

Areas Interest/Research:

- “Collapse” paradox: The very beliefs/practices which helped people to survive, no longer do, and actually facilitate decline/demise. Problems of *perceived “indignities”* may be a factor in this sense:
 1. Tension between “dignity” of respecting tradition, and forward looking “dignity” of survival
 2. Tension between rationality and faith-based beliefs:
 - Is *dignity of religion* compatible with *dignity of rationality*?
 - How does tolerance for religion intersect with dignity of rationality?
- Free Speech issues
- Art/Music/Nature as providing the space for, and substance for, Conflict Transformation
- Evolutionary Biology as lens for understanding everything else

What hope to get out of this gathering?

- Clarify competing conceptions of *dignity*
- Consider *dignity of individual* versus *dignity of the group*

What hope to contribute?

- Facilitation skills
- Spontaneous ideas as generated during the conference/workshop

What does dignity mean to you and your work?

I. In Mediation:

- *Dignity of mediation* should be patently affirmed, as a process of equal value offered in court, as alternative process of conflict resolution involving autonomy, recognition and empowerment of individuals. Currently this process is undermined and undervalued: i.e., provided with fewer resources, inadequate time and space, regarded as inferior to, and subordinate to traditional adversarial and authoritarian legal processes
- *Possibility of dignity* as value is offered for consideration/lens for framing each party’s experience

II. In Academia:

- *Concept of dignity* is explored/debated
- Tension between dignity that is accorded to *process of education*, and dignity accorded to *students*?

III. In both Mediation and Academia:

- Tension: not all humans equally warrant being granted *dignity*?
 1. Does *dignity* require reciprocity?
 2. Criteria for “earning” *dignity*?
 3. Criteria for “forfeiting” right to be granted *dignity*?

Exhibit A: • Legal decisions upholding “sincere religious belief” as determinative in public policy, regardless of scientific grounding, and with inconsistent application

-In the context of access to contraception, how is *dignity* relevant? If someone’s “sincere religious belief” not only prohibits one from using contraception, but also mandates obstructing others from access to contraception, in a world of over 7 billion people, with scientific consensus of 2 billion as optimal sustainable human population, wherein lies *dignity*?