

Chapter Twelve — Our Us/Them Instincts Have Created Much Of Our History

To create a culture of Intergroup Peace for America, we need to begin by understanding exactly how we are doing today relative to Peace between the various groups in this country.

We need to look very clearly and very honestly at our history as a nation, and we need to look very clearly at where we are now relative to our intergroup issues and relative to our intergroup realities.

We need to use that understanding to lay the foundation for where we want to go now and for what we need to do next to create a culture of Intergroup Peace for our country.

We have had successes and we have had failures as a nation. We need to understand the areas where we have been successful and enlightened, and we need to recognize the areas where we have made progress in important ways.

We also very much need to understand the areas where we have failed. We need to understand the areas where we have committed acts of serious intergroup discrimination and where we have done major damage to

various people in this country — and we need to look at those damaging behaviors across the entire course of our history.

Significant damage has been done. We need to deal with that reality today. We need to have a clear sense of how badly we have acted in some key areas, and we need to understand the very real challenges to intergroup Peace that have been created by a long series of very wrong things that we, as a nation, have committed against too many of our own people.

We need to have clear knowledge and understanding about our successes and our positive achievements. We need knowledge of our failures and our sins in order to give us a complete foundation and a full context for teeing up intergroup Peace today.

We need to begin that process by recognizing that we have both residual anger and residual damage that has been created by our long standing discriminatory intergroup behaviors.

We Have Areas Of Intergroup Disparities And Damage

Today, as a nation, we continue to have significant economic differences between our major ethnic and racial groups. Our minority

Americans tend to have lower average incomes and higher rates of unemployment.

We need to recognize that reality as a context for what we need to do now as a nation.

We also have some clear differences in education levels by group, and we have major differences in our likelihood of being imprisoned — based on which racial or ethnic group we are in.

Hispanic American males are three times more likely to end up in prison than White American males. African American males are roughly six times more likely to go to jail than White Americans.

We can't ignore those major differences in economic status or life patterns for our various groups. We need to close the economic and education gaps — and we need to prevent the incarceration gaps from occurring.

We need to bring all groups to the best levels in each major area of performance to ensure our long-term success as a nation.

Those differences in life patterns need to be addressed. We need to share a commitment to giving all Americans access to the American Dream.

We need to support that commitment, in part, by doing what needs to be done to have the best neuron connectivity support for each child in the first months and years of life for each child.

We need to share a commitment to helping every child from every group succeed.

There Are Wide Degrees Of Success Within Groups

We can be encouraged by the fact that there is a wide range of outcomes, success levels, and economic status for people within each race and ethnic group today. There are clear patterns that show economic disparities by group and there are clear exceptions to those patterns.

Some of the wealthiest people in the country today are Hispanic or African American. Some extremely successful CEOs of major companies come from our minority groups.

Highly successful entrepreneurs and business owners have come from all groups. We have a very diverse set of artists, musicians, entertainers, and creative people in our various media venues who also come from all groups.

So those are successful exceptions to the patterns. Those exceptions prove the value of having the American Dream available to all Americans.

But the overall group-linked patterns are clear and painful and the basic data about our groups relative to performance in several areas is powerful. There are major differences today.

We need to do much better at narrowing key differences between those groups in a positive way that will help us achieve and protect intergroup Peace.

We Have Discriminated By Race, Ethnicity, Culture, And Gender

When you look at our history, it is clear that we have discriminated in major ways against very large subsets of our population. We have damaged people based on their race, culture, ethnicity, and gender. Some of the key and most discriminatory parts of our history that are described later in this chapter have given us cause for sorrow and shame as a nation.

We have enslaved people, ethnically cleansed people, and we have written very intentional and clear laws that have discriminated deliberately and shamelessly against people based very specifically and explicitly on their race, gender, and ethnicity.

We now need to create intergroup Peace in this country with that history as part of our foundation for intergroup interaction. We need to start now by recognizing where we are now — and by recognizing where we have been.

We Need To Do Deliberate Right Things To Achieve Peace

We need a strategic plan for creating intergroup equity and intergroup Peace in order to do that work successfully.

Peace between groups in our country will not happen spontaneously or serendipitously. It definitely also will not happen in a vacuum.

Peace invariably happens in a context. When it happens, Peace involves people doing deliberate right things to end stress, reduce intergroup tensions, and end intergroup conflict.

Peace involves people doing very deliberate, right things to set up the opportunity for long-term status Peace. We need the Peace we create to be protected over time by having the right things we do continue to happen and continue to exist into the future.

We Need Honesty As A Starting Point

We need to be honest with ourselves in the process, because trying to build the future on anything less than a reality-based and honesty-based foundation of facts is highly likely to fail.

There are some exceptions — and some parts of our country are significantly less safe than others — but most of us live today in a state of functional Peace. That Peace allows us to go to our schools, work places, shopping places, and places of worship almost all of the time without fear of being attacked, robbed, or otherwise damaged, threatened, or impaired in some way.

Our Laws Now Help Create Peace

We have that kind of functional Peace for our country today in large part because we have put very clear laws in place that create rules for behavior in key areas of interactions and activities. We have built an infrastructure of laws that create functional safety in most settings for most people most of the time.

We also have an intergroup culture today that is increasingly based on a clear and intentional motivational desire to not be doing damaging things to one another.

Our leaders all make at least token statements in favor of intergroup Peace. Intergroup leaders in far too many other countries openly and clearly preach intergroup hatred, division, and even violence. We have very few leaders here who are making those kinds of inflammatory and divisive admonitions to their people, and the areas who do preach hatred have relatively few followers.

We do have periodic outbreaks of intergroup violence. We have protests, demonstrations, and we even have a few mobs that periodically do angry things to the people and the property of other groups. But the mobs that do form in this country are infrequent, and they tend to be significantly less violent when they happen than the equivalent mobs we have seen in recent times in Sri Lanka, London, or Paris.

Our New Laws Codify Many Desired Behaviors

We do have some areas of major cities where gangs control much of the behavior context for communities. Those areas are less safe.

The gangs who control those areas all have strong ethnic identities and composition. The negative intergroup energy levels that are created by various mob turf issues can be very difficult for a country to overcome.

In Oakland, California, for example, significant parts of the city are functionally controlled by racially divided resident gangs and those gangs are in constant conflict with one another. Oakland has a killing, on average, every three days — and shootings actually happen daily in that city.

Detroit and Chicago also have major areas of the city where gangs create the reality for far too many people in their relevant neighborhoods. A number of other major cities in our country also have areas of the city where gang behaviors create the reality for the people who live in those areas. Everyone in those cities knows what those situations are.

But those situations where gangs create the daily living reality for people are still relatively uncommon and they are currently outlier situations for us as a total country. Most settings in this country are currently safe almost all of the time.

Laws In America Used To Mandate And Require

Discrimination

We have laws that are in place to create intergroup safety. We also now have a growing number of laws that protect people against intergroup

discrimination and that make some kinds of basic negative intergroup differentiation illegal.

Those anti-discrimination laws represent significant progress for us as a nation. We used to have some very negative laws that actually required and mandated intergroup discrimination. Our new laws now are intended to make those same exact basic and important levels of discrimination illegal.

Most of our anti-discrimination laws are relatively new. Those new laws clearly represent growing levels of enlightenment for us as a country.

They were not made into law without significant opposition — but they have been enacted and they create the context we use today for major areas where we have had very negative intergroup behaviors in the past.

Those anti-discrimination laws are only years or decades old instead of being centuries old. They are recent, but they are extremely important to us today because not very far back in our history, we had the exact opposite sets of laws in place.

For literally centuries, sheer and blatant discrimination was legal and encouraged. We discriminated freely and we discriminated often.

Discrimination was supported by, embedded in, and even required by some of our laws.

Some laws very specifically mandated and required directly discriminatory behavior against specific sets of Americans. Laws required Black Americans, for example, to sit in the back of city buses. Those laws existed only a relatively few years ago.

Buses and public transportation were legally segregated in some cities. Other laws made it illegal for some white restaurants to feed black or other minority customers.

For long periods of our history as a nation and in large parts of the country, very intentionally racist laws separated people by race in our schools, work places, public parks, restrooms, and even in our choices of home sites.

Deed covenants that existed for homes in many communities stated that some homes could never be sold to a minority person at any future time.

Some race-related covenants on some home deeds actually said that minority people could not even be guests in those homes during evening

hours. Minority people could work in those homes as cooks or as servants of some kind, but minority people could not be there after dark as guests.

The clear intent of deliberate, explicit, and entirely intentional racial discrimination was embedded openly in all of those laws. We had a wide range of discrimination laws and we had those laws for hundreds of years.

The very worst laws in our history created slavery by race. We ended slavery as the result of the Civil War — but ending slavery did not end discrimination.

The slave states did not give up their desire to enslave people lightly. When we ended slavery, we did not suddenly become a nation that extended full rights and full access to the American Dream to all of our people.

Many of the people who were willing to fight and die to keep people enslaved continued actively and deliberately to oppress the people who had been enslaved. We created an entire array of laws that were intended to damage and hinder the former slaves.

Discrimination was required by those post-slavery laws — not banned by them. Major voting barriers were created for the newly enfranchised

former slaves. Education barriers and economic barriers for minority Americans were the rule rather than the exception.

Intermarriage between races was clearly illegal in much of the country for a very long time. Racial intermarriage could put people in jail for significant periods of time.

The list of laws that were created to keep both former slaves and other minority Americans in one level of inferior rights and diminished levels of inclusion and economic success were long and truly ugly in their intent and goals.

There is no way to interpret that history other than to say it was evil and it was ugly at multiple levels — and the evil was both deliberate and conscience-free. Us/them ethnics and us/them morality values were in full gear for all of those laws.

We have had a long and clear history as a nation in creating restrictions for our minority populations. The White American majority group functioned as an “us” are treated every other minority group as a “Them.”

Laws and practices discriminated against each category of “Them.” Our minority Americans were prevented from voting, barred from employment, and not allowed to own property in a number of areas.

Schools, public transport, and even eating places and places of accommodation were segregated in ways that created real barriers for minority Americans.

The us/them instincts of the majority White American group discriminated with no sense of guilt, ethical remorse, or shame — because our us/them instincts cause people to exhibit those belief systems and behaviors.

Discrimination Against Women Has Also Been A Major Problem

Discrimination against minority Americans was not the only area where major segments of our population were damaged by negative intergroup behaviors. The White males who ran the majority group “us” for America also discriminated against women.

For most of our history, women in this country have also been discriminated against at multiple levels. The discrimination against women was also ugly and very intentional.

Women were not allowed to vote for most of our history.

Men were legally considered to be the “head of the family.” There were laws in place for a very long time that made a woman’s property the property of her husband with full control of the property going to the man as soon as a woman married.

Women were often legally and deliberately paid less money for doing the same jobs as men and — even more dysfunctionally — women were not allowed to even apply for a number of specific jobs that were reserved only for men.

Those levels of legal and culturally supported discrimination for hiring practices by both race and gender have been true until relatively recently.

We have now very clearly changed the legal status of those discriminatory practices and made those practices illegal, but those are very recent legal changes.

Deliberate and clearly defined discrimination against women was also a key component of our culture and our infrastructure for most of our history. The universal patterns of male discrimination against women that we still see today in so many other countries in the world were actually a major part of our own history as a country at multiple levels for a very long time.

In several parts of the world today, there are still laws in place that discriminate massively and deliberately in very direct, oppressive, and punitive ways against women.

Many other countries have become much more enlightened relative to the legal status of women, but there are still a number of countries that still make it illegal for women to do things that can be done legally by a man. Many countries continue to discriminate in major ways relative to the economic status of women.

Women in some settings are still sold as brides or even as slaves. Women are held as captives in the confines of their homes. Women who simply talk to men outside their family setting are sometimes killed by their own families in “Honor Killings.”

Those packages of behavior need to be eliminated in all settings. Sexual abuse, rape, and other forms of violence against women need to be against laws that are actually enforced in far more areas of the world.

Discrimination against women has been clear and intense in far too many settings for most of human history. That is true today in many settings.

Very clear levels of discrimination against women have been part of American history as well.

The book *Primal Pathways* and the book *Peace In Our Time* both have fairly long chapters that are focused entirely on the inequality that has been embedded in those universal patterns of discrimination against women. Those chapters explain some of the reasons why that discrimination against women has existed and why that negative set of behaviors has had such discouraging consistency and such a painful and extended history across so many cultures and so many settings around the world.

We Americans have, however, managed to make significant progress on many of those specific gender-related areas in this country, and we now very explicitly outlaw discrimination against women in all legal areas rather than requiring that discrimination to happen.

Enlightenment Is Happening On Several Fronts

As we go forward to create the next levels of intergroup collaboration and intergroup Peace in this country, we can begin from a better context now than the one we had just a few years ago.

We have made major progress in multiple areas of our society. We have been slowly and steadily becoming more enlightened on many kinds of relevant intergroup issues.

In some areas — like voting laws and ending clear job discrimination — significant progress has been made. We have been working hard at multiple levels to have laws, behaviors, and belief systems that are much more enlightened on multiple sets of intergroup issues.

Enlightenment has now been embedded in our functional and legal value sets in a number of key areas, and even though we are far from perfect, there are a number of areas where the improvements in those behaviors have been significant and beneficial. Recent progress has been highly encouraging.

We now have a number of enlightened behaviors, policies, rules and laws in place today that directly reach out to create and protect many levels

of intergroup and inter gender legal equality in ways that did not exist a relatively few years ago.

As noted earlier, those particular protective and inclusive laws that benefit both minority Americans and benefit women tend to be fairly recent — but they definitely now exist.

New Paradigms Change The Way We Think

As the section of this book that deals with belief systems and paradigms explains, once we adopt a new paradigm on any topic, we tend to have that paradigm and its core beliefs structure the relevant processes of our minds that deal with that topic.

We do major aspects of our individual thinking and our group thinking in the context of belief systems. We tend to place great value on our belief systems and we use them extensively to guide our thinking and our behavior.

A problem we face is that some belief systems on some intergroup topics have negative and even damaging components. To increase our level of enlightened behavior, we need to change our core belief systems to eliminate those negative components where they exist. That can be done.

Changing those negative paradigms is one of the basic strategies for The Art of Intergroup Peace.

Paradigm change can be extremely useful. It changes thinking and behavior for entire areas and tends to have long-term impact — because we tend to keep paradigms in place once we adopt them.

When we change those belief systems on any topic, our context changes for that topic and we often can't even remember the old paradigm and its key beliefs once a new belief is in place.

We need to understand how to best organize our mental processes relative to those key issues.

The functional reality is that we tend to incorporate new belief systems into our personal behaviors and into our personal thought processes once we begin to use a new paradigm on any topic. We literally change what we believe.

So when we change beliefs about a key issue, like whether or not women should be allowed to vote, then everyone who used to believe that women voting was wrong at a basic level now tends to believe that having women vote is very right at a basic level. When a paradigm, belief system,

or culture changes, we each tend to embed the new values into our thought processes and our beliefs. Once that change happens we often can't even remember when we held the other opinion.

Much of the success of The Art of Intergroup Peace strategy relies on that belief-system change process. We need people changing from negative and damaging beliefs to new supportive and inclusive beliefs.

We need to facilitate that change on key points by embedding our new beliefs into our laws, into our personal expectations and into our cultures — and that all causes changes to happen in the personal values we each feel are right for our lives.

Once we have decided to act in more enlightened ways on any topic, we are more likely to actually do the enlightened things if we build them into our laws. Laws both reinforce and build paradigms. Whatever we build into our laws, and then enforce, tends to become embedded in our expectations and in our beliefs.

We Are All Stronger When More People Achieve The

American Dream

It is obviously possible for us to function as people and as a country in very enlightened ways. We have proven that to be true.

We have done some very enlightened things very well. It is entirely possible for us to function for major parts of our society and for major parts of our nation in ways that embody the best features of the American Dream for us all.

For a couple of centuries, people have immigrated to this country from all over the world for a chance to participate in what they have perceived to be the Dream of America. The American Dream has offered people the opportunity to be free and to be able to work hard to create a good life for themselves and their families.

People who have been able to fully utilize the American Dream have been productive and successful. The people who have personally achieved the Dream have given us one of the best economies and the strongest nations in the world.

The functional reality is this — people can do really well when people are allowed and enabled to do really well. The American Dream —with all of its key aspects and values — has enabled people to do well. When more

people are given access to that dream, we will have more people doing well, and that will strengthen us as a country.

We need all Americans to share in the key components of the American Dream.

Freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and the freedom to pursue ones life goals have existed in this country for much of our population for a very long time in ways that have not been true for people in far too many other countries. Aristocracies and various kinds of ethnic and tribal rule and cultural discrimination levels that dictate the functional reality for people in multiple other settings have kept many people in many other settings from realizing their own personal potential.

Those constraints created in those cultures have kept people in those settings from making key choices about their own lives and they have kept people in those settings from benefiting from their own efforts.

The American Dream says that people who achieve success and who create value should be able to enjoy the value they create.

Hard work for people in other countries can too often result simply in more hard work and no reward for the hard workers.

Hard work here has traditionally resulted in owning a home, educating your children, and enjoying your portion of the shared prosperity of the American economy.

The American Dream is highly seductive — and the opportunities created by that Dream still draws people across our borders from other countries every single day.

The Dream attracts people to this country even today because it allows people to aspire and to actually achieve in ways that benefit people and their families, and the people they love.

Unfortunately — for a number of reasons that are increasingly obvious, as we understand our us/them packages on instincts — we have not allowed all of our own people full access to that American Dream. We need to understand that reality.

A wide array of discriminatory actions, prejudice and damaging intergroup behaviors have created limited access to that Dream for far too many Americans for far too many years.

Many people from our American minority groups who have aspired to achieve the American Dream have faced significant barriers that have made the Dream personally unreachable.

The frustrations felt by people who were living in this country where the Dream was visible and real for so many people, but was denied, very intentionally, to so many other people has created a reality we need to deal with and collectively understand today.

There is a significant amount of anger and some collective resentment from a number of our people about some of those clearly discriminatory and damaging behaviors, and about being denied full access to the American Dream for so long.

Us/Them Instincts Have Triggered Discrimination

Instinctive behaviors have created those key barriers to many people in this country having access to the American Dream.

Major barriers to the American Dream happened for all of those years for so many people in this country because all of the us/them instincts that were described and discussed earlier in this book have clearly played a

major role in creating multiple levels of discrimination in this country for many of our people.

Instinctive behaviors have been at the root of those problems and barriers.

Those us/them instincts that were described in the earlier chapters of this book have too often worked against us in this country in some important ways. We have clearly and deliberately practiced significant discrimination against various groups of Americans.

Discrimination by group against group is obviously an “us/them” behavior. The patterns for those behaviors are clear. The intergroup behaviors that result from those instincts are remarkably consistent in all intergroup settings.

We Need To Understand Those Behaviors To Understand Our History

Our history is built on a foundation of those behaviors.

We need to understand those behavior patterns well in order to understand our own national history well.

The majority group in this country has tended to discriminate as an “us” against each category of “Them.” Whenever and wherever anyone perceives someone to be a “them,” we tend to discriminate against them and we tend to feel no guilt when we discriminate against a “Them.”

It feels right, when those instincts and those perceptions are activated, to do negative things to them. It also feels right to favor our “us” and to do positive things for “us.”

The damaging truth is that we can even inflict various kinds of damage on “them” and we can often do that damage to whoever we perceive to be “Them” without regret, guilt, or remorse.

As this book pointed out earlier, each of our instinctive behaviors tend to “feel right” to us. It “felt right” to many people to deny voting rights and it felt right to deny the full protection of the laws to people they perceived to be “them.”

It “felt right” simply to keep “them” from buying property and to keep them from being admitted to “our” schools.

It felt right to employ only “us” and to deny employment to “them.” People making hiring decisions tended to hire “us” and to promote “us.”

Those decisions were both conscious and unconscious — and they tended to feel right when people’s us/them instincts were activated.

Far too many discriminatory and damaging behaviors “felt right” to too many people for far too many years simply because it generally “feels right” to damage “them” when our us/them instincts are activated and when we perceive someone to be a “Them”.

The American Dream Was Not Extended To “Them”

So the American Dream was not extended to Americans who were perceived to be “Them” by the people in power.

Our history on those issues is obvious and clear. Discrimination has been consistent and long standing. So have various levels of both voluntary and involuntary segregation.

Our feelings of comfort when we are surrounded by “us,” and our feelings of discomfort, stress, and even anxiety when we are surrounded by “them,” has created centuries of discriminatory behavior for the people who are perceived by the majority of people in our American settings to be a “them.”

People Who Were “Us” Benefited Greatly

The people in this country who were perceived to be “us” have been given the full benefits of the American Dream. We have become the greatest country on the planet in multiple ways because of the creativity and energy and achievements that have resulted from enabling a major segment of our population to thrive and to flourish in the very powerful, effective, and enabling economic context that is created by the American Dream.

The opportunities that have been created for the people who have been included in the American Dream have made us strong and successful as a country and made us a world leader in many ways.

At the same time, the various sets of people who have been perceived by the majority group in this country to be “them” have had their access to that dream blocked and hindered in many ways... and those groups of people have been damaged by that blockage.

Being a “them” is a huge disadvantage under any circumstances. The people who are “us” instinctively distrust them, protect turf against them, and feel stress and even anger when any “us” is in proximity to what the “us” group feels are threatening numbers of “them.”

It is clear that we have used those sets of instinctive behaviors to shape our history — and those same packages of behaviors and perceptions are getting people damaged and even killed in many countries in the world today.

Instinctive Behaviors Can Be Brutal, Evil, And Conscience

Free

It is almost painful to intellectually acknowledge the powerful impact that those instincts have on our thinking and our behaviors.

Instinctive intergroup behaviors that relate to anyone we perceive to be “them” can be brutal, evil, and conscience free.

In our country, we had real brutality and we had high levels of sheer, blatant, and conscience free discrimination. We have had lynch mobs, Jim Crow laws, anti- miscegenation laws, and for a couple of centuries, we even had actual intergroup slavery.

We have had segregation laws that were so extreme that we even put barbed wire fences up between the graves in some cemeteries to keep “Them” from “us” after the people in that setting were actually dead.

Each minority group has faced those issues.

We have ethnically purged and displaced entire groups of Native American people from their ancestral turf. We perceived and labeled those specific ethnic displacements to be “White Destiny” rather than “Indian Displacement.”

We have embedded us/them discriminatory behaviors and us/them values deeply in the history of our country and in the laws of our country at multiple levels for whoever was perceived by the majority “us” in each setting to be “Them.”

Negative Patterns Created By Instincts Or Created By Conspiracies?

It is time for us all to look openly and honestly at the impact of those us/them instincts on our own history.

We need to all openly acknowledge now that some groups of people were never allowed full access to the American Dream. Us/Them instincts made a negative difference in the opportunities that exist in this country for too many people for far too long.

That level of discrimination is so consistent and so long-standing, that it looks conspiratorial. It looks very much as though there has been a centuries long “White” conspiracy that has created that massive consistency of discriminatory behaviors against other groups of Americans.

Many people believe that an actual functional and engineered conspiracy of some kind has existed to guide all of those negative behaviors.

That belief in our overarching conspiracy is not entirely accurate. That overall consistency of behavior actually did not exist as a functioning conspiracy.

There actually was no master and macro formal conspiracy process or plan that created all of that negative intergroup behavior consistency. Those behaviors were not planned and deliberate outcomes that were created in the context and under the guidance of a functional conspiracy.

All of that extremely negative consistency of behavior was actually triggered by our instincts. The negative local intergroup conspiracies that clearly existed in so many settings also stemmed from that same set of instinctive intergroup us/them triggers, with their consequences rolling out in each local setting.

That reality about the absence of an actual overarching conspiracy gives us grounds for optimism about future behavior.

Optimism is relevant for those issues because it is much easier to discern and steer instincts than it is to uncover and crush a conspiracy.

If we believe that there is, in fact, a secret conspiracy of some level that has caused all of those behaviors to exist, then our solution strategy for improving and ending those negative behaviors would need to be aimed at uncovering and overcoming the conspiracy and somehow defeating the conspirators.

Spending time to defeat that secret conspiracy in some way is not likely to improve our country very much, because that particular macro plan actually does not exist as a macro plan.

Focusing on overcoming the power of conspirators who do not exist at a macro level isn't a strategy that is likely to make our success levels higher in resolving those intergroup issues.

There Is No Gender Linked Or Racial Conspiracy

There is not a macro gender-linked conspiracy that has created and coordinated all of that discrimination against women and there is not a

macro racial conspiracy that structures all of those negative ethnic and racial discriminatory behaviors.

For better and for worse, those negative behaviors that we see in all of those settings are structured by our instincts — and our solutions to those wide ranges of problems will require us now to use our instincts and our cultures in enlightened ways to create new and better patterns of intergroup behavior.

We can do that. We need to do that, in fact. We need to keep those negative intergroup instincts from driving our future intergroup behavior. To keep those sets of instincts from doing future damage in all of our relevant settings, we need to understand what has triggered those instincts in the past. Understanding those triggers is a key part of figuring out how to deal with those issues.

We clearly activate us/them instincts based on race, tribe, ethnicity, culture, and nationality. We also clearly trigger those sets of instincts based on professional status and our employment issues.

Each and every one of multiple categories can cause us to perceive people to be us and can cause us to perceive other people to be them.

When we look back at our history as a nation, all of those us/them categories were relevant.

But those categories were the triggers that have created the major us/them problems for us as a country. Our history as a nation is anchored to a very large degree — at a very basic level — to a very primal set of factors.

Sight And Sound Trigger Those Instincts

Our basic patterns of discrimination as a nation can be traced back to the basic fact that our instincts use sight and sound to trigger a sense of us or them.

If someone looks different from us or sounds different from us, we easily perceive that person to be a “Them.”

We all need to recognize the fact that the long history of discrimination against the various minority groups of people has existed in this country for so long against those specific groups who faced discrimination because of the two key personal differentiators that tend to trigger us/them conscious and subconscious alerts, and create us/them perceptions in people everywhere on the planet.

Those two key instinct focusing differentiators that trigger those instincts in all settings are sight and sound. Sight and sound.

Sight and sound are extremely important instinct triggers — and the groups that have faced discrimination in this country have been the groups who trigger those factors.

We all tend to trigger very clear and very instinctive us/them alerts and warnings in our minds if someone either looks different or sounds different than us.

Babies – before they are even one year old — have different neuron activation patterns in their brains that happen when they hear a foreign language or when they see someone who doesn't look like their familiar “us.”

We begin that differentiation between us and them at a very early age. As adults and as children, we suspect at a very instinctive level that someone who doesn't look like “us” or someone who doesn't sound like “us” might actually not be “us” but might, instead, be a “Them.”

That basic set of visual and audible us/them differentiation triggers creates us/them perceptions and behaviors across the planet. Those

perceptions are triggered very easily — when people have a different skin color, face shape, or hair texture than the other group. Those perceptions are also triggered when people sound different than the other group in that setting.

People in Nigeria and in The Congo were killed last year because they were perceived by the sound of their voice to be of a different ethnicity than the people who killed them. In those particular settings, the people who were doing the killing and the people who were being killed all actually looked alike — but the factors that triggered the deaths of a number of people in those situations was the use of a different language in one setting and the use of a different dialect in the other setting.

The killers in each setting in those settings knew from hearing peoples' voices that the people with a different dialect were not from their own tribe. That perception triggered conscience free and guilt free us/them behaviors that resulted in killing many people in those settings without mercy in those settings merely for being “Them.”

Killing “Them” based on people either looking different or sounding different than “us” is not a new set of behaviors.

Throughout human history, tribes have often killed other tribes. Tribes each have their own languages or dialects. You can tell who is in your tribe and who is in their tribe by listening to people speak.

As noted earlier in this book in several places, tribal conflict has been part of the basic history of Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, and even Australia. The various Aborigine tribes in Australia made war on other Aborigine tribes. So did the tribes of North America, South America, Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia.

The tribal patterns of killings that are happening in Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Kosovo, Ceylon, Sri Lanka, and even Crimea today are all very basic and fundamental tribe versus tribe behaviors — us versus them.

Different tribal languages and dialects trigger a sense of them in each setting. The contending forces in Crimea today speak two different languages. That is, in fact, their main differentiating characteristic.

We Fear Them — And Other Tribes Are Them

That pattern of intergroup killing is a universal set of behaviors. The reality is and always has been that people can all be at actual risk even at this

point in the history of the world — when people are in the presence of other tribes. That isn't just ancient history. It is behavior today.

When we look back at American history, it is clear that the people who were accepted by the White majority group who ran the country as an “us” were people who looked White and who sounded like White Americans.

All of the European tribes melded easily into that White “us” as soon as they sounded like that particular “us.”

But all of the groups who did not look like the White “us” have faced centuries of clear and intentional discrimination. The patterns have been consistent and irrefutable. Looking different triggered an instinct-linked perception of “Them” — and the White American majority acted accordingly.

The majority group in this country accepted all people who looked like the majority group and who sounded like the majority group to be “us.” The next chapter of this book explains that process in more detail.

At the same time, the majority group in this country regarded all other sets of people who either looked different or sounded different to be a “Them.”

That was clearly an instinctive reaction — and it was not an intellectual strategy or a conspiracy.

That differentiation process between group, based on how we look and how we sound, happens at an unconscious level for all of us on an ongoing basis. Until that entire instinct-triggered differentiation process based on sight and sound is explained to us, however, we tend not to know at an intellectual or cognitive level that those very primal triggers exist in our brains or that they have been activated.

When We Don't Know The Triggers, We Blindly Follow Their Guidance

When we don't know at an intellectual level that those instincts exist and when we don't know at an intellectual level what triggers them, then we simply allow them to be triggered and we simply define and assign the status of any person who looks or sounds differently than “us” at a very primal level into the status of “them.”

All of the relevant negative behaviors that follow relative to how we trust “them” can then simply emerge, originate, and stem from that differentiation.

It is not a good thing for people, in any setting, to be perceived by an “us” who holds power to be a “them.”

Slavery and ethnic cleansing can happen in settings when we see people as them. So can denying people the right to vote or denying people the right to own property.

Ethics are affected by those perceptions. We don’t instinctively feel the emotional need to be ethical relative to “Them,” so we often damage them in various ways.

Ethics Tend To Be Situational — At An Instinctive Level

Ethics tend to be situational — at a very instinctive level.

That point is rarely understood or even discussed, but the reality is that our ethics generally apply fully only to “us.” People who believe they are personally deeply ethical will sometimes conduct their personal ethical behaviors at wonderful and enlightened levels relative to whoever they perceive to be “us” and then those same people can sometimes simply lie,

cheat, deceive, or even usurp possessions and steal property with no guilt if those negative behaviors are done to someone who is perceived to be a “Them.”

Those highly ethical people often feel no contradiction or challenge to their self-image as an ethical person because their instincts skew their thinking and cloud their minds to the point where their normal ethics don’t apply to “them.”

We fire bombed Dresden and Tokyo in World War II, killing huge numbers of women and children with those firebombs, and felt no guilt as a nation because the people in those cities were perceived at that point in our history to be “them.”

People who are loving parents, good citizens, and people of great moral character in their daily life with their own people can slip into completely immoral behavior — pillaging, raping, and deceiving whoever they perceive to be “Them” — and then those same people can slip back into their purely moral and highly ethical mindsets when they interact with us.

The stories about the concentration camp guard who did great evil to “Them” in those wartime camps, who was then captured in hiding years later

and who was described by his new neighbors to be a gentle and caring person who was kind to neighborhood children, happened because that guard had his “us” values activated in the neighborhood and that same guard had his “Them” values activated when he was in the concentration camp.

The guard wasn't hiding evil in his post-war neighborhood setting. He simply had not activated evil in that setting. Our us/them instincts steer values and thought processes to a massive degree when they are fully activated. We can feel very right being steered to any direction — negative or positive — that fits the behavior pattern for that instinct in the situation we are in.

We now need to collectively recognize the fact that we allowed those more negative us/them instincts to play out in a wide variety of very negative ways in this country over the course of our history. We need to recognize those historic behaviors and we need to understand their consequences so that we can understand where we are today and so that we can understand what we need to do now to achieve intergroup Peace.

As we build intergroup Peace for America we need to be very careful not to activate our “Them” related packages of instincts in any setting — and

we need to work very hard to generate the instinctive perceptions of being “us” in all settings.

The Negative Behaviors Related To “Them” Have Damaged

Many People

We need to build that entire process on where we are now. People who have been damaged in this country as a people have clear collective memories about the damages that were done to their group.

People who were not damaged individually or as a group, by those behaviors, often did not know those specific sets of damages existed. We need to bridge that awareness gap to create intergroup understanding because we need the people who were not damaged to know that damage was done.

Looking Different From The Majority Triggered The Instincts

The behavior patterns for intergroup behaviors in this country were pretty consistent and they were very clear.

Those particular us/them triggers that are activated by our appearance and by our languages have been, of course, extremely dysfunctional and they

have been highly damaging to many groups of people in this country for most of American history.

The next chapter explains in more detail how those instincts played out in our history as a nation. We need to understand how painfully simple that instinct-activation process actually was.

Looking different has been the key trigger for those negative intergroup instincts in this country.

At a very core and consistent level, there has been major discrimination against anyone who either sounds different or looks different from the majority group that has been the American Us.

That majority “us” group for this country was white in skin color and spoke English in American dialects.

Anyone who had a different skin color or a different facial appearance from the majority group who defined “us” in this country, has faced centuries of discrimination at a very instinctive level.

We need to move past that history and build a new American “us” based on our shared values and basic beliefs — an inclusive “us” that can move us past that negative history into a possible future.

That will only happen if we do the right things to make it real.