

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# **Our Negative Behavior Was Situationally Conspiratorial – but Not Based on a Conspiracy at Its Core**

WE HAVE DISCRIMINATED as a country in very intentional and deliberate ways against any groups who did not look like or sound like the White majority group that has held power in this country for the past several centuries.

Each and every minority group has faced economic, social, educational, and political discrimination in various ways over those years — and people from each group can point out and recall multiple levels of on-going discriminatory behaviors that have adversely affected their group.

We have done much better in recent years in many aspects of our intergroup interactions. Our Civil Rights Movement has made magnificent — if painful — progress in many areas.

But our most positive civil rights gains have only been in the last 50 years and we have not achieved full success and remediation for our intergroup education status issues or for our intergroup economic status disparities for the groups who faced that discrimination for all of those years.

The discrimination that is woven so painfully into our history and into our culture was also directed against women. Women were only given the right to vote in the last century — and many women are still facing economic challenges and disparities that are clearly gender linked. Problems in those areas are shrinking a bit, but they are not disappearing.

No one doubts or questions that those negative intergroup behavior patterns relative to both minority groups and women have been our reality as a country for all of those years. What people do question is, what actually caused all of those problems? Why have we seen those negative intergroup behaviors at such consistent levels across so many settings for such long periods of time?

## **Do Conspiracies Cause Those Problems?**

Some people believe that our consistent negative behaviors against minority Americans and that our consistent negative behaviors against women are caused by actual conspiracies for both sets of issues. A number of people, I have learned, believe that there are very explicit conspiracies at the core of the processes that create and guide those negative intergroup and negative intergender behaviors in all of those times and places.

When I first began looking at our patterns of intergroup behavior, I saw and read a number of books and articles that argued that there are very clear and very intentional core conspiracies that underlie those discriminatory patterns and that create those sets of negative behaviors.

I have read and heard both some minority Americans and some women who believe strongly that the negative and discriminatory behaviors that exist against their groups are conspiratorial at very direct, very explicit, and functionally very well organized levels.

Some people believe that there are conspiracies that create messages for women that cause women to feel insecure about their appearances and that there are conspiracies to keep women from levels of authority in various settings.

Today's newspaper had a quote from a woman who said that there is a conspiracy to cause women to feel insecure in both social and athletic settings as young girls — and urged women to triumph over that conspiracy.

Some people believe that there are equally and fully conspiratorial people who are explicitly committed to “White Skin Privilege” who consciously and intentionally put in place the sets of realities and functions that have given

White Americans both economic and political advantages in a wide range of ways and settings.

There are people who believe that men conspire in explicit ways and highly intentional processes to oppress, suppress, and exploit women and there are people who believe that White people have an equally functional conspiracy in place to oppress and suppress non-White people in this country.

When I first started doing my research into intergroup issues, I looked hard, directly, and explicitly for any examples or instances of functioning conspiracies that might exist and be channeling behaviors in any of my available settings.

Because of my job and my various levels of personal public involvements, I have had the chance to interact in business, health care, social, and governmental settings with many people of both influence and impact — both in our own country and in several international settings. I have been in the “smoke-filled rooms” of legislative and congressional influence and I have spent time individually and collectively with leaders of major business and organizations.

I have looked hard for any evidence of those conspiracies at any level.

I have been in some countries — like Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh — where there have been clear and intentional decisions by the people in local power to do very restrictive things relative to women and to minority groups in those settings. Those decisions to discriminate in those ways were extremely clear. But there was no linkage that I could see behind those discriminatory behaviors in those settings and any larger conspiracies that reached across and between countries on those sets of issues.

I looked for conspiracies relative to those sets of issues in every setting where I had exposure and personal interactions.

I have interacted directly with major advertising agencies in several major cities at multiple levels, for example, both as a direct client and in various collaborative efforts. There were some very interesting people in those ad agency related settings, but I can't imagine any way that those people in that industry and that profession could pull off a conspiracy — much less a conspiracy

to oppress anyone that also required those people keeping things about the conspiracy confidential.

I have worked with ad agencies in several settings to help create public health campaigns on issues like health, eating, healthy activity levels, and brain development for children.

Those public belief system related campaigns were very hard to do. There are not easy tools available for advertising people to use for those purposes. Imagining that those sets of people who have major challenges creating a health campaign using advertising tools could somehow be part of a conspiracy to psychologically undermine women by embedding secret messages in multiple ads is a bridge too far as a simple logistical possibility and it is several bridges too far as a current skill set.

The ability to create those kinds of messages in an organized and secret way does not exist.

So my search to find any overarching conspiracies on those sets of issues in any setting failed.

But what did not fail was my effort to figure out why all of those negative behaviors in those areas create the clear impression that those might be conspiracies involved in all of those settings.

I could see from the beginning of my search for conspiracies that it is true that the entire package of discriminatory behaviors — against both women and against minorities — can look and feel very much like it is the result of a master intergroup conspiracy of some kind that might exist for each set of issues.

## **The Negative Behaviors Are Remarkably Consistent**

The reason why those consistent patterns of negative behavior in all of those settings look so conspiratorial is that those negative behaviors are, in fact, so consistent in all of those settings.

That consistency cannot be happenstance. Consistency at that extreme level for all of those behaviors in all of those negative settings cannot possibly be either accidental or coincidental.

There clearly needed to be a consistent and constant reason why we had done such negative things to so many people in such consistent and pervasive ways in so many settings.

The evidence of consistent negative behavior is overwhelming.

But I could not find the conspiracies that created those behaviors.

Since I could not find conspiracies that created those behaviors in any of those settings, and since there clearly needed to be a reason why those behaviors were so consistently negative and so universally in place, it was painfully clear to me that we need to answer the question of a universal set of causality factors with an explanation of what those universal causality factors might actually be.

The answer is — instinctive behavior.

As I have explained in several places in this book and have discussed multiple times in the other books in this set, I have come to the strongly held conclusion that the universal causality factors that create all of those consistent behaviors in all of those settings can functionally only be our instincts.

No other factor has the reach or the functionality of instincts.

Instincts are, in fact, everywhere.

We all have instincts.

Instincts create consistent behaviors whenever they are activated and those consistent behaviors can be so consistent that they appear to be conspiratorial.

## **Those Evil Deeds Had Instinctive Roots**

It became clear to me as I looked at those issues of negative intergroup interactions that the White Americans who discriminated so badly and who often did damaging and sometimes intentionally evil things against each of the other perceived categories of Them in this country generally and consistently did those evil deeds against all of those other groups based on purely instinctive behaviors and thought processes.

It was increasingly clear that those people in the majority population who were directly affected and personally and collectively influenced by those specific sets of intergroup instincts did those evil deeds to the people they damaged with no sense of guilt because our pattern as people is not to feel guilt and to suspend both conscience and ethics when we instinctively perceive someone to be a “Them” and when we individually or collectively do damage or take action against that “Them.”

We have discriminated as a nation very clearly by group and we have discriminated equally clearly by gender. Cultures have done a number of things to oppress and suppress women in various ways that have resulted in major levels of discrimination against women being embedded at multiple levels into both cultures and our economy.

The issues and factors that relate to discrimination against women are discussed in more detail in Chapters 20 and 21 of this book.

## **Every Group Perceived to Be “Them” Faced Discrimination**

Our patterns of instinct-triggered discrimination against all of the minority groups in this country are clearly a very real part of our history. The negative intergroup patterns that have resulted for our country from those instinct-guided behaviors have been extremely consistent for each of the groups who have triggered those differentiation factors... at levels that are so consistent and so universal that they actually do look as though they have some level of conspiratorial underpinnings.

Hispanic Americans suffered major discrimination at very consistent levels in multiple settings. So did Asian Americans. Asian Americans could not get jobs, be elected to various offices, and could not buy property in a number of settings.

Every set of immigrants from Asia and the Middle East has faced similar barriers.

African Americans were very obviously discriminated against very deliberately in multiple functional, political, and economic ways, beginning with the extremely evil sin of intergroup slavery and continuing for years after slavery ended with a wide range of laws that were intended to constrain, demean, oppress, and functionally and financially damage any and all people who had African ancestors.

American Indians were almost all expelled from their original lands, forced into often painful exile, and many of the children from those groups were moved into forced assimilation programs.

Those forced assimilation programs into White America for our Native American tribes tended to fail — just like the various attempts to assimilate and meld the Kurds have failed for centuries in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran and the very similar attempts to assimilate the Romani by taking their children into re-education settings have failed in multiple European countries.

### **The Negative and Consistent Intergroup Interaction Patterns Look Very Much Like a Conspiracy**

The high levels of consistently negative behaviors that have resulted for all of those groups of people for all of those years from that very direct discrimination that was directed against anyone who did not look White or who did not sound White has been so absolute and so consistent that the overall package of behaviors often looks and feels like there must be a conspiracy that underpins all of those behaviors.

It is easy to see why so many people believe in conspiracy theories. When you look at the entire package of behaviors — and when you look at the negative intergroup interactions that happened in so many settings, it truly does look like there must be some level of overarching conspiracy that is secretly in place that creates, guides, sustains, and perpetuates all of those negative intergroup behaviors.

### **Some Local and Situational Conspiracies Do Exist**

There actually are, I have found, a number of local and situational conspiracies that have created some very negative intergroup interactions in a wide range of settings.

I could see local conspiracies at several levels. People in various settings have conspired to keep minority people in their settings from voting, holding public office, owning land, being employed, or being educated in those settings. Those focused conspiracies relative to those kinds of issues do exist and they do real damage when they exist — but those local conspiracies are not actually organized and coordinated as part of an overarching master conspiracy.

Those local conspiracies exist in all of those settings because they are shaped and triggered by our overarching, master set of intergroup instinctive behaviors that cause us to do damage in various ways to anyone we perceive in any setting to be “Them.”

The negative and consistent overall intergroup interaction pattern and all of those setting-specific negative intergroup behaviors that we see in so many places, I believe, founded on — and grounded on — our basic and universal packages of intergroup instinctive behaviors.

The overall discriminatory and negative behavior patterns have had a thought process guide for White Americans because that consistent pattern of negative behavior has very direct instinctive roots. Negative sets of instincts have been triggered by all of the groups who actually look different than the White

majority at a level that triggers intergroup instinctive perceptions and related behaviors for that group.

I have actually looked hard in many settings — often involving very senior people in those settings — to find actual overarching, high level, inclusive intergroup conspiracies. I failed in my search. I could not find an overall conspiracy — against either minority Americans or women. I also could not find anyone in any of those settings in the role of being conspirators.

So I am very comfortable contending that those sets of consistent and negative intergroup problems are created by instincts — not by conspiracies. I now believe with great conviction that our intergroup problems for our country have been caused by clearly discernable overarching patterns of very directly instinctive behavior and I believe that those negative and consistent behavior patterns were not caused by actual overarching and all-powerful conspiracies.

An extremely negative consistency of intergroup behaviors does, in fact, exist. But all of those consistent sets of negative intergroup behaviors in all of those settings have not been anchored in an actual macro conspiracy of some kind.

## **We Actually Have Macro Patterns of Negative Instinctive Behaviors**

That pattern of consistency we see in so many negative intergroup interactions has actually been anchored in a macro package of primal instinctive behaviors.

That has been particularly true for our country. Those particular sets of negative intergroup interactions have been anchored in our country by a perception on the part of White Americans about who is us and who is them. That pattern has been simple and clear. Every group that has looked different or has sounded different from the White majority American group “Us” has been discriminated against in a very consistent variety of ways.

The sum total impact of all of that consistently negative instinctive intergroup behavior was just as effective in doing consistent damage to all of those groups as an actual overarching conspiracy to do damage to those same groups might have been.

The consequences of that consistent and very intentional negative intergroup differentiation aimed at anyone and everyone who was not White has been very dysfunctional for all minority people in America. That level of pure intergroup differentiation that existed for all groups has created very consistent negative and damaging national behavior patterns for literally centuries.

### **Too Many People Have Been Denied Access to the American Dream**

One set of intergroup interactions that has looked particularly conspiratorial is the fact that many people have very clearly and intentionally been denied access to the American Dream. For centuries, the minority groups who have been perceived to be a “Them” by the White majority in the U.S. have been very consistently denied full access to the American Dream.

That is a bad thing for those excluded groups. The American Dream truly is a wonderful Dream. The American Dream of opportunity, freedom, and innovation is one of our great strengths as a nation.

I believe that to be true about the inherent strength and value of that Dream because I have seen our country succeed in so many areas based on people who have invented, created, and built important things for us all in the functional context of that dream.

I believe that the dream to be a powerful tool that has proven its value over and over again for the people who have been able to take direct advantage of it and use it in their lives.

I also believe it to be true that only White American males have had clear and consistent access to the full benefits of the American Dream for almost all of our history. Women and minorities in this country have faced major barriers in multiple areas relative to that Dream.

## **The Barriers Were Significant — but Not Entirely Insurmountable**

The barriers for women and minority Americans relative to that Dream were not entirely insurmountable. The barriers for both minorities and women have been significant, but they have not been absolute. We have actually seen a number of major individual successes for both minority Americans and for women relative to the American Dream.

We have both women and minority Americans who have risen to positions of success and power and we have both women and minority Americans who have created great personal wealth. Individual realization of the dream has been achieved at a personal level by both women and minority Americans.

But those successes have been achieved by individual people who each surmounted significant group-focused barriers to succeed. Those isolated successes do not disprove the existence of the barriers for most minority Americans and most women.

That is unfortunate and sad. I strongly believe that those barriers that have existed for those Americans should not have been in place and I strongly believe that those barriers need to disappear now.

It has weakened us as a country to have those kinds of barriers to opportunity keeping large portions of our people from succeeding.

The basic logic for my thinking about the need for us to include everyone in the Dream now is pretty clear. We are obviously stronger collectively when more of us succeed. We need more people in our country to succeed so our overall country will be more successful overall.

We need to remove the remaining barriers to the American Dream for all Americans now. I believe we will be significantly stronger as a nation when those barriers are gone because more people will succeed and because collective success clearly creates collective strength.

## **Barriers to Owning Property, Having Jobs, and Holding Office Have Been Very Real**

Our history of discriminatory treatment in several areas for everyone other than White males has been painful, dysfunctional, and damaging at multiple levels for everyone other than White males.

Barriers to owning property, to owning businesses, and to rising to levels of impact and influence have been very real. Those barriers have existed for people by group at extreme levels for centuries.

The various types and categories of discrimination that have occurred as a result have created levels of both damage and residual anger for significant groups of people that we need to deal with now.

My own sense from talking to a lot of angry people is that the residual levels of anger will continue to be felt for a very long time by the groups of people who had been damaged in this country because the injuries and even the insults to each set of people who have been damaged have been so significant, so long-standing, and so real.

The cumulative impact of those negative behaviors has had layers of negative consequences. Much higher local arrest rates for minority Americans have clearly existed in multiple communities. One consequence of those arrest rates has been that a significant number of minority Americans are now convicted as felons and have lost the right to vote.

So many Black men have been arrested, that the number of black American males in jail today exceeds the number of black American males who were enslaved during the Civil War.

Some people believe that there is an overarching conspiracy that exists to imprison African Americans in order to keep African Americans from voting.

I do not believe that specific conspiracy exists as a package. I believe that there are more immediate negative intergroup goals for the imprisonment and I believe that the voting disenfranchisement is an unintended bonus for the people who have the other agendas that put all of those people in jail.

There are a number of strategies in some states to create new barriers to voting for minority Americans. Those are separate local conspiracies and not part of an overarching strategy that includes incarceration of millions of people as a vote prevention tactic.

## **We Need to Perceive People – Not Color**

I am optimistic.

We have major problems — but we have the opportunity to make major progress.

Now that we understand the particular set of triggers that have created that discriminatory and dysfunctional behavior across all of those settings. We can decide not to have those same factors steer us in the future. Now that we have a better sense of how our basic us/them perceptions can negatively affect our thinking and our behavior, I do believe that we can take steps now to overcome those behaviors and to override them in all of the settings where they might emerge or exist.

We each need to know now how to override those barriers. As a starting point, we all need to learn to see people as people instead of primarily seeing the skin color of people or seeing the eye shapes or the nose outlines of people.

People are people. We are all people. That is a wonderful and useful truth that we all need to understand. The fact that we are all people at a very basic level is a blessing that we all need to work with in very intentional ways.

We truly do need people to be judged by the contents of their character rather than the color of their skin. That can only happen when we get to know each other's character in a direct and trusting way.

We actually can make that change in our personal ways of interacting because we now know how our thought processes functioned in the past. We can have a much higher level of success in achieving that basic goal of seeing people as people when we each understand the impact that those visual skin color based visual instinct triggers have had on our own minds for all of those years.

Those same issues have applied to the people from every group. Every set of people tends to divide the world into us and them and every set of people tends to define people who do not look just like themselves to be Them.

White Americans did that — but so did every other group of people. It was more damaging when White Americans did it because White Americans held power and used that power in ways that were influenced by those perceptions.

Other groups have also decided who to trust and who to associate with based on similar instinctive pattern.

It is time for all of us to understand how those patterns influenced each of us — and it is time for all of us to rise above those perceptions to create higher levels of belief system based “Us.”

We all need to each understand more clearly how all of those instincts have structured our own personal thought processes and our own personal behaviors and we need to make choices that let us make future decisions based on better criteria.

### **We Need to Interact Directly as People**

We need to develop a more inclusive sense of us that is not limited to skin color and tribe. We need to be an us as people — not function as dueling “min-us” subsets of divided segments and groupings.

We each need to accept each other’s core humanity. We collectively need to be an “Us” aligned by our beliefs and not divided by our ethnic group or race or by any other non-inclusive definition of who we are.

My own experience is that having personal relationships with people from other groups can help each of us achieve that needed people to people perception in important and personal ways.

That is exactly what the Dalai Lama advocates as one of his major pieces of counsel to the world. He teaches that we need to know each other as people in order to have Peace between people. I believe he is right.

I can't emphasize too many times how good it is for each of us to be friends with people from groups other than our own.

If we can't create those relationships in person, we should build them electronically and we should build them virtually — creating friends that we share information with and have personal dialogues with using various Internet connections and tools.

We need people who are very good at various kinds Internet connectivity processes to help facilitate those exchanges and to enable and support those linking processes.

The goal for us all is to help us each see other people as people. We need to move past seeing people as stereotypes and collective labels.

We need to have direct relationships with people at a person-to-person level that allows people to appreciate and know other people as people. People need to see people as people in order to interact with people as people.

### **We Need to Make Our Best Old Values More Inclusive**

We don't need new values. We do need to make our very best old values more inclusive.

We need to build now on the enlightened instincts that caused us to call for freedom and to call for individual equality when the rest of the world was run by aristocrats and ruled by princes and kings and we need to use that best part of our history now as an anchor for our future as a new American "Us."

We need to build on our best values now. We need to understand clearly what makes our best values so special and so key to our future, and we need to very intentionally and effectively extend our very best values to all of us.

The existence of those beliefs and the inconsistent and very visible application of that old set of clearly enlightened values and opportunities that have for a very long time been available only to some Americans has actually made the exclusion process in this country even more painful for many excluded people.

The excluded people in this country have felt and seen that exclusion from the American Dream. Many people have perceived that exclusion to be very deliberate and entirely intentional by White Americans as a group.

### **There Have Been — and Still Are — Three Sets of White Americans**

After talking to and with a significant number of White Americans about those issues and after looking at the behaviors of White Americans in multiple areas of intergroup activity and inactivity, I have reached the conclusion that the White majority population has been split roughly into three groups about our intergroup issues. The size of each group has varied at different points in our history.

It has been clear to me that one set of White people was actually working — sometimes working hard — to do racist, discriminatory, exclusionary, and often damaging things to various sets of minority people in this country.

### **Some People Are Negative and Do Intentional Damage**

The White people who believe in doing negative intergroup things clearly do exist. They have existed for a very long time. They have done a lot of damage and some people in that group are doing damage today.

To the extent that situational conspiracies have existed in various settings, that set of White Americans have been the primary conspirators.

That particular set of negative intergroup strategies and its array of advocates has lost significant momentum in recent years. The groups of people who are most negative make up a smaller proportion of the population and they have currently lost direct power. Those particular negative people no longer make our laws.

But it is clear to me from multiple sources of information and from multiple examples of negative behaviors that those negative and damaging mindsets have not disappeared and those negative beliefs are still held by a significant number of people. The racist young man who recently killed a group of the African

Americans in a South Carolina church is an easy to see example of that set of beliefs.

He was inspired in his negative behaviors and intergroup hatred by other people who used the Internet to share their poison with one another.

There are clearly people in our country today who do want to do bad things to other groups of people. They are a minority right now, but those people do exist and they are a threat to who we want to be.

### **Some People Are Cognitively Oblivious**

I also believe — based on multiple discussions and based on conversations with many people and based on years of careful and direct observation in many settings — that another very large set of White people has tended to be pretty much oblivious to the entire intergroup process and set of issues.

The cognitively oblivious White people who I have talked to about those issues actually tend to be generally and generically in theoretical, philosophical, and even ideological favor of both intergroup equality and intergroup opportunity.

But the White people who are in that generically supportive category generally do nothing intentional or direct themselves in either a negative or positive way on a personal level relative to any of those intergroup issues in any area of their lives.

That set of oblivious people is not affected in their daily lives by any intergroup issues. My perception and observation is that set of people tends to ignore those issues until and unless some event or some direct incident brings any of those issues into public view and public attention.

My experience has been that significant numbers of White Americans do not have a daily sense of the existence or relevance of intergroup issues because those people do not personally have a daily interaction or a working connection at any perceived level with any actual intergroup issues.

Many of those people live in White neighborhoods, work in predominantly White work settings, and have relatively fewer settings where intergroup issues are visible or relevant.

When I talk to people from that group about the various intergroup problems that exist in our country, the response I get is vaguely sympathetic and sometimes confused — with high percentages of people thinking in vague ways that progress of some kind has been made and with some people from that group wondering explicitly why more people from our minority populations are not taking better advantage of the progress that has been made.

### **Another Group of People Wants to Do the Right Thing**

The third set of White Americans that I have talked to about those topics understands the relevant issues clearly and very much wants to see things improve.

That set of people who want the intergroup situation to improve in this country have generally been believers for a long time in extending the American Dream to all Americans. A number of people from that group of White Americans have worked very intentionally and very persistently over extended periods of time to support that full and inclusive access to the Dream and to help expand and protect people's civil rights, freedoms, and opportunities.

That subset of White Americans who do want to make progress relative to our intergroup problems and to our various intergroup issues has had, I could see, some real successes in recent decades.

The subset of White Americans who have collectively and persistently believed in the shared humanity of all Americans have made slow but sure progress over unfortunately extended periods of time to move us as a nation to a point where civil rights laws now allow everyone — regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender — to vote and where laws allow all Americans to be free from direct and intentional legal discrimination.

Civil rights laws exist today that did not exist only a few years ago for both minority Americans and women. That is not an insignificant set of accomplishments.

Real successes have happened in a wide range of areas largely as the functional and linear result of actions and beliefs relating to that set of enlightened people.

The Civil Rights Movement has succeeded because of the efforts of heroic, dedicated, and persistent activists from minority groups who pushed the movement and because of support from the subset of White Americans who want Civil Rights to be the basic value set for America and who have supported the agenda of the Civil Rights activists.

Progress has involved both sets of people.

We very legitimately and appropriately celebrate the fact that Jackie Robinson integrated baseball — and we need to remember as well that the White men who owned and who ran that particular baseball team actually made that integration of that particular sport by Robinson functionally possible.

We need to celebrate that entire set of people when we look at that success. It took both sets of people for the progress we have made to happen. We need to remember that there was anger and stiff opposition by many White Americans to each key step of that progress when it happened and that there was support and acceptance of that progress from other people whose support was needed to make the new approaches the new expectations for America.

## **We Should Celebrate the People Who Made Progress Happen**

Those White people who supported those initiatives and who achieved those goals took enlightened action that was not supported by a number of the people who they identified with and cared about. That entire set of enlightened people who actually did do the right things in so many key areas should be celebrated by us all today.

We should clearly celebrate the Supreme Court ruling on *Brown vs. the Board of Education* that transformed our expectations and our rules about who should be in our schools. We generally celebrate and honor the brilliant and articulate Black legal counsel and legal team who argued the case before the court. That celebration is well deserved and entirely appropriate.

We also need to all recognize and remember that every single Justice who actually voted to make that enlightened decision and then write that key ruling was White. White and male.

Earlier generations of Supreme Court Justices — also all White and also all male — had done very negative rulings on key and important intergroup issues. It took more than a persuasive argument by a brilliant advocate on a great day in court to achieve that positive and important vote. It took individual people on that court who made the individual and personal decision to do the right thing in that setting to make that ruling the law of the land.

## **They Were Not Forced into That Decision**

That particular set of White Justices who ruled on that case struck a major blow for enlightenment.

They weren't forced into that decision. They wrestled with their conscience and they made that positive decision at a time when many people become deeply angry with them for what they had done.

As I have looked at the role that has been played by White Americans relative to a very wide range of intergroup issues for our country, it has been

clear to me that all three of those baseline categories of White Americans have existed for a long time and that all three of those sets still exist today.

I can see that progress is still being made on key intergroup issues with strong support continuing from group three and with at least mild support from group two.

I can see that group one still hates that progress and still wants us to be a country that does negative things to our minority populations. We need to convert those people to more enlightened belief systems when that is possible to do. Conversions can happen. We need to welcome those conversions when they occur.

But we need to make our progress using the support of the other two sets of people at this point in our history. We will need both of those more enlightened groups to be supporters for creating needed win/win levels of intergroup Peace in America. I am optimistic that we will see that support happen and that we can create a culture of inclusion and values based behaviors and beliefs.

## **We Need to Build on the Progress We Have Made**

There have been some obvious heroes for civil rights and enlightened behaviors for each of the groups of people in this country. The fact that we have multiple streets in a number of cities named after Cesar Chavez and named after Dr. Martin Luther King makes a clear statement that those heroes exist and that those heroes are being recognized and honored by at least some Americans for their celebrations.

I take huge pleasure every year from the fact that we have Martin Luther King Day as a national holiday of recognition. His “I Have a Dream” speech has been framed and displayed on my walls both at work and at home for decades. I love that speech and the clear message about inclusion that it conveys.

The civil rights movement in this country has had an array of heroes who put their lives on the line — and sometimes lost their lives — to help create higher levels of equality for all Americans. We need to honor the achievements of all

of those heroes and we need to build on what each and all of those heroes have achieved.

I had a chance to spend some time with Delores Huerta, a co-leader for the migrant worker campaign with Cesar Chavez. We both had been given lifetime achievement awards for our work in diversity issues in health care by minority group medical education association. I was able to have dinner with her and heard some truly horrible stories about the internal resistance from local employers to her work with those workers. She was damaged for life by a beating she received in the process.

When we look at the print and video history showing us what each of the groups in this country have faced — and when we look at the heroes who have led the way for each of our groups who have made real progress for us all — it is a humbling and inspirational experience.

People have done some very heavy lifting. It is clear, however, that we still we have more heavy lifting to do.

### **We Can Move Past Those Old Differentiation Anchors**

Now that we understand that those basic underlying patterns of discrimination for our country and now that we recognize — the levels of direct discrimination that has happened against anyone who looked different or sounded different than the White majority American us, we can make new choices. By both rejecting and understanding that particular pattern of discernment, we can make better decisions about how we can work together to improve our future as a country.

We have proven that we can look past those factors in enlightened and positive ways.

As a first step in that process, we need to begin a dialogue between all of the groups that make up the fabric of America — and we need that dialogue to begin with a clear sense of where each group is today.