still overwhelmingly White.

For those folks, for their daily experience, White is still the visible majority at a significant level. The actual numbers that show how diverse we are as a country for the overall country tend to be less visible to White people in those settings.

I have shocked some very intelligent and very well-informed White people in some all White settings by telling them those actual sets of numbers about our current diversity levels. We tend to believe that the world immediately around us is a representation of the entire world. For White Americans in that particular perceptual cocoon, that is not true — and I have shocked some people in those cocoons by pointing out the actual numerical realities.

I have followed those revelations with a sense that the future we face can be a blessing to us all if we approach it in the right way.

### **We Can Turn Our Diversity Into A Strength And An Asset**

My own belief is that we have two clear choices. We can turn our overwhelmingly new diversity into a major asset for our country — or we could turn that new diversity into a horrific and highly problematic set of intergroup tensions, intergroup conflicts, and increasingly dysfunctional



intergroup behaviors. Vulnerability is very real if we choose that second path.

Both paths are easily within our reach. Either outcome is possible. If we want to succeed going forward, we need to start with the facts. We need now to collectively understand the basic fact that we will be increasingly diverse and we need to all accept the fact that the trend is indisputable, inevitable, and entirely irreversible.

### **We Have Led The World On Enlightened Behaviors**

One of the things that gives me real and significant hope for the future of our country is knowing that we have led the world in so many areas of enlightened behavior. Some of our history involves negative us/them behaviors that are truly painful and hard to look at.

But other parts of our history are much better and those better parts of our history that are linked to our very best us/them behaviors give me cause for optimism and hope.

We do have a clear history that is rich in enlightened elements. We have done some good things at multiple levels that needed to be done. We have very intentionally embedded enlightened behaviors and enlightened beliefs into our culture and into our society at multiple levels and we

continue to get better at expending our enlightened behaviors into new areas of our society and world.

We all know and celebrate the list of our enlightened achievements. Those behaviors are worth remembering and noting. We were democratic when the rest of the world was run by autocracies and ruled by kings.

We created freedom of speech, when other countries imprisoned people who told the truth about things that the people in power did not want said.

We stumbled badly for a long time on slavery, but then we did free our slaves and we outlawed slavery here before it disappeared in some other major portions of the world. We were not the first nation to outlaw slavery — but we were far from the last.

We then discriminated badly, intentionally, maliciously, and in some very cruel and evil ways against our former slaves. We also discriminated very intentionally in multiple settings against all of our various ethnic and racial minority groups in this country.

### **Every Minority Group Has Its Discrimination History**

Every minority group can tell its own very real story of deliberate and damaging discrimination. I write about that history of intentional

discrimination against each of our minority groups very explicitly in both *Primal Pathways* and *The Art of Intergroup Peace*.

Our us/them instincts caused the White majority group to act in very discriminatory ways against each and every perceived category of “Them.”

As I have explained in each of this trilogy of books — anyone who looked different or who sounded different triggered those instinctive reactions — and significant levels of discrimination happened in very negative ways for our minority groups who looked or sounded different than our White majority group.

But the reality is that we have now made major progress for many of those issues. That historical level of deliberate, intentional, and systematic discrimination is no longer the law of the land. It is true and good that we have in recent years grown increasingly enlightened in many of our areas of functionality and our governance relative to those extremely important issues.

That has been relatively recent progress in key areas, but it is real progress and it did happen. We can build on that progress. We only awarded women the right to vote 100 years ago — and the civil rights bill that was written to protect the voting rights of all Americans was passed only 50

years ago. We are still working on getting the voting inclusion processes right — but huge progress has been made.

We had hundreds of years of extremely discriminatory and unenlightened behaviors that we should feel shame for on both of those issues — but we are on the right path on almost all of those key issues now. Major progress has been made in a wide range of areas that we should celebrate.

We now have formal equality under the law on a wide range of issues that extends across genders and reaches out to all ethnic groups and races. We have made significant progress in key areas and my sense is that we now need to understand that progress for what it is so we can build on that progress and those enlightened approaches going forward.

### **We Should Both Condemn And Celebrate**

We did not get to where we are now easily. Each step in the process of progress had to be won on its own merits — and clear opposition has existed on all key issues. Ours is a painful history to study. People who did not want enlightened behaviors in multiple areas put up fierce and sometimes bitter and angry fights for long periods of time to keep the old practices in place.

The good news is that once we adopt a new and more enlightened belief as a nation and a culture, we tend to bake the new belief into our expectations and into our laws.

Our ability to bake a new belief into our cultures was a very useful point for me to understand in working on those issues. Our cultures give us rules for our decisions and behaviors. We function better in groups because we have rules to guide that functioning and to help us with behavioral decisions and expectations.

Those rules help each of us prioritize and channel the pull we feel from each of our own instincts. Our cultures function as the key element in that tool kit of setting situational priorities in many settings.

The guidance processes that are built into our cultures help us prioritize our thinking in practical ways when our various instincts are simultaneously activated.

### **We Use Our Cultures To Civilize Our Instincts**

Our cultural expectations in most settings guide us away from — and protect us from — our worst sets of instinctive behaviors.

It was extremely important to my own learning process to understand that we use our cultures both to channel our instincts and to protect us from our worst instinctive behaviors.

We use our cultures in very basic ways to achieve our instinctive goals. We have hierarchical instincts, for example, so every culture invents rules and expectations for hierarchies. We feel right following those rules because we feel right both in achieving instinctive goals and in complying with cultural admonitions and guidance.

We have instincts to acquire property, so every culture creates its own set of rules about who can own what — and every culture sets rules about keeping other people from stealing the property we rightfully own.

Those rules define how we can achieve our instinctive goals and they create safe grounds to help us protect our property from being taken from us.

Likewise, we have instincts that relate to sexual behavior, and every culture creates its own set of rules about acceptable and not acceptable sexual behavior. We use those rule sets to guide our behaviors.

I have seen culture after culture build sets of rules that channel instinctive behaviors into pathways that meet the needs of each culture. It is

possible to build enlightened behavioral expectations into our rule sets for our cultures.

## **We Also Use Our Cultures To Protect Ourselves Against Our**

### **Worst Instincts**

I have also seen — in multiple settings — the sad fact that when we don't enforce some of the key rules that protect people in any setting, we run the risk very quickly of having a regression to more basic, negative, and primitive instinct-driven patterns of behavior.

Some of our instincts point us in negative directions relative to how we trust other people. We need to create cultural protections for people relative to those behaviors.

Our cultures create rules that protect us in those areas — and that protection is most likely to be successful if our cultures enforce those rules.

If we create enlightened rules about property protection, for example, or rules about consensual sexual activities and if we do not enforce those rules, people too often simply revert to the less enlightened and more primal and negative behaviors that those rules were created to avoid. Property theft, abusive sexual behavior, and discrimination can all be activated as negative behaviors when rules that govern those behaviors are not enforced.

Discrimination happens in many work settings when the discrimination rules for a setting are not enforced because people tend to feel right being with people like themselves, and people feel right helping people like themselves.

That set of “feeling right” behaviors for “people like us” can very naturally result in discrimination at some level against people who are not like ourselves. Like hires Like. Like promotes Like.

That is the natural instinct-incented behavior pattern that tends to self-create itself spontaneously in each work setting, unless we deliberately create rules that modify and prohibit that discriminatory behavior and create more inclusive hiring practices.

If we create rules that make discrimination illegal, then we can cut far back in very good ways on discrimination. Those rules become the normal behavior patterns in that setting.

If we, however, do not enforce those rules, then the old patterns of discrimination naturally reappear in each setting and those behaviors feel right to the people who are discriminating. “We” like “us.” Behavior patterns follow.



Sexual harassment rules follow that same pattern. If we bake those rules into our cultures and if we also enforce them, they become the normal behavior pattern and harassment is significantly reduced.

If we clearly do not enforce those rules, however, some people move to harassing behaviors. Harassment happens far too often when those rules either do not exist or are not enforced — and that behavior does damage to people when it happens.

Baking in enlightened behavior into a culture by enforcing the behavior is a key step in making progress in those key areas. That was one of my conclusions about the progress we have made and about the progress we need to make. We need to use our laws in very explicit ways to protect the progress we make in each of those areas where the more negative instinctive behaviors will otherwise create damage to people in multiple ways. If we skip that “baking in” step for those kinds of behaviors, we can put progress in each of those areas at risk.

We need to be very aware of our increasing diversity as a country. We need to take steps in every diverse setting to bring people together in ways that benefit all groups.

We need to reach out as individuals to make connections on a 1-to-1 basis either people from other groups — and we need to build the trust levels that happen best at a personal level through those interactions.

We need personal commitments to the goals of having us all succeed and having us all benefit from being who we are.

We need to take our great and growing diversity as a country and turn it into a major asset — having many people succeed and having our collective success based on the success of many people make us stronger as a country.

We are blessed not to have the kinds of tribal intergroup conflicts that scar so many other parts of the world. We need to turn our own diversity into a values-based and mutually supportive American “Us” that can give us the success levels we need into collective success for us all.

We need to begin by actually dealing very directly in safe ways with some of those key issues.