



World Dignity University
Bringing Dignity to Learning



**A Message From
Michael Britton, Ed.D., Board Director**

“Reflections on Violence”*

**Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies
World Dignity University Initiative**

April 18, 2022

Dear Dignity Friends,

The world is filled with overlapping, intersecting, cross-cutting patterns of violence. Victims often, though not always, make new victims. Reflecting on Ukraine, I think our stance in the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies community is that we wish the use of violence to stop. We stand for the end of all violence altogether.

We stand for tending to the terrible injuries that violence has inflicted for centuries and continues to inflict, on lives, on loves, on deep connections and on trust, on the soul and the self, on dignity and on hope and faith in life — injuries sustained by so many for too many reasons.

Where there is violence there is suffering, often with counter-currents of violence and suffering, diffuse ripples of violence contaminating all kinds of lives in all kinds of places, spreading the suffering. To relieve suffering is good, to stop the violence is good. The end of humiliation, the end of exploitation, the end of treating someone’s life as insignificant, expendable, a pawn to be sacrificed as if it were all a game. We stand for such endings. And we stand for nurturing beginnings that have not yet taken hold of our human world for the good.

We support and are thankful for those who take action to help those who suffer. We support the labors and the dignity of those determined to know more of the realities of this world than they have known, even if this implicates them in ways they had not realized. We support those who give voice to suffering and harm that is not recognized so that those who were unaware can intervene. All of us have the right to experience our humanness in dignity.

Through it all, we support everyone telling their own stories rather than inflicting judgments that meet indignity with indignity. We regard it a sacred task to sustain everyone's dignity when they are striving to end violence and end harm and ignorance of reality. We regard it as a sacred task to protect in others the interior space to reflect on where they stand and what humanly inflicted suffering means *in their own heart of hearts* — how their spirit responds to knowledge of the real. We support the ability to render conflicting views fruitful, giving birth to greater presence, wisdom, and responsible action.

We, humankind, are a community of the imperfect, a community of those who have made mistakes, a community of those who have harmed others by intention or without realizing it and regret it and wish to put



things right now and going forward. We support humility in recognizing and conveying truths to those who have not known those truths, and we support the voice of apology finding its place in the world.

We, all humans, are a community with an in-our-nature goodness, with generosity and the capacity for hearing the stories of others and for telling our own with empathy. We stand for the beginnings of such goodness everywhere, wherever, and in whom it has been stirring or begins to stir. Goodness sets in motion ripples of still more goodness, spreading out, fostering safety and dignity in all kinds of lives in unexpected ways in unexpected places. May this become our future, for all groups, not just some. May we discover all groups as kindred and may we walk together into the unknown future before us, taking care with each other and of each other.

I think this is the heart of the conversation we have undertaken and the conversation we wish to continue. These are times bigger than the thoughts any one of us can put into words. That is why ours is a dialogue that welcomes the diversity of perceptions and wisdoms. We appreciate yours. No one has been where you have been, no one has seen what you have seen. You can enrich what we as a group are able to know.

In loving respect,

Michael

*This essay grew out of a conversation with the New York Dignity Now group. These comments are my own, written in my way of writing, which is not for everyone. I think they capture what many of us would say, but typically I can inadvertently put things in ways that sound other than I intend, or they may not be what you or others would say...