

CHAPTER TWO

All Saints and All Sinners – the Terrible Price of Being “Them”

ONE OF MY very early and most seminal learning moments on this journey into the impacts of instinctive behavior on us as individuals came when I was reading about a horrible war criminal from World War II who had just been arrested in a foreign land years after the war was over.

The old man had been known to the local children in his new neighborhood as a warm and generous person who was clearly their friend.

In his war mode, he had tortured people and he had deliberately starved, abused, damaged, mutilated, and killed both women and children. In his Peace mode, he repaired toys and he cuddled the neighbor children’s pets.

I wondered how that man could have concealed his evil side for all those years from all of those friends, neighbors, and local children — and then I realized, in a flash of disruptive, shocking, and very painful clarity, that he didn’t need to hide the evil side in that setting because his evil side had not been activated in that neighborhood setting.

He did not conceal evil in that setting. He had not activated evil.

He was situationally who he appeared to be in that situation.

That truly was a very shocking moment for me. It was jarring, in fact. Jarring and frightening.

When I thought further about both sets of behaviors — that was also an extremely useful insight into human behavior and thought processes that had both negative and positive implications at multiple levels.

That insight into the situation-linked activation of his instincts pointed me to a path to the positive behaviors and the positive thought processes that we want people to have. That insight also pointed a path to the evil and damaging sets of behaviors and thought processes that we desperately want to avoid.

That functional insight into the situation-based activation of evil behaviors somewhat perversely caused me to have a level of optimism at both a functional and operational level relative to the positive consequences that can result if we effectively activate our situational ability to be an “Us.”

It told me that even an extremely evil person might never be an evil person if the wrong set of situational instincts is never activated for that person.

It also told me that we need to very intentionally not set up situations where any of those negative instincts are activated.

Those truly are extremely powerful packages of instincts. That particular insight and that general observation and understanding of people’s situational behavior and situation-linked values still gives me a sense of clear terror, pure horror, deep discomfort, and unsettling anxiety about the very real potential we have for truly evil behavior to be situationally triggered in people.

The simple fact that a person who functioned so obviously in one setting as a lovable “Us” could then personally flip into “Them” thinking and could become an evil danger to other people based entirely on situational issues is, at best, a very sobering concept to contemplate.

When I thought about other similar value-altering behavior switches that I knew about, the major changes in values that happen all too often when people’s riot instincts are activated came very clearly to mind.

People who are caught up as participants in riots do huge damage all over the world. Every major city police department has riot gear and riot training because the instincts for riot behavior are embedded in people everywhere. People in many settings do very ugly things to other people when those riot instincts are activated.

That reminds me of the behavior we see in domestic house dogs who sometimes have a chance to run in a pack with other dogs and who have their own personal pack instincts activated by being in a pack. I have seen that set of behaviors happen. The behavior changes in those dogs can be ugly, hard to believe, and hard to forget.

The prison guard story had very clear echoes of those kinds of behavior.

I had already begun my study of us and them sets of instinctive behaviors when I read about that particular prison camp guard. I knew already at that point that we have packages of instincts that shape our lives and I knew that our instincts to separate people into us and them had major impact on our group and individual thought processes and behaviors.

The book I was writing at that point in time was intended to help explain those sets of instincts and to point out their influence and their impact to people in what I hoped would be useful levels of detail. I knew that those instincts created some key and powerful patterns for our lives. I wanted everyone to understand the patterns so that we could at least understand them when they were relevant to our lives.

I knew that there were evil patterns of behavior, and I wanted us to understand those behaviors when they occurred.

What I hadn't realized, however, was how situationally powerful and how circumstantially relevant that both good and evil behavior can be and how situationally activated our basic good and evil value guidances and thought processes could be.

That particular man had done horrible things to people when he had his "Them" instincts activated. He mutilated "Them." He deliberately and intentionally created pain, suffering, and death for "Them."

But the same man nurtured "Us." He was a kind protector for "Us." He did things to make the lives of other people in his world better.

Both behaviors, I realized, felt right to him at a deeply instinctive level as he did each of them.

We Need to Be “Us” to One Another

We need, I decided in that moment of painful insight, to work very hard at being “Us” to each other. That fact was painfully clear. I set a goal in that moment, to do what I could do to help people have a shared sense of “Us.”

I set that goal for my own interactions with the world at multiple levels because I realized in thinking about those sets of behaviors how terribly bad it can be for people when people see other people as them.

Our instinctive behaviors, I knew, could damage us. Our instincts can cause us to do evil and damaging things when we perceive someone to be a “Them.” Our activated instincts can create evil behaviors and can cause people to feel no guilt in being evil.

I also realized at that moment with equally great clarity that our instincts can trigger both good and beneficial behaviors — and I realized that we very much need to have our instinctive behaviors help, support, and protect us in our various interactions and settings.

We will never, I knew, escape being influenced by our instincts. We have no way of being instinct free.

Therefore, logistically and strategically, I realized that we needed our instincts to be our ally — not our enemy.

I knew for a fact that we could go down either path and my goal at that point, became avoiding going down the damaging and destructive paths that lead to people perceiving other people to be “Them.”

Anger, Lust, Greed, and Being “Us” Can All Be Situational

I had been on a search for instinctive behaviors in multiple settings when I read that newspaper story. I already knew how situational some of our instincts could be. Lust is very situational. Anger at having your child attacked is very situational. Greed, even, generally tends to be fairly situational. I knew that to be true. But I hadn’t expected evil to be so situational. That surprised me. I had

somehow expected evil to be a constant and consistent characteristic of evil people. That expectation was wrong.

That level of personal and individual consistency for evil behaviors and for evil thoughts is actually, I believe, true for some evil people. I believe it is also true for some mentally impaired people who have particular sets of mental issues. But it was also clear to me at that point that evil was actually a highly situational behavior for many other people. Those people could do very evil things when those instinctive thought processes were activated. Those same people could be kind in their thoughts and deeds when the situation they were in called for other sets of more positive instinct-triggered thoughts and behaviors.

That particular insight convinced me — at a very personal level — how important it is to be an “Us” with other people. In any setting, the setting is more likely to be both safe and productive if the people in the setting situationally perceive other people in the setting to be “Us.” We are much less likely to damage people who we perceive to be “Us.” We are capable of both sets of behaviors. We can both help people and we can damage people depending on what category we believe people are in. It was extremely important for me to understand that we are all influenced by our instincts in ways that can cause each of us to be saints under some circumstances, and that we all can be influenced by our instincts in ways that can cause us each to be sinners under other circumstances.

Dual Track Behaviors Can Happen with Some Frequency

Once I realized that set of differential factors to be true, I saw those dual track behavior patterns everywhere I looked. Those patterns are easy to find. I saw people act in ethical and caring ways in major portions of their own personal behaviors and then I saw those same people act in cruel, damaging, and even evil ways for other sets of their own equally personal sets of behaviors.

I had already done some serious reading on those issues and those behaviors before I read that story about the prison guard. I read every book I could find on racism and prejudice. I read books on riots. I learned about the intergroup behaviors and consequences that are triggered by most riots. I read books about intergroup cruelty. I read a wide range of magazines and newspapers that addressed various issues of intergroup tension and conflict. I also read very good books by E.O. Wilson, Robert Wright, Francis Crick, and Richard Dawkins on instinctive behavior patterns in humans. I looked at several related sociobiological thought pieces and essays. I even read and re-read the works of Charles Darwin.

Wilson, Dawkins, Crick, Wright, and Darwin are all elegant, clear, and persuasive writers. I found their insights and their clarity to be very useful. Those particular authors were not trying to solve the same intergroup problems that I was trying to solve and they weren't trying to create the same kinds of process-relevant action steps relative to functional intergroup instinctive interaction issues that I was working on for my own thought process and my books, but each of those authors had some remarkable insights into highly relevant issues and I deeply value and appreciate their work. I learned a lot and I built very useful foundations for an overall context and a thought process from their teachings.

As Chapter Nine of this book describes in more detail, I had been personally doing some coaching and therapy with a Jungian psychoanalyst about that time, and he had pointed me to instinctive behavior as a key factor in creating so much consistency in both our individual and group behavior patterns. His insight was reinforced for me by the analysis and reading I did about our various sociobiological thought processes.

I also, at that point, skimmed through some writings from a small number of philosophers looking for useful references in philosophical theories to instinctive thinking and to both moral and immoral behavior patterns. The philosophies did make some generic references to instinctive behavior, but I did not find much in

that reading that was useful to my quest and learning process about instinctive behaviors. References to human nature, I personally believe, lead us to our basic instincts much of the time, but that was not an insight trail that the philosophies I read were pursuing.

Some of the best information to help my early thinking came from the work of anthropologists who were studying the behaviors resulting from various animal instinct packages. It was very clear that the situational activation of instincts triggered clear patterns of behaviors for chimpanzees, wolves, and a number of other species who interact with each other in instinct patterned ways. Some of those patterns were so close to the patterns I saw for our own behaviors that I couldn't decide at times if the similarity was informative, amusing, or painful. Alpha behaviors in people, for example, look even more primal after I read about Alpha behaviors in several other species. I now have bookshelves full of books on related topics and I have boxes full of newspaper clippings and magazine articles that contain reinforcing data points and relevant information about intergroup incidents and intergroup issues in various settings.

I also hungrily read both professional and public consumption psychology magazines to look for any articles or insights that might help me understand and create a context for those issues from a psychological perspective. Psychology journals written for psychology practitioners actually had a number of useful articles that I found to be reinforcing data points about the relevance of consistent patterns of behaviors. Again, these writers were not focused on intergroup issues, so specific insights that were directly applicable were not common.

Over the years, a few publications have been particularly useful sources of data. I particularly appreciate *The Economist*. Every issue of *The Economist* gives me grist for the thought process and for the proof points that support the theories and strategies that are outlined in my own books. *The Economist* also tends to actually name some of the relevant tribes when ethnic conflicts happen. They don't do that naming of tribes every time for every conflict, but they do it

often enough to be very useful. They have gotten much better recently at adding that information about the actual names of the situation relevant ethnic groups involved to some of their conflict stories.

There Is a Lot of Evil in the World

All of that reading convinced me that there is a lot of evil behavior in the world and that behavior patterns happen with reinforcing consistency. I could see from both direct research and reading that there is a lot of intergroup conflict, racism, prejudice, and discrimination in the world. The patterns of those behaviors are too consistent not to have been impacted by our basic instincts for related issues. All of that work convinced me that there is very good reason to believe that our basic packages of instincts are both the source and the guiding energy for many of those behaviors.

In recent years, the Internet has become a gold mine of information about intergroup conflicts. Wikipedia, all by itself, has been a very good source of information about a number of the intergroup issues for some of the settings they describe. Wikipedia needs to be better and more consistent at reporting that information — and I hope that the publication of this trilogy of books will inspire people who know more about the specific intergroup issues and the specific conflicts that are happening in various settings to share that information with the relevant Wikipedia sites in ways that will make that particular reporting tool more robust and more complete on those issues.

I once had a vague plan to personally create a separate website that would list details and more direct information about the tribes and the ethnic groups involved in each of the conflicted settings and then I realized that Wikipedia already exists and could easily be used to perform that function if the people who knew those kinds of details about those conflicts would simply add those details or links to those details to the Wikipedia data base.

All Saints/All Sinners

It was clear to me fairly quickly back in the early 1990s that we have a number of instincts that cause us to do tribal things and to interact in both evil and beneficial ways with one another. That fact that we have instincts that are so situationally influenced makes us all a threat and it makes us all an asset — or a potential asset.

Both sets of positive and negative behaviors are around us every day. That has been obvious from the beginning of this research. As I travelled around the world, I saw people acting in loving and kind ways to one another in every single setting and I saw people doing horrible, destructive, evil, and deliberately cruel things to one another in every single setting.

In what has often been very disconcerting ways, I have seen the same people doing both sets of behaviors — acting very differently depending on whether they perceived someone to be an “Us” or perceived that person to be a “Them.” I saw people I liked and respected doing bad things to other people under the guidance of those instinctive behaviors and I saw those people not have any sense that the things they were doing to those people were actually bad.

We Suspend Ethics and Do Evil Things

Possibly the most dangerous and painful aspects of our thought processes — and one I believe we all need to understand clearly — is our ability to suspend ethics and to feel no guilt in damaging whoever we perceive to be a “Them.” Feeling no guilt is an important instinctive functionality. I saw those guilt free attitudes and guilt-free negative behaviors in setting after setting where people were perceived at instinct triggered levels to be a “Them.”

It was very clear to me that our us/them instinct packages can feel “right” linking us to very different sets of behaviors, values, and beliefs, depending on their degree and direction of activation. We feel right in our “Us” behaviors and we feel equally right in our “Them” behaviors.

People Can “Feel Right” Doing Damaging Things

It was often painful to me to see people I liked “feel right” when they were doing their “Them” set of behaviors. It can be an ugly set of behaviors. As I studied those behaviors, and as I looked at our history as a nation, it was clear that we have gone down both paths as a nation — and it is clear that we have done real damage when we perceive people to be “Them.” With our “Them” instincts activated, we have been able to enslave them, damage them, and deceive them with no guilt or remorse. It was clear that those kinds of behaviors and crippling ethical value deficiencies have historically happened to people when their “Them” instincts were in play. The instincts that are situationally in play for each of us in each situation tend to define us and guide our values and our behaviors, and they guide us into very different packages of behaviors based on their activation.

Soldiers, Warriors, and Parents Trigger Different Behaviors

It was very useful to understand the functional impact and the strategic value of the fact that the instincts we trigger when we are warriors — or when we are in mobs — are clearly entirely different than the instincts that we trigger when we are an us in a domestic setting and when we nurture and cuddle our own children and both protect and support the people we love. I looked at the behavior of soldiers in multiple settings and I saw the same multiple and complex set of values and behaviors for each soldier — depending entirely on which set of instincts is situationally activated for each person. A soldier who is a fierce and even bloodthirsty foe in a war setting can be a gentle father and a quiet protector of their family safety when the soldiers “Us” instincts are in gear. The values and the instincts of a war zone are clearly different than the instincts that are activated in a soldier’s family nursery.

I also saw, when I looked at that particular set of issues, that most soldiers seem to be able to switch gear from the war zone instinct package to their Peace zone instinct package as they personally and situationally change zones. I also

saw that some soldiers who have those instinct packages activated have a hard time shutting them off in a Peace zone. That mobility to shut those instinct packages off when the situation doesn't call for them can result in a whole series of dysfunctional behaviors. In some cases, compulsive behaviors that are situationally incorrect can create dysfunctional and sometimes damaging behaviors.

Our instincts do trigger our values and structure our thoughts in very consistent and predictable ways.

It is, I believe now, extremely important for each of us to have the personal humility, the personal self-awareness, and the direct and clear individual insight into our own personal thoughts and our own personal behaviors to be able to recognize as individuals that we each tend to be under the influence of and be guided by the instinct that is currently activated in our minds.

That is a very useful insight for each of us for self-guidance and it is even more useful for our personal self-awareness. Our brains are like computers with multiple programs — and the current functionality of our own mind and the current state of our own emotions depends very directly on the program or programs that are currently running in our own brains.

We Each Need to Be Personally Accountable

That insight does not at any level excuse any people for doing evil things. Evil is evil. Constant and consistent evil and purely situational evil are both horrible and unforgivable thoughts and behaviors. Evil is not acceptable. I have come to believe as I have been working on those issues and on those books that we need to each be accountable at a personal level not to do evil things. We each need to live with personal accountability for all of our behaviors as a defining guide for who we each are. We each need to make the intellectual choice and we each need to make the moral choice at a personally accountable level to never allow our more negative instincts to cause us and allow us to do unethical and evil things to other people.

I believe in the power of our intellects — fully armed with the right knowledge — to steer us to ethical and enlightened behaviors. Our intellects, I strongly believe, need to anchor that process. We need our intellects to guide each of us to enlightened behavior and we each need to make the deliberate and intentional personal choice to act in enlightened ways — even when unethical or evil ways may feel situationally right and may be emotionally seductive.

Functionally, we need to channel and utilize our best instincts and we need to use our best instincts very effectively and intentionally in the interest and for the benefit of each of us and all of us.

I have both optimism and the hope, after studying and observing those issues for two decades, that we can get the enlightened behaviors and the positive values that we want from people if we intentionally activate the right and more positive sets of instincts and then channel those activated positive instincts into our cultures and into the belief systems that we both want and need in order to live together in enlightened ways in these modern times.

It Can Be a Slippery Slope to Evil

At the same time, I do have a sense of real fear about our future because I realize that we can lose our enlightened behaviors and we can go down a very slippery slope to evil behaviors — sometimes very quickly — if the wrong set of instincts is triggered and if the wrong set of behaviors is activated.

I have seen that slippage happen in setting after setting. I have seen organizations, communities, and even major components of nations slip into us/them conflicted instincts, values, thought processes, and behaviors — and I have seen people turn on their neighbors, friends, and co-workers and do damage to other people with no remorse or regret.

The Holocaust Epitomized Evil — and Was Not a Pure Anomaly

Our us/them instincts can drive us to some truly horrific behaviors. When I started looking back in 1987 at how people treat “Them,” the Holocaust came

quickly to mind as maybe the best-known example at that time of dehumanizing behaviors. I had known about the Holocaust my entire life. I knew how evil the Germans had been to the Jews in Nazi Germany. I had believed up to that point in my thinking that the Holocaust was an anomaly.

Then I looked at patterns of behaviors in multiple other settings. I concluded that the Holocaust very clearly exemplified our most evil and horrible us/them behaviors, but the Holocaust wasn't the clear and rare anomaly that I had hoped that it was.

I saw very similar and purely evil ethnic cleansing issues in multiple other settings and I saw ethnic-linked evil behaviors in a stunning array of settings. Ethnic cleansing happens in many places. The Hutu-Tutsi massacres were clearly triggered and enabled by those same basic packages of instincts as the Holocaust. The Sarajevo murders stemmed from that same package of instincts. The massacres we are seeing today in the Middle East have those sets of instincts at their core.

I made a very long list of very ugly intergroup occurrences that were currently happening in 1989 — not just a list of historical examples of us/them behaviors. It was a deep and truly ugly list at that point in time and it has gotten even longer and uglier since that time.

We have done a lot of evil in a lot of settings — and pure evil is happening today in places like Sri Lanka, Syria, Iraq, and the Congo. Local genocide is happening today as I write these pages in villages in Iraq and Syria. One tribe at war in Syria today has warplanes and as I was editing this chapter of this book, I read that those tribes are very intentionally using their war planes to bomb the other tribe's hospitals — deliberately killing both the caregivers and the damaged civilians in those hospitals in a very intentional campaign of guilt-free destruction and purely evil terror.

The people who are machine-gunning and bombing the helpless patients in those hospitals clearly regard the other tribe as Them. Pick up your newspaper or scan the Internet on any day and look for current intergroup conflicts. You

can find those kinds of conflicts somewhere every single day if you look on the Internet or in the news media for even a relatively short time with that search in mind.

Another group in Syria is entering villages and killing everyone in each village who is from a different religion or a different sect of their religion. The us/them delineation could not be more clear in those settings.

This behavior is not ancient history. Those are behaviors that are happening to real people and happening today. Both *Primal Pathways* and *The Art of InterGroup Peace* talk at length about our intergroup instincts and about their very real and very negative impacts in so many settings today. When people lose their personal ethics and when people with those negative instincts activated have their values and morality levels collapse and degenerate to truly primal levels, then unethical, cruel, and evil behaviors happen in far too many places and people feel right doing things that are truly wrong.

I have developed a chilling sense about how deadly our tribal instincts could be and I have developed a chilling and deeply sobering sense of fear about how fragile our civilized behaviors can be as I have been working on these books. The research process that I have been on to look for evidences of that behavior in as many settings as possible has been both sobering and depressing. I have seen both clear current instances and clear historical instances of those horrific behaviors in every setting that I have visited and it was sadly clear that those behaviors felt right to the people doing the horrible things to one another in each time frame and setting.

The Aborigines Were No Exception

I have now gone in person to three-dozen countries to do my research into those behaviors. I believe I will have gone to a couple more countries before this book is published. I have looked specifically at us/them instinctive behaviors in every single country I have visited, and I have found those behaviors to blossom and influence both behavior and thinking in very visible ways everywhere I looked.

Very early in my research, I had heard from some friends in the social services world that the Aborigines of Australia were the exception to those intergroup patterns of behavior. I even read some materials in the early 1990s that seemed to indicate that at least some of the Aborigines actually had no turf and had no tribal linkages or tribal wars. That piece of information about the Aborigines gave me a glimmer of hope that there might be another path that we can choose relative to those issues.

So I went to Australia and I went in person to an Aborigine village. That rumor about the Aborigines having no tribes and no turf was clearly very wrong. It was clearly a tribal village. I could see immediately that the rumor about not having tribes or turf had been entirely incorrect. In that village as an educational feature display, I saw a war dance done by that local tribe that was explicitly aimed as a direct threat against the tribe who lived on adjacent turf.

I also saw the weapons that had been used until very recently by that particular tribe in intergroup war to protect their tribal turf. I now have one of those Aborigine weapons in my own weapons collection. It is a well made, clearly damage-producing implement of war.

I had a picture that I took of that specific war dance in that Aborigine village hanging on my office wall in Minnesota for years next to a picture of the Peace Wall in Belfast. I have since seen similar war dances and similar weapons in other Aborigine settings. The rumors were wrong. There were no exceptions to the rule. I have seen tribal behavior and some level of intergroup conflict in every intergroup setting that I saw. Those particular instincts are obviously relevant in every setting. That was very sobering information.

The introduction to this book points out how deadly those instincts can be. Those packages of intergroup instincts exist everywhere and they can be activated in a negative way any time we have more than one set of people in any setting. If my books do nothing other than point out the impact of those instincts in language that helps people understand those instincts in ways that allow us to use that knowledge for both group and personal awareness and

understanding, I will consider writing those books to have been a success and worth the years that I have spent writing them.

If people stop reading these books after reading this chapter, but understand now how important those instinctive behaviors are in our lives and how dangerous those instinctive intergroup behaviors and thought processes can be to us all, then I would suggest that concept and that reality would be a sufficiently useful thing to learn all by itself. You could stop reading at the end of this chapter and you will have learned the key points that we need to know and understand relative to intergroup behaviors.

Those instincts influence our values and they influence our behaviors in extremely important ways. I believe very strongly that we each need to understand how those instincts work, because they have such a huge impact on our behaviors and on our intergroup interactions at so many levels.

Let me recap the key points about our basic us/them instincts and describe their impact one more time.

We Divide the World into Us and Them and We Act Accordingly

The basic patterns and the impact of those instincts on our thinking are basically the same in every country and in every setting. The consistency is unquestionable. We divide the world into “Us” and “Them”. When someone is an “Us”, we are protective, nurturing, supportive, and forgiving. We tend to tell the truth to “Us” and we celebrate when “Us” succeeds.

When someone is a “Them”, by contrast, we are suspicious, distrustful, antagonistic, and we are very protective of our turf and our possessions relative to them. We feel anger easily toward them. We generally want them to fail. We celebrate their failures. I have seen multiple settings where we are very willing to do things to damage them and even willing to hurt them proactively in prospective revenge for possible damage we believe they will probably do to us in the future. We don't even need actual past sins to feel right punishing them.

We are too often willing to punish and damage them now in anticipation of expected sins that we believe they will commit in the future.

We far too often suspend conscience and ethics relative to “Them.” We enslave “Them,” firebomb them, ethnically cleanse them, damage and discriminate against “Them” and we feel no guilt for all of the negative things we do to “Them.” It can feel very right at an instinctive level to help an “Us” and it can feel equally right to impede, hurt, or damage a “Them.”

Those are extremely damaging packages of behaviors. As I looked at those behaviors in country after country and setting after setting, it made me sad and more than a little discouraged about the challenges we face to make those instincts less destructive in their impact.

Our Language Dehumanizes “Them”

There is an amazing consistency in the ways we suspend conscience and tend to dehumanize “Them.” In many languages the word that is used by a group of people to define the tribe or the ethnic group we feel is our own “Us” is a positive word that means the equivalent of “human being” or “the people.” In those same settings, the word that is often used to define “Them” in the language of the group means subhuman, inhuman, less than human, or even clearly animal. That language approach for the local “Them” was true in Japan and it was true for a number of our Native American tribes. It is true in Sri Lanka.

Those intergroup attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors and that level of intergroup thinking exist all over the planet. My travels and personal observations have reinforced those patterns in every setting. I have talked to people in each country about their local “Us” and their local “Them.” The patterns are, again, very consistent from setting to setting. Everyone has a “Them.” Sometimes the local “Them” is the gypsies. Sometimes it is the Albanians. In many cases, the “Them” I heard people talk about is a local set of indigenous people who have been displaced by the majority group in that setting and relegated to the status of “Them.”

I have heard well spoken and very gentle Chileans in Santiago and in beautiful Vino Del Mar refer to their remaining Native American tribes people in language that was blatantly, clearly, and unconsciously dehumanizing. I have heard the same damaging and demeaning language about the local minority groups in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico in this hemisphere, and in Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia on the African continent. The tribal people of Northern Japan and the Sami of Northern Norway are often labeled with some of the same insulting descriptive group names.

We Use Disparaging Group Names for “Them”

The people from Wales were not wrong in their claims that people in England sometimes speak of the Welsh in very disparaging terms. I have heard snide, insulting, and demeaning comments about the Welsh from a small, but clear number of English tribes people.

In our own country, we have pejorative and demeaning terms that are used by various groups against other groups. All groups have their negative labels and all groups have negative labels that are used against other groups.

In the book, *The Art of InterGroup Peace*, I strongly advise us to not use those specific terms against each other or about each other because those words have the power to insult, demean, degrade, and anger each of us in ways that make division between our groups more likely and mutual alignment and collective intergroup Peace more problematic and much less likely. Those negative descriptive group terms are even dysfunctional and intellectually damaging when we use them silently to ourselves or when we use them just with our own group behind closed doors — because those pejorative words do what they always do when they are used — they divide us and they trigger sets of instincts that we really do not want to trigger if we want America to prosper, thrive, and achieve intergroup Peace.

That was one of the points I learned in my years of observation and experimentation. Avoid pejorative labels because they tend to trigger pejorative

paradigms and our pejorative paradigms create obvious internal and perceptual barriers to both intergroup trust and intergroup Peace.

I Could Have Stopped My Travel-Based Research Early

I probably could have ended the travel-based part of my research into those topics back in the early 1990s. I did not need to go in person to three-dozen countries to learn what I learned. The patterns that I saw everywhere were absolute and the data and fact base about intergroup interactions that I learned was overwhelming, obvious and equally clear in every setting. I continued my journeys for two decades, however, for a couple of reasons.

One reason to continue my travels was that I really did want to find places that had learned to deal with intergroup issues well. Some sites do better than others. Jamaica, for example, did a nice job of including a more inclusive set of people in their “Us.” They did that by using economic status rather than race to a large degree to identify who is “Us.”

I also saw that groups managed to work together using a broad range of approaches that extended from pure truces and ceasefires at one end of the continuum to total melding and assimilation at the other end. Creating alliances was one step on that continuum and forming confederation was another. For *The Art of InterGroup Peace* book, I listed nine interaction options that I saw work in one place or another. I have included that list of intergroup interaction options in *The Art of InterGroup Peace* strategy kit.

Because I looked at all of those countries, I saw approaches that were used to trigger intergroup conflict and I saw a number of approaches that were used in various settings to derail, prevent, or avoid intergroup conflict. I also saw various ways that people managed to defuse and alleviate active conflict and I saw a number of ways that governments and community leaders worked to keep situational conflicts from erupting into violence.

I saw things that were good, bad, and ugly relative to all of those issues — and I believe that I made the right decision to go to all of those places in just to compile that list.

I also traveled to all of those places so that when people challenge me relative to my assessment of how bad things are and my assessment of how people are behaving in multiple settings, my response to those people who doubt my conclusions can be — “I have been there. I saw people do those things. I talked to people in Moscow and Paris and Kenya who have been personally damaged.”

I do feel now that I have looked at those issues in enough real world settings so that I now have a sufficient number of experiences and observations to be able to say to any doubters. Those are things that people really do. The behaviors I write about truly are universal behaviors. I can tell you from being in many of those settings that those intergroup behaviors do actually happen everywhere in those settings and I am not guessing or theorizing about those interactions. I have seen the Peace Wall in Belfast and the demarcation line in Johannesburg and they both affect people’s lives in very real ways.

It is easier to make the points I make about intergroup interactions with a sense of credibility and internal comfort after literally going to dozens of countries in search of that learning and finding the points about intergroup issues that I have made in these books to be confirmed, affirmed, and reinforced in every setting.

Challenges Are Everywhere

The next five chapters of this book describe what I learned about those instinctive behaviors and their functional reality in several categories of settings around the world. Those next chapters of this book explain how the rest of the world is dealing with those packages of instincts in the context of a growing array of intergroup conflicts. As I noted earlier, I am including those chapters in this book because some people have told me with some vigor that they don’t believe that the problems I am concerned about actually are as serious or as

widespread as I tend to believe they are. A few fairly senior policy people have expressed doubts. I believe that telling that set of stories clearly about all of those countries at war with themselves in various ways can help resolve and alleviate some of those doubts.

Chapters that follow those current status chapters deal with the nature of instincts and with the ways I have learned to use that knowledge about instinctive behaviors in my work life and in the community efforts that I have been part of. As I have noted earlier, I have worked with and chaired companies, task forces, coalitions, commissions, and various associations as part of my own learning process. The various ways I have used that information about our instinctive behavior patterns in those settings have given me a broad set of additional points about those issues that are described and presented in context for this book. It has been a fascinating time of learning for me and I hope this book makes some of that learning useful to other people. I do have some deep concerns that I believe will only be alleviated if we all understand those issues more completely.

Wishful Thinking Will Not Solve the Problems

Not to be unkind, but wishful thinking and either willful or innocent ignorance about those sets of intergroup issues will not help us avoid tribalizing as a country. Rose-colored glasses about the rest of the world will only mislead us relative to the impact that the rest of the world will have on us here and will also mislead us relative to the impact that those same packages of intergroup instincts will have on the groups that make up the increasingly diverse fabric of our own country.

We really are a world that has major problems to resolve and we are in a nation that needs to do the right things well and soon to keep us from being just another multi-tribal nation at war with itself.

The behavior that I read about for the concentration camp guard who was situationally a good and caring man in his Peace setting who was also —

equally situationally — an evil, damaging, and destructive man in his prison camp settings reinforced my sense that we need to be very intentional and very strategic in not creating the wrong situational triggers for us all here. The wrong set of triggers clearly exists in the world we live in. We need to channel how each of those triggers are activated for “Us” here.

To do that well, I believe we will be well served by understanding what impact those instincts are being on the rest of the world. My day in Wales was my first data point. It was followed by a deluge of data points — and I am sharing a few of them in the next chapters of this book.