



Human Dignity and  
Humiliation Studies



**World Dignity University**

Bringing dignity to learning, globally and locally

## **Invitation to a Future that Dignifies People and the Planet**

### **New Definitions of Heroism**

**by Evelin Lindner, on Behalf of Humankind**

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#### **Dearest Dignity Hero!**

Please know that your ability to think and reflect, and your ability to do this lovingly, is worth more than all gold and all diamonds of this world. Your wisdom and innovative creativity, your talent to lovingly envision different futures, all this is of unparalleled value. Your ability to see nuances, to turn around and look at all situations from many perspectives, is brilliant. Your willingness to extend your loving reflectiveness to all beings of this world is priceless. Your capability to seed our world with seedlings of loving care is wonderful. You are precisely the kind of thinker, the kind of responsible intellectual, the caring nurturer and gardener of humanity that we are in dire need of in these times of global challenges and crises!

**Dearest Dignity Hero!** Your abilities are a gift – they also represent a responsibility. You are the new kind of hero that the world now needs. Your kind of heroism is needed because there is a new fact in the room, a fact that we, as humankind, have to take into consideration. The new fact is the global interconnectedness of our world. It represents a radical game changer. No history lesson can help us in this new situation. History does not repeat itself any more. None of our forefathers could see the Blue Planet from the astronaut's perspective as we can today, none of our forefathers could see that we are one human family who inhabits a tiny, fragile, and finite planet. In the past, we could afford to overlook the fact that we live on a tiny and finite planet, we could exploit each other and nature without too severe backlashes. This has changed. Nature now warns us with a very loud voice, and when exploited people get angry, they find a globally interconnected arena to hit back. Many among our brothers and sisters have not yet grasped those new facts. YOU have!

In the past, heroes were those who were winning wars. In a globally interconnected world, this kind of heroism is the heroism of fools. In the wars of our time, all lose. In a globally interconnected world, it is a suicidal strategy to identify enemies and try to exterminate them. No longer is competition for domination a path to victory and heroism. It is a path to destruction. In a finite and interconnected world, trying to dominate over enemies, or trying to turn nature into an enemy to be subdued and extracted, is bound to end in utter ruin. Competition for domination over people and nature, over one another and over our habitat, by now represents a strategy of stupendous folly. Admittedly, competition for domination is an

easy strategy, easy to carry out for people who can only think in black and white. Yet, this does not change the fact that in an interconnected world, it is a suicidal strategy.

In an interconnected world, humanity will only survive if we go to your ‘enemy’ and ask: ‘Why are you my enemy?’ The answer will be: ‘I am not your enemy! I am a peaceful person! I am a victim of your actions! If you humiliate me, I have no choice but to fight to regain my honour! It is you who is my enemy! If you stop being my enemy, I will be only too happy that I can stop defending myself against you!’ You will be surprised: wherever you go on this planet, you will only find victims who are convinced that they do nothing but heroically defending their honour...

Therefore, the new hero is the nuanced thinker like you, the thinker who can hold more than simple black versus white polarizations in her head, the thinker who can hold many shades, the thinker who is able to engage in partnership, cooperation, and dialogue rather than competition for domination. The new hero is the human being who nurtures and invites into mutually enriching dialogue, rather than the warrior who fights enemies.

Unity in diversity is the path to a decent and dignified future for our children, for our future generations, rather than uniformity in division. Striving for uniformity without diversity among our own people, so as to be better prepared to compete for domination out in the world, a world characterised by division without unity, is a suicidal strategy. It is a strategy that operates with out-dated definitions of dignity, pride, and honour.

The new definition is respect for equality in dignity for all, dignity for all people and for the nature we are part of and depend on. Nature speaks to us now, and its message is a warning to us all. The old world was one of higher beings presiding over lesser beings and nature. A dignitary was a person of higher standing, a supremacist, who felt entitled to humiliate all those below with the aim to teach them lessons of humility. A dignitary was a person who felt humiliated when asked to stop arrogating superiority. In the new interconnected world in which we live now, we all need to gather in the middle, leaving behind the old world of higher and lesser beings. In the new world we need all beings to hold hands in mutual respect for equality in dignity.

I would therefore like to ask you, on behalf of humanity, to acknowledge that you have a responsibility not just for yourself and your immediate family. You have a responsibility for humanity at large! Please take this responsibility very seriously! Remember the advice in the airplane to put the oxygen mask first on yourself, and only then on others. If you put the oxygen mask on others first, you will not be able to help many before you become unconscious. Putting the oxygen mask on yourself first is not selfishness, at least not when your next step will be to use your oxygen to give life to others.

Please, please preserve an optimal oxygen supply for yourself, avoid losing oxygen unnecessarily! Only then can you nurture life beyond your immediate family, life for humanity as a whole! I see you a wonderful new world leader, a Nelson Mandela or Secretary-General of the United Nations! Or anything else in that order!

Please know that I would like to invite you, on behalf of humankind, to assume ever more significant roles or positions of responsibility for humankind as a whole in the future!

LOVING ADMIRATION

Evelin Lindner

Founding President of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies