

Chapter Fifteen — Threats, Challenges, And Risks To Peace

It is important to protect Peace once Peace has been achieved in any setting. Peace can be fragile — and if Peace is created and lost in any setting, the events and the situations that can cause Peace to be then lost can make it much harder to regain Peace in the future in that setting.

When Peace of any meaningful kind has been created for any setting, it is important to take the steps that are necessary to protect that Peace against the array of threats that will inevitably emerge to damage, erode, or destroy it. Peace in some settings can have a self-reinforcing stability — but Peace in other settings can have an inherent fragility subject to attack, resistance, undermining, and deterioration from multiple sources and factors relevant to each setting.

Our instincts create much of that fragility.

The basic instincts we all have to divide the world into us and them and then to be suspicious and distrustful of anyone we perceive to be a them are very powerful instincts and those instincts can destroy Peace all by themselves when they are actualized, triggered, activated, or reactivated in any given intergroup setting.

Our Instincts Create A Risk To Peace

For obvious reasons, our us/them instincts serve as a constant threat, barrier, vulnerability factor, and challenge to any Peace we can create between distinctively different groups anywhere in any setting where distinctly different groups exist and where those groups interact and attempt to achieve and maintain Peace.

Those instincts cause us to have a consistent and constant underlying level of suspicion and distrust relative to any former “Them” who is now part of a Peace situation.

We can enter into those agreements and they can work well — but we tend to always have at least a low level of alert at an instinct-triggered level relative to the possibility that the former enemy is still, in secret, actually an enemy.

That low level of alert does not harm most situations that are going well, but it does make any actions by the other group that might reinforce the suspicion have more potential impact.

Peace can be undermined by those instincts to be on alert if any trigger event occurs that seems to justify the sense of not fully trusting the

other people in any setting. Entirely unintentional actions that are perceived to be negative intergroup actions can cause Peace to be situationally undermined.

Peace can also be intentionally undermined by people in a setting who simply do not want Peace to be undermined. That is clearly a major risk for Peace wherever it occurs. Some people do not want Peace to happen. Those people obviously can damage, undermine, impair, or destroy Peace in any setting where they have influence.

The incidents and actions that undermine Peace can be both intentional and unintentional.

Many people do want Peace to happen but they can do things unintentionally and inadvertently to put Peace at risk.

Anger can undermine Peace. It is highly likely that various people might become angry about other groups in various situations for various reasons — and those people who become angry about an issue or event can allow their own situational anger to flare up and undermine, damage, or even destroy Peace in those settings.

Situational anger can clearly put Peace at risk. Peace can be challenged, weakened, damaged, and undermined by people who become angry and upset over various kinds of intergroup issues or intergroup problems that might naturally occur in any setting.

Knowing that to be true, people who don't want Peace to succeed in any setting can either intentionally or unintentionally do things that cause people in their own groups or in other groups to be distrustful, divisive, or angry enough to undermine Peace in that setting.

Bad Behaviors Happen

Old negative behavioral habits and old negative terminology can both undermine Peace.

People can insult or demean other groups — both intentionally and accidentally — and that behavior can undermine Peace. People can simply discriminate against other people intentionally or unintentionally and can act in prejudicial ways that trigger the protective us/them instincts and emotions in the people who are demeaned or who are discriminated against.

Various kinds of unintentional, but dysfunctional and damaging intergroup behaviors can happen. Those behaviors can all create risk for Peace.

Sometimes the risk triggering behaviors done by people in a setting are deliberate and intentional. Sometimes they are entirely inadvertent and completely and entirely unintentional. In either case, Peace can be put at risk.

Behaviors that have good intentions at heart from entirely well intentioned people can create problems in a setting because people have imperfections and those behavioral imperfections can create unintentional risks for Peace.

Flare-ups Need To Be Addressed Quickly

Imperfection needs to be understood and recognized — and it needs to be addressed directly when it happens. Both unintended and intended intergroup flare-ups can easily happen — and each flare-up that occurs has the potential to damage or destroy the Peace that exists for any setting.

Flare-ups can do damage and can do it in very short periods of time.

Intergroup flare-ups that happen in any setting should be addressed quickly. Flare-ups that occur in any setting should each be handled in ways that do not exacerbate the inherent us/them instinctive reactions and perceptions that exist in any intergroup setting.

Explosions are much harder to undo once they have occurred. It is very hard to un-explode anything.

Avoidance of explosions is the better strategy. Negative intergroup interactions tend to be much harder to deal with once they build momentum and after people in any setting get us/them instincts strongly activated in their minds.

Keeping the Peace in any setting involves both averting and avoiding intergroup explosions and diminishing or defusing those explosions quickly when they occur.

Our us/them instincts can explode Peace quickly once they are triggered. It can be a short and very slippery slope to intergroup anger and to negative intergroup behavior in many intergroup settings.

So preventing intergroup anger is good and reducing or diverting that anger in any setting can be essential to long-term Peace for that setting.

We Need To Be Careful To Not Open Old Wounds

When we have an understanding between groups and when we are building good will between groups of people in any setting, we need to be careful to not do things or say things that can open old wounds or reactivate old suspicions or old angers.

It can take relatively little to undermine Peace in many settings. The wrong words can do real damage. Inflammatory language can sometimes relatively easily undermine a state of Peace.

Insults can be explosive and purely destructive for both amity and trust.

People who either intentionally or unintentionally use pejorative, insulting, or demeaning terms to describe the other groups in any setting can trigger emotional responses in the other group that can undermine Peace.

The use of pejorative terms can also cause negative instincts to be activated in the person who is using the language. Some pejorative words and thought processes create their own negative self-activation.

Doing symbolic and visible things that are insulting or offensive or damaging relative to the other groups can create obvious and overt threats to intergroup Peace.

Negative Symbols Should Be Avoided

Some people either intentionally or unintentionally display various kinds of explicit symbols that are perceived to be either insults to the other group, attacks on the other group, or insensitive reminders of prior attacks or earlier damage that had been done to the other group at some points in their past.

Those symbols should be avoided. Swastikas, for example, are obvious symbolic attacks on the groups of people who were murdered by the Nazis.

Confederate flags can be equally obvious symbolic attacks on people whose ancestors were enslaved by the soldiers who flew those flags over the Civil War battlefields where a key operational and functional goal for the soldiers who were in those battles, and who flew those flags over their own forces was to continue to enslave, oppress, degrade, damage, and actually own other human beings.

Displaying pictures of the Prophet Mohamed in settings where that display is considered to be a blasphemous thing to do also has the obvious impact of being inflammatory. People who are affected by those kinds of visual points are often deeply offended at those kinds of visual displays.

Pretending Not To Understand Is Disingenuous

Deeply offending someone in an intentional and deliberate way with any kind of visual display is obviously not a good foundation for building Peace with that person or for building Peace with the group of people that person represents.

Anyone who feels the need to do something in a public way that they know is deeply offensive to someone else should try to be very honest with themselves about their own existing motivations and about the full layers of underlying divisive intent that might exist for their own behavior.

Pretending not to understand those issues or pretending not to understand the impact of those kinds of symbols on other people is clearly disingenuous for the people who are pretending. If people feel a need to do something that they know absolutely will be perceived as a symbolic attack on other people, the person doing the attack should have the personal

honesty to admit their entire goal to themselves and to be open and honest — at least to themselves — about their entire array of intentions and goals.

We can't just say — “I would not be personally offended if they said something like that to me — so therefore they should not be offended if I say that to Them.”

If we want to bring people together to create a collective agenda where all groups of people do well, and where all of the groups mutually do win, and if we want to live in a setting where all groups collectively do thrive — then using any visual symbols or any symbolic actions that trigger negative us/them responses at a visual and visceral level for any of the people in that setting obviously puts any Peace that exists in that setting between those sets of people at risk.

People Who Display Offensive Material Intend To Offend

That piece of information is generally not a new insight for the people who actually do chose to display offensive materials in many settings.

The inflammatory symbolic behavior that happens is sometimes truly innocent, but more often than not, the people who display those inflammatory visual symbols do intend to put Peace at risk in that setting.

That is often their direct, clear, and purposeful functional goal for performing that negative function in that setting and in those particular ways.

The goal of anyone who displays a swastika or who wears one on his or her clothes is clearly not to bring us all together as a people. The pure act of wearing or showing or displaying those symbols is an aggressive and intensive act directed against the other group in its own right.

When those displays do happen, we need to take the time to talk to each of the people actually doing the display — with the intent of educating the people doing the display about the impact of their actions and, hopefully, converting those people to the cause of the intergroup Peace.

Conversions do happen. Some people are uninformed rather than malicious or evil. The attempt to do a conversion for the people who are uninformed is clearly worth the effort.

If conversions do not happen, however, then the other people in that setting who do want Peace to succeed need to reject those kinds of negative and damaging of behaviors and need to reject those insulting and attacking behaviors publicly and explicitly.

Clarity and speed in responding to those kinds of inflammatory symbols can be both useful for keeping the Peace and useful for restoring the Peace in any setting.

**Other People From That Same Group Need To Disavow And
Reject The Pejorative Action Or Symbol**

It is important to recognize that in the settings in our country where those negative and hate-based symbols are used, usually only a very small minority of the people in that setting from the group who is doing the insulting behaviors actually, personally and deliberately, are taking those kinds of offensive actions and intentionally displaying those kinds of negative symbols.

But because we all tend to think in terms of both group identity and group behaviors, those symbolic acts by any individuals, from any group, can easily be perceived as a symbolic attack from their entire group.

In those situations — when those kinds of inflammatory and symbolic events do happen — then other people from the group who has a disruptive person making those kinds of pejorative and offensive statements need to

step forward and openly disavow and explicitly condemn that behavior by their fellow group member or members.

That public step by other and more enlightened people from that group to clearly disavow the symbols of hate and to publically reject and condemn the explicit emblems of intergroup damage can be very healing. It can put the behavior of the hateful people in that setting into context as being outlier behavior, and it can create bridges for the people who have been insulted to the people who openly and publicly reject the negative act.

Having other people for the group disavow those negative symbolic behaviors from a group member can be good for Peace in any setting.

That is an important strategy for maintaining intergroup Peace.

When people in any setting make those kinds of negative and disrespectful visual statements, then the rest of us in that setting who do respect the other group, and who do want InterGroup Peace to survive in that setting, need to explicitly disavow that specific negative symbolism and we need to reject it very directly and clearly in visible ways.

As a core Peace maintaining strategy, we need to use our collective cultural impact as reasonable and caring people to keep the most offensive symbols from being used.

In cases where those particular symbols are used, we need to make it very clear that the vast majority of people in that setting from the group who has people exhibiting the negative symbols are not in favor of slavery, concentration camps, death camps, or any kind of deliberate disparagement and intentional disrespect for anyone's deep religious beliefs.

We need to tell the people in our own groups who do chose to use inflammatory and hateful symbolism that their behavior is unacceptable to us as their "us" — and we need to make that collective opinion very real to the people who are being attacked and insulted by those symbols.

Our negative us/them instincts tend to trigger seductive negative group behavior when those kinds of symbols and inflammatory language is in play. We need to resist the temptation to be sucked into that behavior and we need to signal clearly that we reject both the intent and the behavior.

We Need Freedom Of Speech Without Direct Attacks

Some people who display those symbols say that they are not being symbolic and that they only display those symbols as a personal linkage to their own ancestors who actually were soldiers who fought under the Nazi symbol or under the Confederate banners.

Those people sometimes say they are simply honoring their own ancestors by sharing those symbols externally and they say that they do not intend to be attacking any other people by those symbol displays.

There is a useful way to test that contention and see those people are telling the truth about that issue. Once the full symbolism of those flags or those emblems as symbols of evil to entire groups of people is explained to those people in a clear and thoughtful way, then the decisions that are made by those people who are displaying the symbols about their personal future display and about their own personal future use of the offending symbol, tells us fairly clearly what their actual motives are and what their real intentions are.

There are obviously many other very effective ways of displaying respect for one's own grandparents and for one's own ancestors that do not involve celebrating death camps or human bondage.

Freedom Of Speech Needs To Be Protected

Peace can be at risk if we don't reject those kinds of negative symbolism and if we don't make that collective belief and our collective rejection of those behaviors both obvious and real when those kinds of events happen.

That is not to say that freedom of speech should be attacked or undermined in any way.

Freedom of speech is an extremely important part of our culture, our values, and our functionality and our survival as a people. Freedom of speech helps keep us free and it keeps us functioning as a nation that governs itself in a democratic way.

We need to protect freedom of speech.

Our strength as a nation is heavily dependent on the fact that we do have freedom of speech and the fact that each of us can express our beliefs and our values openly and clearly without the kinds of retribution and negative consequences that happen in so many settings in other places in the world where freedom of speech doesn't exist.

It is a blessing to have free speech. It is also a strength and an asset. That benefit of that freedom for us all is obviously very true.

Freedom of speech is included in the 12 basic beliefs that are outlined in the last chapter of this book that give us a set of shared beliefs we can collectively commit to together as a key part of being an American “Us.” We need to support freedom of speech.

At the same time, we need to be sensitive to using that freedom in ways that are offensive or painful to other people or groups of people.

We can have both free speech and respectful speech. Maintaining Peace involves making respectful choices not to insult or attack or demean other people.

Clear expression of opinion is a good thing. That clear expression can be done without attacking the beliefs or the dignity of other people.

Hate speech that is clearly and intentionally intended to do damage and to inspire hatred and anger can be outlawed without undermining our overall freedom of speech.

We Need A Larger Sense Of “Us”

The fact that the last issue needed to be addressed points out another reason why Peace can be at risk and explains why Peace needs to be protected.

There are constant levels of intergroup risk that exist anytime we have more than one group in a setting. Every multi-group setting is at risk for having some kind of trigger issue or trigger event divide the groups in ways that could activate those sets of us/them instincts. We need to be aware of those risks and we need to be sensitive to them.

We need to create intergroup harmony and then we need to protect that harmony from the instinctive challenges it will inevitably face.

We can't afford to let ourselves slip backward into increasing levels of intergroup tribal behaviors at the exact point in our history where we should be turning our growing diversity into a national strength.

We need to come together at this point rather than pull apart. We need to protect the collective sense of being an American us against its inevitable challenges.

The primary key to maintaining Peace at this point in our history is to create, protect, nourish, and maintain a larger sense of "Us" that involves all

of the various groups that make up America as the component parts of our functioning Peace coalition.

Having a collective sense of American Us is a powerful and effective way of creating and protecting the context we need to anchor an American culture of Peace.

Converting Enemies Of Peace To Peace Is A Good Strategy

As noted earlier, the Peace coalition that we create will always be at risk from people who don't want Peace. It will always be at risk from people who will deliberately trigger a sense of them and who will deliberately and intentionally activate various behaviors and communications approaches that are aimed at damaging or angering them.

We need to understand that those people exist. We need to try to convert those people to the side of Peace wherever we can. The best response to a former foe can often be to convert them to be an enlightened and sincere friend. That can be done.

Many people who do negative intergroup things today do those negative intergroup things to be loyal to their own group. They aren't

necessarily doing negative things for the sake of being negative. They want to help their “us” succeed.

We Need To Convert War Chiefs To Leaders For Peace

We need to expand the sense of “us” and we need to have those people understand the benefits of win/win outcomes in a way that makes wins for all groups something we can all support.

In a best-case outcome, we should try to make the current intergroup war leaders in any setting an asset for Peace rather than a liability for Peace.

If we can’t convert those people to the cause of Peace, then we need to minimize their impact and we need to offset their damage when that is the best option available to us.

A key part of The Art of Peace strategy is to help those people who want their own group to win to appreciate the value of connecting to a win/win strategy for all groups as part of our Peace agenda.

If conversion is impossible and fails, then we need to be very aware of the threats those people can create. We need to deal with each of those threats effectively and well when they happen.

We need to know who is working to destroy and undermine Peace and we need to deal with their behaviors in ways that keep the worst set of instincts from damaging us in any setting.

Common Danger, Shared Values, Collective Gain Can Unify

Us And Protect Peace

A major strategy we need to use to protect Peace is to build on the commonalities that bring us together.

Some of the key alignment factors that were described earlier in the pyramid that was outlined in chapter three of this book — a sense of common danger, shared values, shared concerns, common enemies, and a collective agreement about shared strategies — are all good and functional tools to use to both trigger and protect Peace.

Those six alignment triggers that are outlined and described in Chapter Seven can help tie and link people together in ways that allow for the creation and the existence of additional levels of intergroup alignment and intergroup Peace.

Those same six triggers can also be used to protect that Peace once it is in place. We can achieve that Peace in particular settings, and for

significant periods of time. We can aim to create a national agenda of Peace for the entire country by using that set of functional alignment tools clearly and well.

Tools Can Be Used For Good Or Evil

At the same time, we need to be aware and cautious that those same alignment instincts and that same set of tools that are described in Chapter Seven to bring people together can also be used in a negative way by skilled and divisive leaders to pull some parts of our coalition for Peace away from our collective “us” to become a separate and conflicted divided segment of internal “Them.”

That is a very real risk. Those basic alignment tools can align all of us, but they can also be used to split us and to align and realign subsets of us into isolation and separation from the rest of us.

Creating a sense of a common enemy for a specific subset of our Peace coalition can be very easy for someone who opposes Peace to do, for example.

The subset of people in any setting who then begin to perceive that common enemy to exist will often decide to group together and to align as a

separate subgroup to resist that enemy in ways that functionally pull those internally aligned people away from our collective us.

Skillful and negatively motivated leaders for various groups who want division to happen in any setting can use each and all of those basic six alignment triggers to make division of some sets of people into their own militant and internally aligned “us” happen.

We Need People To Understand Current Stress Points

We need to be very aware of the risks to Peace that will always continue to exist based on any of the component groups in the Peace coalition having their own us/them instincts activated in a negative way that creates separatist behavior.

There are significant levels of intergroup stress in our country today. Those stress levels can become anger levels based on incidents and on behaviors and those stress levels can cause real division and separation in various settings and communities.

We need to understand that intergroup stress risk and we need to know why it exists.

To preserve the most effective levels of our common agendas and to create mutual understanding, over time, we need to collectively be aware of how differently various groups of people in this country look at issues of race and ethnicity today.

To create intergroup Peace in our settings and to protect the Peace we create, we need to be very honest about those differences.

We need to do what needs to be done — when necessary — to keep a combination of old divisions, bad history, and new trigger events from segmenting our new Peace coalition into conflicted and angry Us and Them subsets in the future.

We need to clearly understand what our old patterns of behavior have been in order to build a new pattern that can achieve Peace.

White Advantages Are Often Invisible To White People

White Americans often significantly underestimate the impact of both race and racial prejudices on key pieces of our history, our society, and our economy. That is an area where education can be very useful relative to creating the next set of strategies that can be used to attain Peace.

Peace is actually at risk if White people in America don't have a clear sense of that history and a clear understanding of those continuing intergroup perceptions held by the rest of America.

We need education for White Americans on those basic intergroup issues and we need other groups to have a sense that those education efforts have been successful.

It will not be easy to have some groups of people in this country believe that White Americans are now ready for the next level of intergroup equality and intergroup benefit without some conscious recognition by White Americans of the long history of discrimination that we have had as a country and without open recognition of the clear patterns of intergroup inequality that have favored White Americans over other groups for our entire history as a nation.

The point of achieving this understanding on those issues at this point in time is not to blame or attack White Americans.

The personal advantages that have existed for White Americans that are part of the current and historic American experience were not created, invented, designed, architected, or implemented by each and all of the White

Americans who are alive in America today as a strategy of deliberate positive differentiation in multiple areas for people who are White.

Those advantages of being White do exist — but they have stemmed from a societal and cultural implementation of key behavioral elements and basic thought processes that are anchored directly in our us/them instinct packages.

That implementation of those various advantages for their own group was not done deliberately or consciously by White Americans functioning today as a conspiracy strategy.

The behavior patterns that have created those advantages for White Americans are instinctive. The benefits that exist are personal, but they are not intentional — and those beliefs were not created by people at a personal level and then somehow implemented as part of any actual plan or strategy.

White Americans often do not have a clear perception of the various personal advantages in multiple areas that accrue to being White — because the reality is that those advantages functionally tend to be visible clearly only to people who do not have those advantages in their own lives.

The advantages of being White often have the lowest visibility to people who are actually White — and they tend to be most visible to the people who haven't had the benefits that those advantages entail and create for White people.

We Have Made Major Areas Of Discrimination Illegal

Overall, we are far more enlightened today across all of America on various intergroup issues than we have ever been. We now have laws that make many kinds of discrimination illegal.

Those laws have emerged in a positive way from a growing sense, by the White Americans who have been making the laws of this country, that the old intergroup approaches were ethically, morally, and functionally inappropriate and often entirely wrong.

That enlightenment on those specific sets of issues is relatively recent, but it is very real for many people. The majority of Americans now believes in those new values. Those new intergroup interaction values are far superior to the values we held as a nation just a few decades ago.

We have laws that now make discrimination illegal — and those are very enlightened laws. We should celebrate and protect those laws and we

should respect and honor the fact that White Americans who were in positions of power when those laws passed have made the ethical decisions to share that power in inclusive ways through passing those laws.

Majority Tribes In Other Countries Are Often Less

Enlightened

We are not seeing the majority tribes in many other countries in the world voluntarily making those same kinds of enlightened choices about inclusion of their minority people.

Minority people in Saudi Arabia or Japan or Fiji or the Dominican Republic are still second-class citizens at a very fundamental, direct, and intentional level and that isn't likely to change in any time soon.

For our White Americans, those new sets of more enlightened laws didn't create a new access to some entirely new level of personal opportunity — because the old level of access to opportunity was already very effective and available for White Americans.

That opportunity change that is resulting from those new laws is most obvious to the people who were denied opportunity in the past. The full

impact of that change has been less visible to the White Americans who have always had those particular opportunity levels as a fact of life.

So our collective progress as a nation is clearly real and clearly significant — but we still do need White Americans to understand why significant resentment levels still exist and we need White Americans to know what the old behaviors and the old advantages actually have been for their group.

One way of dealing with that specific set of issues very directly with people from all groups could be to share this book and its sister books with other people who read and to point out those issues of our long history of discrimination explicitly and directly as facts of life for many people in this country.

This book was written in part to function as a tool that gives people both a mechanism and an intellectual context to use to explicitly discuss those historical intergroup issues, to recognize that reality, and to sympathize and empathize with the people who have felt pain as the result of those historic behaviors and realities.

We Need To Understand The Powerful And Negative Input Of Us/Them Instincts On Our History

It is a significant risk to intergroup Peace not to understand that our history has given us an unfortunate context where significant intergroup damages have clearly occurred over long periods of time for many people in our country. For Americans from our minority groups, the memory of those wrong doings continues to make that history relevant and real today.

That is very true in those settings where discriminatory situations are still happening today and it is true even in those settings where there are no current traces of either intergroup conflict or wrong and discriminating behaviors.

Each painful category of historic discrimination still leaves some scars and angry memories.

The fact that people of all races and all ethnic groups — and both genders — can vote today does not erase the memory that getting that vote was a painful experience for many people and that there were multiple occurrences of very ugly, painful, and powerful intergroup interactions that occurred as that more enlightened voting rights process unfolded.

Even today, there are settings in our country where voting rights still can be impeded by new laws that create various barriers to voting for some people.

The new laws that focus on voter identification issues don't create explicit barriers to voting by group or race, but the functional impact of those laws can have that same potential effect in some settings.

Minority Americans who could not vote at all a relatively few years ago, can clearly see echoes of those clear patterns of historic vote-denying behavior that are embedded again in the new voting laws.

The impact of restricting voting access is obviously not a new pattern of behavior. Those current voting concerns and issues are tied to the intergroup memory of absolute voting discrimination for many people.

So the new approaches that make voter identification rules more stringent can easily look and feel like a linear extension of the old practices and the old approaches to people who were unable to vote in the past. Those memories have not faded.

Likewise, the collective memories for Black Americans about the Civil Rights protests just a few decades ago, when White people in police

uniforms brutalized them with batons, unleashed dogs on them, or sprayed water from their fire hoses into the crowds of black people who were seeking to vote, or to ride on the front section of a city bus, or who were just trying to sit and eat at a public lunch counter have not faded for many African Americans.

Those memories are regularly reinforced by the old news film that was taken of those events and that is increasingly being replayed when there is a reason to replay it.

We also have had those memories collectively jogged recently by the powerful Ken Burns specials on racial issues in America and by intergroup issues movies, like *Selma*, that retell those stories with clarity and skill.

All of that history is good to understand — and the replay of those events through all of those communication approaches has the inevitable impact of resurrecting group anger that is justified by those behaviors.

The Films Re-Trigger InterGroup Anger

It is easy to both trigger and renew intergroup anger when those news films and those movies about racial issues and injustices are shown. Evil and

cruel things were done in this country by people to other people because of their race.

The truth is that the white people who held those fire hoses or who wielded those baseball bats in those settings look just like other white people look today. As noted earlier in this book, we tend to link our us/them emotions to how people look and we tie them to how people sound and we do both linkages at a very basic and instinctive level.

White people today do not have those particular fire hoses in hand today — but the memories of those hoses exist today for Black and minority Americans and white people who look just like those ‘hose holders’ exist today as well.

It is easy to link those facts and those perceptions at an instinctive level. The anger that is and was directed at the first set of real people who actually had those damaging hoses in their hands can fairly easily spill over to be directed against the other sets of people who look just like those people — white people today.

There are multiple areas where our values and our behavioral expectations are significantly more enlightened today — but our memory of

prior enlightened behaviors has not gone away and we need White Americans today to understand why the scars and the angers from those particular events have not disappeared and are still relevant today.

Shootings Of Unarmed Teenagers Trigger Protests

That set of issues is made even more relevant by more current events — like the shooting of an unarmed Black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri by a White policeman, or the shooting of an unarmed Black teenager by a White policeman in Oakland, California — that triggered protests and street demonstrations by angry and saddened people in both settings.

There have been a number of highly visible similar incidents recently where a police officer, who is not Black, has killed an unarmed person who is Black. Those incidents are serving as catalysts for collective intergroup anger in a number of settings.

The “Black Lives Matter” movement is gaining strength and has resulted in protests and demonstrations in multiple cities and on a number of college campuses.

The existence of intergroup Peace in this country is put at risk by each of those trigger events. People who are angry because unemployment levels

for minority Americans are high and who are angry because incarceration rates for minority Americans are even higher look at those incidents as absolute proof for intentional patterns of intergroup damage in those settings.

There are enough current and very real disadvantages that still exist, at least situationally, for many minority Americans today to have that entire set of historical and current experiences feel like a complete package.

Any clearly discriminatory event that happens today has the ability to trigger longitudinal memory recall for all of the discriminatory things that are part of our history.

Overall, as a country, African Americans are six times more likely to be arrested than White Americans. We have more people in jail than any country in the world by a large margin — and the majority of our prisoners come from our minority populations.

Each incident that happens today in this country has the ability to unleash the collective impact of those negative behaviors and those negative realities.

The recent widely publicized demonstrations in Ferguson, Missouri were about a shooting at one level — but they were more about the pent up anger of a local Black population regarding the high unemployment levels, high levels of incarcerations, and a strong sense of on-going discrimination at multiple levels.

Those issues are discussed in the next chapter of this book. They do put Peace at risk. They also create opportunities to make Peace happen.

Those issues also give us a very public context that we should use to build better levels of intergroup Peace. We need to look at what each of those incidents teach us about our reality today — and we should use that learning to help us solve the key issues rather than have them drive us farther apart.

Win/Win Requires Clarity About The Actual Win By Each Group

We have some major stress points directly in front of us that each put Peace at risk. We clearly need to deal with immigration as an issue. We need immigration laws that meet the needs of Americans to achieve the American

Dream — and we need immigration laws that do not inflame intergroup anger levels.

We need immigration laws that protect Americans from being damaged by issues relating to immigration. All groups who have an interest in immigration as a key topic need to look for win/win solutions for that issue. Win/win is the key.

Win/win solutions can fail and can cause Peace to fail if the solutions used in any setting are weak and if each group in a win/win strategy does not actually have its own core needs met. For win/win success to happen, each group actually needs to understand its own core needs, so that it can know when they are being met.

Each group also needs to understand and respect the legitimate core needs of the other group. That understanding needs to be part of the Peace process.

This chapter of this book is about the various sets of things that can put Peace at risk or can cause Peace to fail.

The risk of failure increases when people in any setting are not clearly benefiting from an intergroup situation. The likelihood of achieving Peace,

in any setting, is much higher if groups in that setting do clearly understand their own needs and if the groups who understand their needs can achieve them in the context of a win/win strategy.

The Mixture Of Relevant Groups Is Changing In Many Settings

In each setting where we want to achieve intergroup Peace, we need to know who the relevant groups actually are for the setting.

The set of relevant groups is changing in many settings as we become more diverse. We now have a wide range of relevant intergroup interactions in our various settings.

The old dynamic and the historic context of having local intergroup situations that were almost always defined and structured as involving a White majority group, and one or more local minority groups, who deal collectively in various ways with the White majority group on community power issues is fading.

We now have multiple groups in many settings. Each group is relevant.

The situation of determining which groups should be included in our win/win strategies in each setting is now much more complex in many settings. Settings are more complex — and each local group needs to be relevant to the process and included in the strategy in order for the intergroup Peace process to succeed in any setting.

In any local area, the relevant groups, in addition to the White group, might be local concentrations of immigrants from a particular country — like Japan, Vietnam, China, or Russia — or the relevant groups might be the traditional Hispanic and African American minority groups.

We Need To Understand Which Groups And Which Leaders Are Relevant For Each Setting

Different settings have different intergroup mixtures and realities.

Peace can be at risk if we don't involve the right groups in each setting in the Peace process.

Peace is also at risk if we don't have the Peace that we create in each setting negotiated by people who their group accepts and recognizes as the leaders in that setting who have the legitimate standing and the personal power to actually negotiate the deal.

The issues of who should be doing the deal for each group in each setting are not always obvious. We need to determine in each situation which leaders have the standing needed to negotiate and lead Peace.

Our increasing diversity can make that a challenge. Some settings have entirely new majority groups. Others have no majority and are a combination of various minority groups.

The new sets of intergroup relationships that will increasingly drive and dominate both the political and economic agendas in a number of areas will now need to be new relationships between the various minority groups who have grown to be the major players in each setting.

In a number of settings — like Los Angeles or Oakland — the key intergroup relations and the new intergroup competition is now black and brown rather than black and white or brown and white.

Chinese American communities are also growing rapidly and are increasingly relevant to the political process in many settings. Vietnamese, Hmong, Scandinavian, and Korean populations hold majority status in some communities.

The African American, Asian American, and Hispanic battles for control of school boards, county boards, and city councils are now the most relevant local political power issues in a growing number of settings.

In those increasingly complex settings, we can either come to a situation where we strive in positive ways for intergroup understanding and alignment — or we can deteriorate into us/them instinctive behaviors with us and them in a setting now being black and brown or multiple other intergroup interactions between the relevant local groups.

In a number of cities, the fastest growing local group is now from one or more of our Asian American populations. The Asian American populations each tend to maintain their separate identities. Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans and Vietnamese Americans who each have population concentrations in various cities are not melding into a generic Asian group. Each of those ethnic groups tends to keep its separate identity and to create its own local cultural reality.

So we have an increasing number of settings where the new intergroup reality is that there are multiple groups — each with its own relevance and each with its own power base.

In each setting, our goal for overall local intergroup relations should be community synergy rather than intergroup division. Understanding how to do win/win negotiating among all relevant groups in each setting can be key to the basic Peace process we need for each setting.

We need the people from each group who are coming to the community discussions and negotiating situations with the goal of creating win/win results for the whole community in ways that also achieve wins for each group.

That can take real creativity — and it takes a very clear recognition of how local most intergroup solutions now need to be.

The Best Negotiators Help The Other Side Win As Well

We need people who lead all groups who want their own group to do well and who also support having all other groups to do well as well.

We need leaders who understand that their groups win when all groups win.

As noted earlier in the win/win chapter of this book, the very best negotiators in any setting not only help their own side figure out their winning issues — they also very often help the other side figure out their

own winning set of goals and objectives. Doing that entire win/win approach well very directly minimizes the risks to Peace.

Really good negotiators in any setting can help the people on both sides of the negotiations be able to understand and articulate their own clear definition of a win.

The best negotiators do that work for both sides very intentionally because negotiations in any setting that result in mutual wins, that are clearly perceived by all parties to be mutual wins, are much more likely to be perpetuated and much more likely to survive over time than negotiations that end up with either one-sided results, or with outcomes that are so bad and so unfortunate that neither side achieves a win and both sides end up with a loss of some kind.

Peace is at risk when any of those results involving losses happen.

One-sided deals tend to be killed at the first available opportunity — often with a significant amount of ill will and even anger involved. Actual lose/lose situations often simply collapse of their own accord.

Those kinds of agreement collapses can easily damage one or both parties, particularly if they collapse in unfortunate ways.

Parties who negotiate a deal in good faith in any setting can become angry and can feel betrayed if the other party collapses the deal and reneges on the agreements after the deal is negotiated.

That scenario of having a deal fail can make relevant people extremely angry and — when us/them instincts are activated by the collapsed deal — vindictive.

Vindictive is a dangerous motivation for any intergroup setting.

Lose/Lose Strategies Clearly Put Peace At Risk

The worst results in many settings — and the highest risks to Peace in almost any setting — are not the win/lose results but the lose/lose strategies and results. Lose/lose situations sometimes emerge accidentally when win/lose efforts fail.

Lose/lose situations can also happen in far too many instances when one of the parties in a setting deliberately aims for a lose/lose outcome for all parties.

When people really hate other people in any setting, then lose/lose situations that create a loss for one side so that one can inflict a larger loss on their side are far too common.

Those behaviors obviously create risks for Peace. They are not a hypothetical concern. People strapping bombs to their own body so they can kill “Them” by dying themselves as a ‘suicide-bomber’ actually happen every day somewhere in the world.

Groups of people in multiple settings who are driven by hatred often create lose/lose situations as their intergroup strategy. That is a particularly sad, destructive, dysfunctional, and damaging set of strategic choices, but it is clearly one that motivates some people, and it is a reality that needs to be addressed.

When Peace deteriorates in any given setting — triggered by an incident or an insult or any kind of clearly perceived negative intergroup behavior — anger can be triggered and that anger can take people from win/win strategies past win/lose strategies all the way to the levels of hate and anger that inspires lose/lose strategies and vindictive and mutually destructive thinking.

Revenge, rather than wins, can become a key motivator. That is a very bad path to be on. Peace is very much at risk when that happens. Peace can be destroyed. People can be hurt badly.

Peace Is At Risk If Wins Are Not Wins

So win/win is obviously the best set of strategies to pursue to reduce the risk for Peace — and it is an approach worth achieving and defending for multiple reasons. Win/win needs to be not only a philosophy and a commitment — it needs to be a skill set.

Negotiated terms and mutual agreements that can achieve win/win outcomes in any setting can do wonderful things for everyone involved in the process.

The likelihood of Peace surviving over time is diminished, however, if people do not feel that their own group is having its key and important needs met. That perception of not winning can turn into the source of real conflict if one party withdraws or breaks the deal and if the other party feels betrayed by the change in status.

Lose/lose situations need to be avoided. Members of any group whose leaders are choosing lose/lose strategies need to look hard at the leaders who they have in place to see if the leadership needs to be replaced in order to return to win/win approaches to intergroup interactions.

When any party in any setting becomes committed to lose/lose results, great energy needs to be diverted in helping those people understand the range of alternatives to those strategies.

Defusing hatred is hard – but it is not impossible. Taking steps to defuse hatred needs to be part of the goals and strategies for the other party in those lose/lose settings, because the consequences of double losing can be so devastating to everyone.

The Negotiators Need To Be Accepted And Have Authority

Community leaders who bring people together to create a sense of inter-ethnic Peace need to be people who have the perceived legitimacy and the standing with their own people to have credibility on those issues and to speak with authority on behalf of their own people.

Having credible negotiations for each side is essential for having the people in any setting accept the deals done by their negotiators. The Art of Intergroup Peace can be best implemented when people believe their leaders have the standing and the legitimacy to negotiate for Peace.

It is often a good tactic for leaders who aspire to achieve Peace to support the credibility of the leaders of the other group who are involved in designing and creating intergroup Peace.

Taking steps to give credibility to the leaders on the other side in a situation can be a very good thing to do when that credibility gives those leaders on the other side the support they need to put Peace in place.

It is a risk to create Peace that isn't built on the work of credible leaders for either side.

The next chapter of this book deals with some basic and fundamental intergroup stress points and realities we need to understand before we can put a credible Peace in place in most settings.

Success is possible — but, it won't happen because of either magical thinking, wishful thinking, or strategies based on optimism and good will, rather than reality and practical decision-making.

We need to understand issues for Peace to happen and survive.