



# TRIBALISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Affiliations, Leadership, Possibilities

# EXPLOSIVE TECHNOLOGICAL PARADIGM SHIFT

How do we function in society now? Who leads and why? Impact of the digital domain?

- Affluent citizens manage myriad messages in multiple platforms 24/7 worldwide  
Tribal affiliations indicate a HUMAN NEED for connection
- Divisiveness: Misinformation, disinformation, bullying, media echo-chambers, isolation
- DISRUPTIVE Regenerative AI: uses & concerns



TRIBALISM & THE INTERNET:  
TOXIC CULTURE WARS OR  
GROWING PAINS?



More opportunity to build identity as isolated, "niche" tribes. Dissent not tolerated

- Perception management a basic strategy
- Quick, reactive interactions: magnitude & speed accelerating. Positive outcomes?
- "Internet of Beefs" - Divisive Narrative. Build teams instead of dividing. How?
- Set by example: Light the way with ethical leadership & awareness

# TRIBAL AFFILIATIONS: SYMBOLS, MEANINGS & CONNECTIONS



SYMBOLS: A sensory shortcut designed to bring attention to specific tribes through visual, audio, smell, taste, touch representation

EMOTIONAL MEANING: represent COMMITMENT to idea, group, specific issue, social concern

TRIBE REFLECTS: Personal NEEDS, BELIEFS, OPINIONS and/or LIFESTYLES.



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# LANGUAGE AS A SYMBOL: MEANINGS & CONNECTIONS

## CULTURAL CONSTRUCTS:

What comes to mind when you see these words?

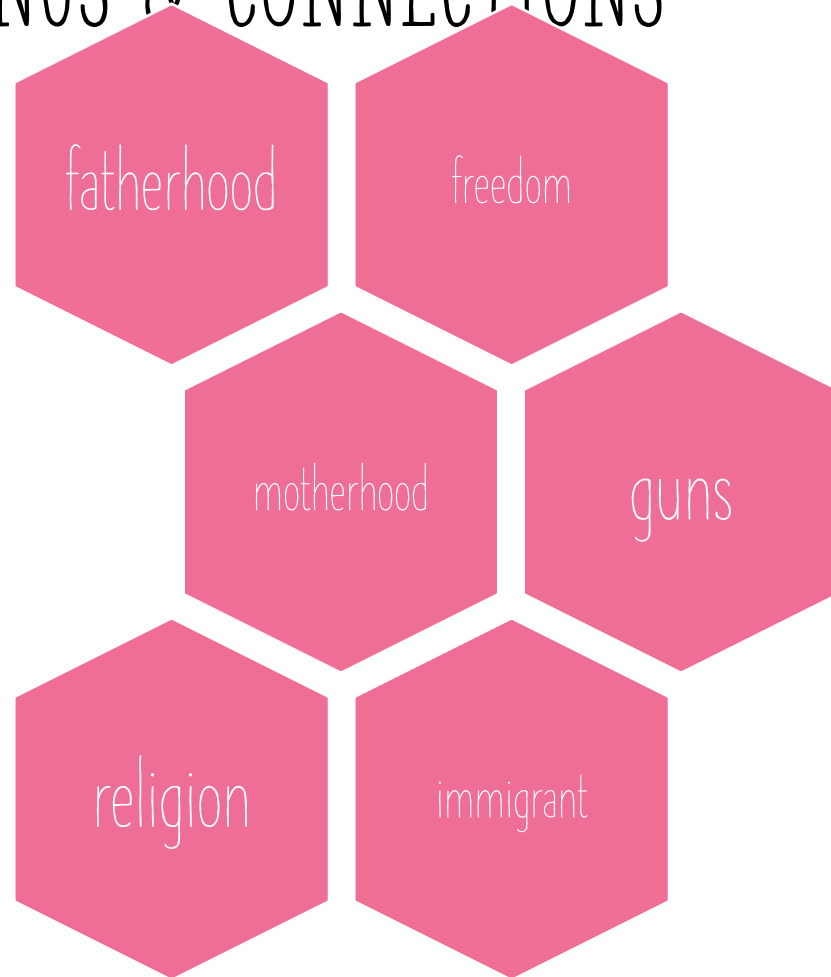
What do they mean to you?

Why do they hold that significance?

Choose 2-3 of these words & answer the questions.

Turn to your seat-neighbor & see if you have similar perceptions.

SHARE! 😊



# PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT



Persuasion is core goal of most media messages  
Dynamics of interaction are consistently measured  
with goal of increasing engagement on some level  
Instant dissemination: One (viral) statement can  
create chaos OR opportunity. Crisis communication.  
Generative Artificial Intelligence: Current cultural  
crisis about social impact. Ethics regarding data  
privacy, data bias, information control, plagiarism,  
copyright, pornography, deep fakes...Impact on  
perceptions? Positive & negative outcomes?

## PARABLE: BLIND MONKS EXAMINING AN ELEPHANT

Each blind man examines a different part of the elephant and believes their interpretation is TRUTH.

Moral of parable:

- humans have tendency to claim absolute truth based on limited subjective experience
- humans will discredit the limited subjective experience of others as LIES, although their experience may be equally true.

: Each perspective isn't "wrong," but is a partial view of a larger society



Blind monks examining an elephant, an ukiyo-e print by Hanabusa Itcho (1652–1724).

ARE YOU SURE YOU SAW WHAT YOU THOUGHT YOU SAW?

Count the number of Fs in the following sentence as you read it:

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY  
COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF MANY YEARS.

How many Fs are there?

There are 6 : The F in OF sounds like a capital V, so it tends to disappear. Even though focusing on this specific symbol (a letter) we don't always see what's "right in front of us." 😊





# LEADERSHIP IN THE DIGITAL DOMAIN

- LEADERS recognize shared humanity with a sense of purpose
- NEW FRONTIERS: social "norms" shifting, restructured environs, redefining identities, other relevant shifts
  - Collaborate to gain credibility & skills
  - Construct viable messages (multi-media)
  - Build morale through acknowledgement, tangible & non-tangible award

# OBSTACLES TO DEEP LISTENING

DISTRACTIONS! Environmental, PHONES, noise

Selective Listening: Tune Out

Wandering Thoughts (Monkey Minds!)

Jargon

Speaker reading from slides!

Dismiss: Can access info later

No emotional connection to speaker and/or content



# LEADERSHIP & BOUNDARIES: NEW WAYS OF WORKING

The 'mental lines' we held between work & family identities are blurred by constant multi-channel Gig Economy expectations.

## How can leaders negotiate this shift?

- Temporal time: Compassionate attentiveness to need. Identify & model specific times for work activities. Implement? No email on week-ends!
- Spatial: Suggest specific area within home for workspace or other feasible options to alleviate physical, mental, social health issues.
- Relational: Hold presence & understand impact of social connectedness. Science of kindness! Manage boundaries.& break barriers



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# LEAD TO BREAK BARRIERS BETWEEN TRIBES

1. LISTENING: With care, compassion & identity of obstacles
2. BUBBLE BREAK-OUT: Shift media diet & social (explore!)
3. DIALOGUE: Respect different points of view & LISTEN respectfully. Avoid Argument CANCEL Culture behaviors
4. MEET PERSONALLY: Post-Covid & isolation (2023 US Surgeon General report), public spaces & private online venues
5. FIND NEW TRIBES: Overcome misperceptions and stereotypes
6. SITUATIONAL AWARENESS: Not reactive, but proactive & engaged



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# MUSIC: THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE BREAKS BARRIERS!



- Sensory and interactive social text: Music carries diverse meanings, depending on experience & context
- Minimal barriers: Cross cultural interaction & non-verbal cues
- Meaning(s) dictated by culture: shared symbols that can be misunderstood or learned (ex: dances)
- Emotional value of Generational "ownership" of music

# CULTURAL RESISTANCE TO ALTRUISM & KINDNESS

The story we tell ourselves: Being kind creates vulnerability, is a sign of weakness, and one "loses the edge" of critical judgement, kind people have a "hidden agenda"...

But who are our heroes? Mahatma Gandhi, Desmond Tutu, Dalai Lama, Jane Goodall, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Sister Theresa & others

Science & human experience show kindness & compassion bring better health, a sense of purpose, increased courage and stronger social presence.

Think of a time you were

Kind to others?

Someone was kind to you?

You were kind to yourself?

How did these experiences make you feel? Long-term reactions?



