

Day 1 – What Now?

Evelin Lindner: When I heard the first presentations, I thought, wow, they're so disparate, did I make a mistake putting these together? But as it evolved, I felt better. The second thing is I want to share what we do now.

Many of you said, “But how do we do it? How do we translate that into action?” I invite everyone who says that to sit in the front row. We need to show politicians that humiliation is significant and can be measured; we can have evidence and put it on the table, take it to policymakers and put it into policy.

Humiliating policy: if a certain language shouldn't be spoken anymore.

Arye Rattner: About a year ago, I gave a presentation in one section of Tel Aviv, Jaffa. Nevertheless, to those of you not familiar with geographical division of citizens in Israel – Haifa, for example – in Tel Aviv you see segregation: Tel Aviv – Jews, Jaffa – Arabs. At a community center in Jaffa, a local chapter of a foundation, they invited me to address our studies. One of the items that I presented there, part of the questionnaire: To what extent do you feel that you are part of the Israeli society? A high percentage of Arabs didn't feel like they were part of society, close to 80%. Alan Slifka said this is exactly what we need, what we want to develop. This is where the dialogue has started, having some international tool to help us, aid us. To what extent are we living in this global village with groups/sectors not belonging to the place where they physically reside? It's not a public policy; it's an international instrument designed to measure social justice. It is based on theories of measuring social justice. This is why we need to invest some effort, to see if we can translate social justice into humiliation. Looking at the scale of corruption developed by Transparency International, should we think about developing something in that direction? Running a survey every few years, ranking cultures in terms of feelings of humiliation, degradation...?

Don Klein: Let's open the floor to “What Now?” ideas, no matter how ill-formed they might be.

Julie Streitzsch: Ideas from everyone on where we take this from the theoretical to the application. I don't have the answer; I'm looking for an answer. If you have an idea, give me one.

Floyd Webster Rudmin: My major research is on acculturation – how minorities adjust to a new culture. As a critic of this research, I have come to realize that we have to think of what our motivations are for doing our scholarly work. If our motivation is understanding a phenomenon, it's one kind of research. If it's influencing policy, that leads to another kind of research. If it's remediating people who have been humiliated, or remediating an institution, it's another kind of research. We must think clearly about our rhetorical purpose. Who are we trying to speak to, and about what?

A major motivation is policy – we'd like to influence policy. A good example of this is Charles Osgood and his theory of de-escalation to oppose an escalation process. He realized how difficult it is for one person to influence US government policy. He devised a strategy in which he'd organize seminars of 12-20 people, inviting three kinds of individuals: journalists, military officers of colonel and major ranks (those who advised generals), and deputy ministers – undersecretaries, etc. (at a level where their influence would percolate up to a policymaker). He

succeeded in influencing the Kennedy administration to unilaterally stopping atmospheric nuclear testing.

Another example is the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) which began in the 1930s and which now has a focus on racism, gender politics, etc. and has hopes of influencing policy. By SPSSI's accounts of people who do internships in Washington, it is important that research be expressed in a one-page memo, and that there be a narrative anecdote at the start illustrating the research. That is, you need science plus a case story.

In terms of research designs, there's the method of vignette experiments. Brief, one-paragraph stories are used, and you change small components in an experimental way. This design is perfect for this topic of humiliation but may be difficult across cultures.

Finally, we're studying humiliation because of its bad consequences. Why don't we study the bad consequences, namely revenge? Why take one step back? Why not go directly at revenge?

Brian Lynch: For about the last eight years, I've been thinking about shame and humiliation. For the last two years, I have wanted to ground it more. I've also been thinking about interest. Few psychologists think of interest as an emotion. You may know of Tompkins' work. My grounding in shame, I see humiliation as a variant of shame; it's a good thing. Shame is a marker, a sign that something is wrong, and we need to pay attention to it. It means we're not getting where we need to go. Humiliation and shame and shaming are different things. Humiliation is someone causing shame in us. They don't have to be connected. Anything can shame us at any time. It starts with our interest.

One example is the movie, "The House of Sand and Fog," which has the line, "It's not so much our hatreds that divide us, it's our hopes." This means conflicts of interest cause shame. Maybe shame and interest are opposite sides of the same coin. The Middle East is a conflict of interest over land. In the movie, they all want the house, and you see that all it would take is a good negotiator at some critical points. Some people have great hopes, and others get in their way.

Anger is a secondary emotion. We miss the mark when we concentrate on the anger. It's a learned, scripted behavior. It doesn't have to follow. I like to think of interest as an emotion; it comes deep from our childhood, what we want.

Arie Nadler: I was thinking about the experiences I've had between Israelis and Palestinians. My own work is on reconciliation, the social psychology of it. The major aspect is power relations. We can't talk about humiliation without looking at power relations. Humiliation is linked to the powerless. Not actions, words or activities that reduce the damaging effects of humiliation, which reduce the damaging effects of guilt. To deal with guilt, one way with which the powerful (Israeli Jews) are being portrayed as perpetrators, and guilt drives personal relations. The way to deal with guilt is to distance yourself from actions, the target of guilt – demean the other group, say you do nothing wrong. It's not the same as humiliation; to bring back power is revenge, retaliation. In almost every conflict there is a power dimension. The dynamic between humiliation and guilt must be overcome to move beyond humiliation.

One way to do that is the apology. Under the EU, we organized 10 Israeli and Palestinian social scientists, in the early '90s, at the height of tensions. The major issue was accepting responsibility for causing pain for the other side. If I accept responsibility, will you reciprocate

and accept guilt for your side? At the end of the meeting, we had a contract for the reciprocal acceptance of responsibility. It never materialized, but it was a start.

Tony Castleman: When I think about “What Now?” measurement is a critical part for advocacy, for interventions and measuring the impact of reducing humiliation, and it’s critical for research. Why not focus on consequences? Maybe that’s too late in the process. Looking at humiliation, maybe it gets at it sooner and can break the cycle. There are different ideas on how to measure humiliation.

First, self-reported levels of humiliation. Some of that information is out there, as in the demographic and health surveys from many developing countries. Ask women of reproductive age if they’ve been humiliated by their husband or partner (part of the larger domestic abuse module), and it would be feasible to draw on those surveys and include other parts of humiliation. Self-reporting has its limits.

Another measure is not out there yet – self-reported levels of humiliation directed at others. We don’t ask that question, but it would get a different slice of measurement.

The third type is measuring specific incidents that we know reflect humiliation, such as female genital cutting, domestic violence, inhumane working conditions...and the positive side as well, empowering practices or sympathetic actions of employers or within families. That could be done on an individual level or perhaps a national level, such as Arye was mentioning.

Rosita Albert: There’s an important part in between – cultural groups.

Tony: Yes, you could do an index for ethnic groups.

The last measure can be specific if you have an interest in a specific group, so that you design data collection on that. I’m involved in a study in Kenya on HIV-positive malnourished adults, asking if they’re allowed to eat with other members of the family, so we’re looking at human value. We’re asking those questions among our population.

Don Klein: Inflicting humiliation is often a study of denial. I have not yet found anyone willing to acknowledge that they have humiliated someone else.

What now of making it something we can talk about? There has been a denial of humiliation and little study in Western psychology, yet it’s one of the most persuasive experiences, the most powerful motivators of individual and group behavior. For a male to acknowledge humiliation is to be humiliated once more.

With a director of a training center, we did a talk about humiliation there. He came back one day after a negotiation with building trade employers, where the representative of management said something he intended to be humiliating. I called him out, and the manager said he shouldn’t feel that, he was demoralized I took it so far – used the unspeakable. Our network is making speakable what has been unspeakable. In our family, work, teaching, etc., we use the term “humiliation” and let experiences be known. That is a powerful “what now.”

I think it is useful to distinguish between shame and humiliation. They get fused together in a variety of ways. A useful way: if I have an affair, and my wife finds out, it is clear I won’t feel humiliated, I’ll feel ashamed. If my wife has an affair, and I find out, I’ll feel humiliated. That’s a clear distinction.

I also wanted to tell about an experience with an African-American colleague at a race institute in the Baltimore-Washington area. He told about the everyday experience of humiliation

as an African American in our society (this is in the '60s). He went off ahead of me at Union Station, and when I got outside of the station, he was in a rage (he was a mild-mannered man). He couldn't find a taxi, and said, "You see what I mean?" He had let down his guard. Instead of being defensive, he had let down his guard with me and told me what it felt like, and he went out and it happened, and he lost it. He couldn't afford to lose it every time; he made himself more vulnerable. I'm sure people still experience that today.

The final area I'd like to talk about is working with conflicting groups in Cyprus. It was very important for people to have time to tell stories about what it was like to be a Greek/Turkish Cypriot and get beyond the sense of feeling blamed. You've probably seen the same with Jewish and Arab citizens. We need to take the time for people to explain. And then there occurred magic moments, as their guard was down, they could talk about and respect others' experiences and feel empathy. The fear of humiliation was no longer a consideration.

It takes effort, energy, making the experience visible and speakable. It takes a great deal of planning.

Robert Kolodny: It's about having an awareness of shame and humiliation, but my experience is that this isn't in the literature. I work with organizations and groups, and since I have discovered it in Don's workshop, now that I have it as a lens, it's been transformative as I see things. It's having the language and awareness myself and finding ways to use it.

I want to report about working with leaders of organizations, with the lens of the amount of humiliation they're vulnerable to. The higher people are in organizations, the more vulnerable they are. The theory we have is that the ones at the top have power and aren't vulnerable, but a deeper look shows that their behavior can be traced back to that vulnerability. Shame is the result/defense of being shamed. I find myself spending time working on people issues – conflict and intergroup issues, people feeling mistreated and neglected, leaders providing support and appreciation of their own vulnerability. There are grades – embarrassment, shame, humiliation. Even if I don't use the language, the fact that I'm so tuned into it is supportive in what I do.

I have to pay attention to my own vulnerability, working and intervening in conflict makes me vulnerable when I strike too close to vulnerability in the groups I'm working with. By tracking my own experience, acknowledging it, I can't avoid shaming people I'm working with if we're going to do something real. Attending to it, guessing when it might come up, it's critical to be connected. I don't think it's avoidable. I don't think people doing work around race/gender relations can avoid hurting each other, but look at how you hold that and deal with the consequences.

The powerful in group situations to attend to – it's amazing to me – how much, how active and the organizing of shame/humiliation, if you scratch hard enough, you'll find that emotion at the base of a lot of what goes on in those relationships. Giving people a chance to talk about their experiences, hearing the impact of their behavior, their intentions and justifications are all entry points to that work. In the settings I work in, I have more access, opportunities to access than in the kinds of settings we're dealing with here, such as warfare. How do you get access to Bush to talk to him about humiliation? I have no doubt humiliation plays a role with him; it's a question of the degree to which he's in touch with it. It's not just him, it's most of us.

Grace Feuerverger: I'm coming as an educator, and I'm very much "on the ground," in a sense. As I mentioned in the morning, I've done work as an ethnographer in Israel, an entry point into issues on conflict resolution, particularly among students. I do work in Toronto with

immigrant and refugee students. Many cities are dealing with this issue, some more dramatic than others. Toronto is an interesting lab, one of largest refugee accepting cities in North America, perhaps in the western world.

What is happening... I'm involved in research pilot project looking at high school students coming from places of war and conflict, and they're suffering from trauma in one way or another. It's interesting how they're playing out these differences. There's denial with teachers and policymakers, but students are starting to act out conflicts from home countries. The issue we're grappling with – if this is happening, and it's happening in large ways, gangs, and so on – it's potentially an explosive situation. What I'm trying to do is open a space for dialogue for these students to have the opportunity to be heard for first time. It's an interesting reaction for students who didn't know others would be interested in this. Through focus groups and interviews with parents and teachers, students begin to realize that what they're experiencing isn't unique. It takes away feelings of isolation. They're not carrying it on their own shoulders. They're carrying the reasons for wars in the first place. Through this sharing of suffering, the students they're bullying also have a story of suffering. Something is beginning to happen when they have the space to tell their stories.

How do we bring it forward into curriculum development, policymaking for educational institutions and other institutions? It's so much easier to hold onto a sense of denial, to see the problem as not that bad, but that may not last forever. Toronto is better off than many other cities, but things can digress. These kids are going to graduate high school, and what happens then? There needs to be an acknowledgment of their suffering, and they're not getting it. These thoughts emerging from this pilot project; it's overwhelming to see how they want someone to listen to them, someone from the mainstream. How quickly the bully can become the healer if given the opportunity. I've seen it in certain examples. It can be turned around if the possibility of exchange happens. There's an opening of a door. How do we translate this into curriculum development? To make it into some sort of policy so that it's part of everyday classes?

Linda Hartling: We see the complexity of this experience. I'm interested in measurement. My doctoral research was developing a scale assessing the internal experience of humiliation, which includes cumulative humiliation and fear of humiliation. However, measurement devices are limited when it comes to assessing relational experience. In particular, these measurement tools have difficulty assessing the power dynamics in relationships.

On another point, I think it would be helpful to understand the neuron-biological research on social pain, which is relevant to the experience of humiliation. According to the research we process social pain in same area of the brain as physical pain. Humiliation sticks with us like the experience of touching a hot stove. Using functional MRIs gives us more information about the overlapping systems in the brain that process social pain and physical pain.

Rosita Albert: As I sit here, I have a number of words already said here, and I want us to differentiate humiliation from oppression, discrimination, prejudice, exclusion, bullying, shame, cruelty, whims, embarrassment, trauma, torture (physical and psychological humiliation). Part of our task is to delineate how they're similar and how different. What is the difference in these concepts: dignity, empathy, respect, and so on? We can do an inventory of what we know (sources), what do we not know and need research on, then move to the policy level, and given what we already know, how do we get access? How do we get to people who don't want to deal with it and have their power diminished? It's not just resistance but also denial and fear,

particularly by the powerful in societies. How do we get them to deal with it? It's a big issue we have to grapple with.

Noel Mordana: I'm involved in law and politics. I've done little to contribute to greater peace in the world. However, I know as an outsider that from a political perspective, if I want to be able to widen the reach of my message, I would want to initially simplify it. There is the definitional richness of this conversation that limits the ability to expand it. It creates an oppositional duality between what you're trying to eliminate (the broad), and what most people would be willing to try to eliminate (the very narrow). Shame is what you agree with, and humiliation is what you disagree with. It was the result of my need for a simpler way to talk about humiliation. I wonder if it might be possible, initially, not to have as broad an authoritative definition, to begin with some aspect of humiliation that we can all agree with, agree that's terrible, and many others may also see it as terrible.

Morton Deutsch: If you look at the Oxford Dictionary, it has a good definition of humiliation.

Carlos Sluzki: We hear, "It's very complicated to describe, but I know one when I see one." Humiliation is an extremely complex emotion that cannot be defined simply. Studies on violent hooligans and of people involved in other acts of collective violence – interviewing individually, they are quite aware of their own foibles and sins, and even capable of empathy, but when acting collectively, they behave differently from what they themselves profess. A definition of an emotion requires the inclusion of the context where it takes place, adding complexity by including the nature of the situation or event. In sum, I favor operational definitions rather than in abstracto. We have to carry on in each case the important exercise of deconstructing and reconstructing the emotion-in-context to make it real. The risk of that task is that we may end up creating a "diagnostic and statistical manual" that pathologizes emotions-in-context into a diagnosis. My plea: let us not use a common-sense definition, let us not assume that people have a shared notion of humiliation; rather, let us include always scenarios if we want to study emotions.

Maggie O'Neill: In terms of research methods, this discussion has gone through measurement, narrative, giving people space and a voice... For me listening, we're talking about participatory action research methodologies. My own experiences, and of participatory methodologies, match well with the appreciative inquiry we talked about earlier. The appreciative framework blends well with participatory methods. For people in different camps with differences, it's about creating a space to include all voices and have a direct outcome and plan of action. It's a blending of theory/experience and intervention/action. There are a few websites I'll share: www.safetysoapbox.com, a participatory action research project I've facilitated with a colleague, working with residents who were angry with prostitutes working outside their doors. We trained community members, who are usually the subjects of research, to do the research and this brought some small, local impacts. Another project is www.makingtheconnections.info, and I'll talk about that tomorrow.

Olga Botcharova: One person whom I worked with in the Balkans wrote that if we are able to reach and evoke a change of mind in about 20% of a population in an appropriate cross-section of this population (not the top leaders who need to preserve their position and perceptions of why

they're there, and we can't think of voiceless minority), we appeal to the middle section of "non-official leaders or non-formal leaders or spontaneous leaders," statistics say that among those people, they are the ones who would be active in promoting agents of this change. They are those capable of shaping the power and educating others to make change visible. We may come up with many practical ideas, and one night I worked on a project, and part of our work was to end our dialogue with plan of action, but there is no quick fix. I believe in the educational exchange of ideas.

Evelin's example of Cairo work, the couple who said we have to kill our daughter to feel appropriate, in order to evoke change, we should be sensitive. We say we don't want to impose our values, but admit that sometimes we want to impose our values and create cultural change. How to create common ground, not as an aggressive imposer, does such common ground exist? Do we work, or do we sit and wait?

Rosita Albert: I have experience in the methods Floyd mentioned. May they be used in a two-way process?

Evelin Lindner: Is there a way now to do something for us today? Such as write a press release, or we all go out and phone one journalist, we go to the street and shout something... The other thing is that I've felt there was a great synergy between the people who talked so far, and would you want me to put you together by email to continue to discuss that among you? Would there be somebody among you who would coordinate that process?

Arye Rattner: One more comment coming from your perspective. An hour ago you said, "Let's talk about what's next." The question that bothers me is that whether something at the ground level can indeed be done so that the group and influential people...so that we can, a year from now and two years from now, and go somewhat beyond – and I don't want to downgrade individual studies – to get us closer to a common denominator, closer to setting up a worldwide or international agenda that can help us to promote and advance the idea. If we continue at this level, we'll remain at the no less important academic level. But how can we take the definition and give it an operational meeting that can be translated into practical reasons? There are by now so many social skills, psychological skills, things that are not that far from subjects we've been discussing here – scales, scales of social distance – they all have something in common with things that happened this morning. This is what bothers me, can we advance these ideas?

Arie Nadler: My interest is an academic one. I'm involved because I care as a citizen and want my academic interests to impact. I would not go further to contemplate an idea that came out of creating a truth commission between Arabs and Israelis – it's not my area, I'm not going to do that. As for the concept of humiliation, I don't know what it means but it's the major thing. To make an impact in the world, one has to create a concept, one that is used and researched and is very concrete and being worked on. It can't be the other way around. The exception: if you can convince the leaders that it behooves them to not humiliate the other side, you can show them that by not doing it, they gain because they are motivated by interests. It would be very important in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to exemplify to the leadership that humiliating Palestinians is counterproductive to Israeli security. It would be the same if talking about the American administration. It's doing something concrete, showing the administrations that humiliation is a bad policy.

Sibyl Ann Schwarzenbach: I'm beginning to have no faith with the higher ups. I want to sit down with the people in Israel and Palestine, but is that impossible?

Arie Nadler: It's completely possible. All I'm saying is that it needs to be carefully orchestrated so that if Israel or Palestine accepts responsibility, it will not be taken as a weapon by the other side to later demand concessions. You have to first create a social contract so that it will not be later used against the other side.

Sara Cobb: I have been involved in the progressive caucus in the House, with meetings on perspectives on conflicts around the world, to provide a perspective on the dynamics of conflict processes, which include what we're talking about today. I want to advocate "Engagement." The idea that the left – or those interested in stopping conflict – would not want to engage those in charge, that's alarming. Unless we practice what we preach here, we will not be able to come into a relationship with another, even if it feels odd. We're seriously in conflict with how we engage with the Bush administration. We have another project on the Middle East on the dual narrative – there are two narratives on the conflict – and how they can be integrated into education in the US. We have to think reflexively on the differences we have, if we want to bring dignity to the people with whom we disagree.

There's path dependency here; when you have the snowball rolling down hill, it will keep rolling. What are the tipping points, the features that will contribute to social context/contract that will enable certain conversations to take place? What are those conditions that will enable us to have those conversations?

The dynamic of circular narratives first requires being able to take ownership over your own weaknesses, problems, ambivalences...ownership over that. What would it take to have that conversation over their own weaknesses so that they can then have a conversation to talk about the history? They can't talk about history unless they can first talk about themselves. What are the conditions that would enable those conversations?

Linda Hartling: That would be a great place to stop. This is an organization that is a possibility-creating organization, and there are so many possibilities that have been mentioned. What can we do now?