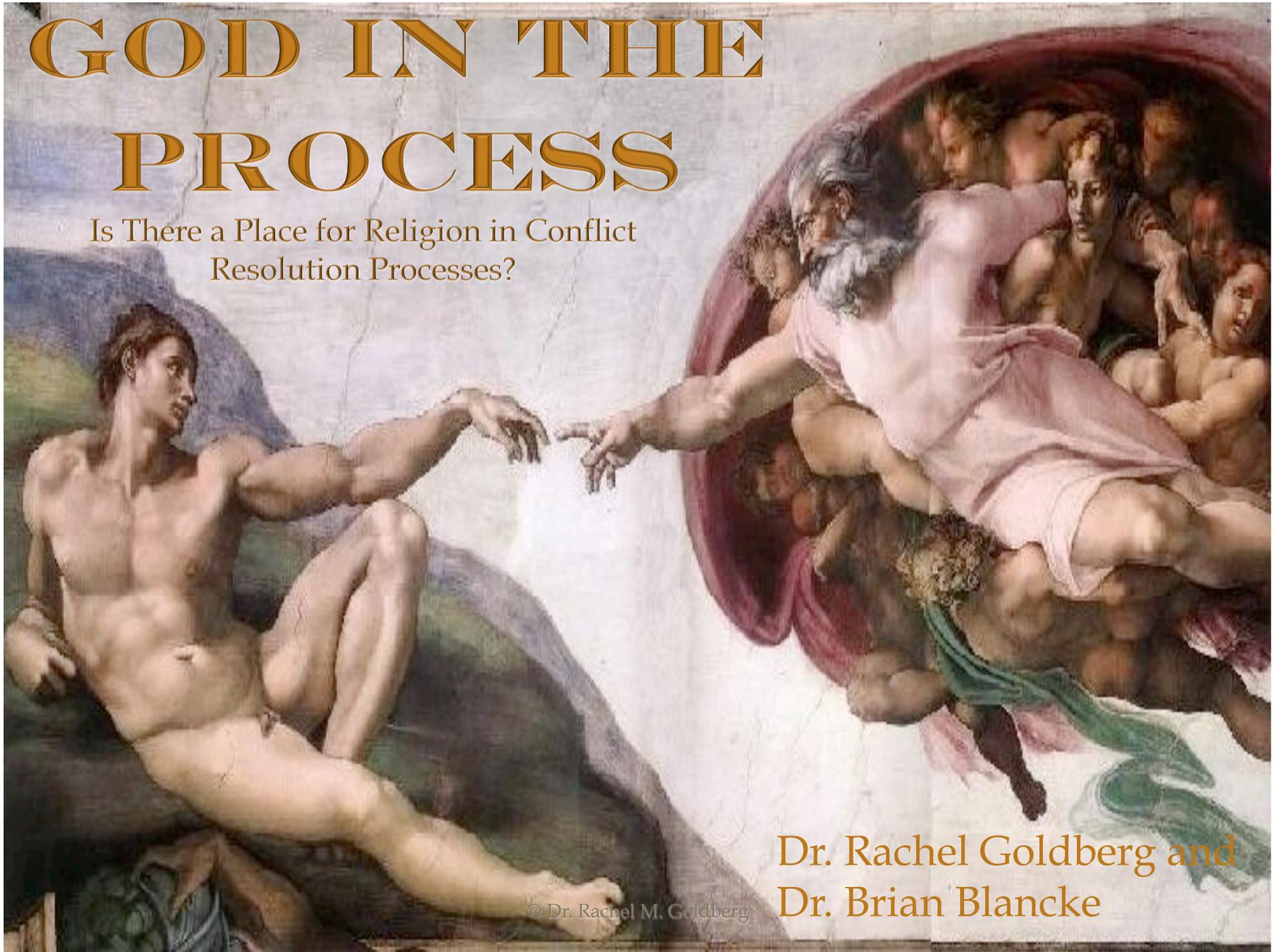


# GOD IN THE PROCESS

Is There a Place for Religion in Conflict  
Resolution Processes?

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Dr. Rachel Goldberg and  
Dr. Brian Blancke



# Agenda

- ◆ Arguments Against - History
- ◆ Arguments for - History
- ◆ Current
- ◆ What we learned from other disciplines
- ◆ Self Reflection Exercise
- ◆ Multi Dimensional Model
- ◆ Small Group Discussions
- ◆ Final Q and A

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# Ask Questions

- ◆ Going to cover a lot in a short period of time
- ◆ If confused, ask questions
- ◆ If we're going too fast, let us know



**Mr. Osborne, may I be excused? My brain is full!**

# Arguments Against:

- BIG arguments
  - Science and Religion
  - Church and State
- Our Arguments
  - Self determination of parties
  - Legitimacy of field
  - Values aren't negotiable
  - Religion is a source of hate and intolerance

# Science and Religion

- Pre-Socratic debate
  - word Logos meant story, reason, discourse or thought in pre-Socratic times
  - differentiated by Plato and Aristotle into two separate categories or types of thought: *logos* and *mythos*.



## Which is better?

- Logos - **philosophical**, and later technical discourse, of logical and **scientific thought** associated with the **rational, abstract functions of the mind**.
- Mythos- **poetic and rhetorical discourse**, considered inferior.
- Useful to separate knowledge in the form of myth and impression from knowledge based on testable and generalizable information
- But, the division elevated logic over all other forms of information gathering and assessment. (Fisher, 1987)
- Led to current thinking...

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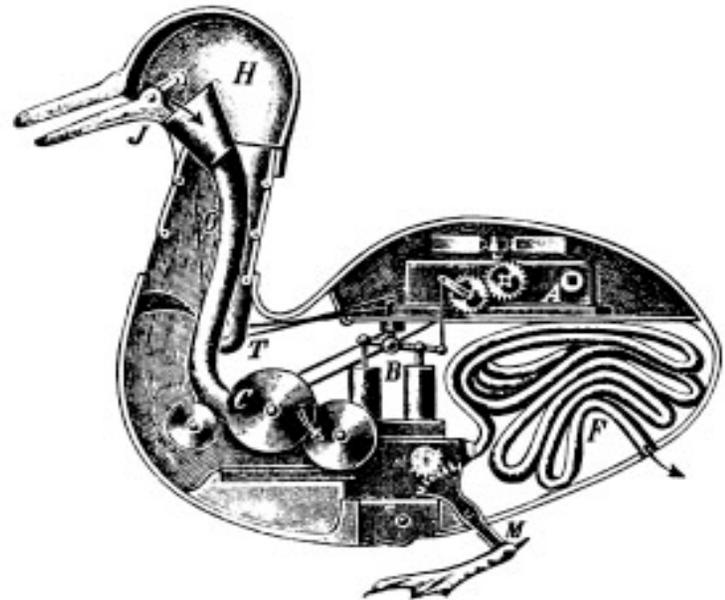
## Current Thinking - Objectivism

- Descartes brought us objectivism, the idea that we can use reason to separate us from our environment and reactions in a way that produces objective knowledge.



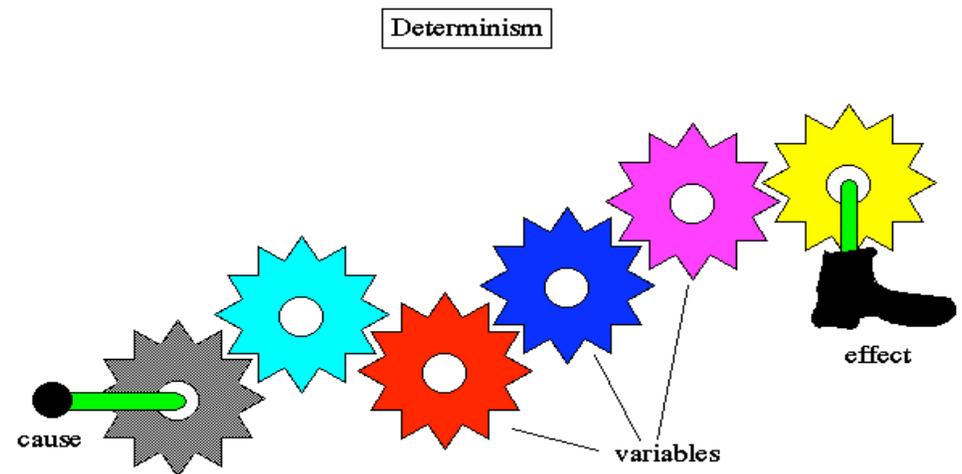
# Reductionism

- Reductionism was inspired by the industrial revolution which led scientists to believe that the way to understand any system is to reduce it to its parts and study the parts, just like a machine.



# Determinism

- Determinism states that every cause has an effect.
- "Combined with objectivism and reductionism, it should always be possible to determine the cause of every phenomenon by tearing it apart and analyzing those pieces in an objective and observer-independent manner" (Jones and Hughes, 2003, p. 487).



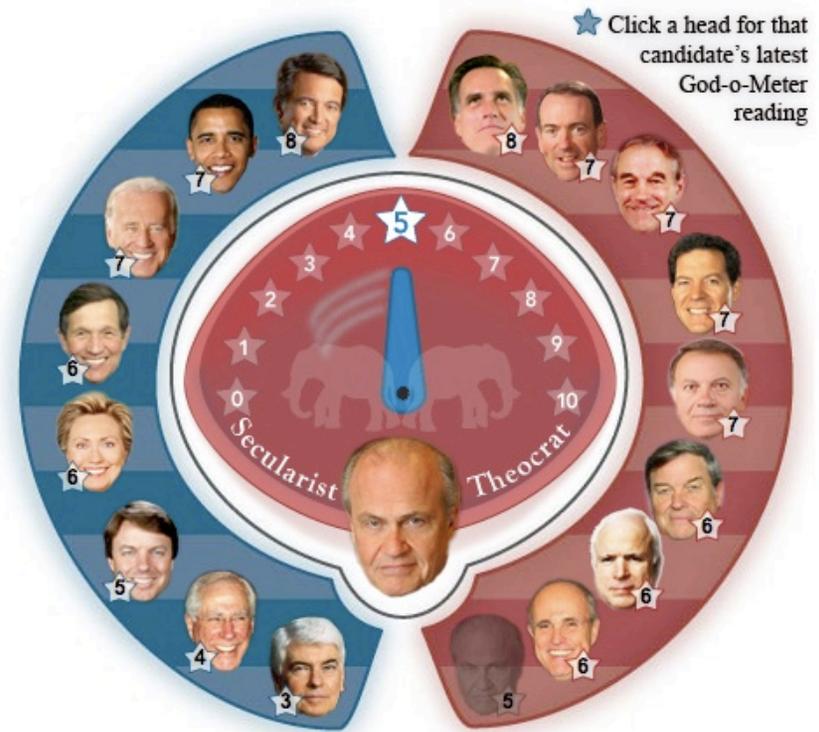
# But...

- Recent research shows that, contrary to these ideas:
- "the **human mind is inherently embodied**, and no separate and objective reasoning facility exists" (Jones and Hughes, p, 487)
- that most of our thought is unconscious, and that we navigate our understanding about abstract concepts largely through **metaphors**.
- Human systems are complex, adaptive systems, which are **non-linear, non-determinative** (cause and effect aren't uniquely coupled), and **integrated wholes** (which cannot be understood by breaking them down into any sort of essential elements).

# Church and State

• In order to **protect freedom of religion**, and **political independence**, a 'wall' was placed between church and state:

- ◆ The God-o-Meter (pronounced Gah-DOM-meter) scientifically measures factors such as rate of God-talk, effectiveness and other top-secret criteria. Click a candidate's head to get his or her latest God-o-Meter reading and blog post.



## In President Tyler's Words:

- “The United States have adventured upon a great and noble experiment, which is believed to have been hazarded in the absence of all previous precedent - that of total separation of Church and State. No religious establishment by law exists among us. The **conscience is left free** from all restraint and **each is permitted to worship his Maker after his own judgment**. The offices of the Government are open alike to all. No **tithes are levied to support an established hierarchy**, nor is the fallible judgment of man set up as the sure and infallible creed of **faith.**” (William and Mary, 1904)

## So...

- In order to have good knowledge you need to stay away from emotion and myth and anything that is subjective and be objective and analyze the pieces that make up the whole, and then you will know the truth.
- And, in order to have freedom of thought, you need to take faith out of processes in order to protect people from one particular way of thought taking over.



## Our Arguments: Self-Determination

- The principle of self-determination is, in the words of Beer and Stief, that, "people can and should make decisions about their own lives. The parties speak for themselves, think for themselves, decide for themselves. The hard work is theirs. So is the outcome" (Beer and Stief, 1997, p. 9).

# Neutrality

- One way the field has sought to protect parties' self determination: neutrality.
- “Equivalent to the absence of feelings, values, or agendas” (Cobb and Rifkin, 1991, pp. 42).
- If we are neutral and unbiased, parties can make own decisions without interference from us.



# Legitimacy of Field

- Another reason we have fought to keep values like religion out of processes is to help legitimize the field as it developed.
- So we claim legitimacy in our role as intervener through neutrality
- But diplomats don't need this - they have other sources of legitimacy (backed by the power and resources of the country). (Mayer, 2004)
- In other cultures, respected elders may be the ones intervening, because they have cultural authority.

# Values Aren't Negotiable

- Finally, there have been arguments that values are not negotiable, so we shouldn't even work on cases that involve values conflict (Moore, 1986; Forrester, 1999).



# Religion is a Source of Hate and Intolerance

- ❑ Religion is often used for war and to foster intolerance of others.
- ❑ If we allow faith into our processes, they can be used to manipulate people.



# Arguments For: Overview

- All processes are value-laden
- Mediators should be advocates
- Claims to neutrality hide oppression and reinforce power imbalances
- Religion has always been a part of conflict resolution - just not the profession
- Many important conflicts are value conflicts, and often religious conflicts
- Religion is a source of transformation and moral authority for peace
- This is how parties make decisions and what they want

# All Processes Are Value Laden

- Arguments – can't be culturally neutral
- All process shaped by the **cultures and value systems** they originate in (Avruch, 1998 and Lederach, 1995)
- Should we have **more values**?
- Should we advocate for **social justice**? the needs of the **larger society**? (Suskind, 1981 and Laue and Cormick, 1978)

# Risks of False Neutrality

- In fact, Laue and Cormick said that “claims to neutrality on the part of the intervener... almost always work to the advantage of the party in power” (Laue and Cormick, 1978, p. 221).
- Goldberg’s (2008) - our values-of-practice do lead to different approaches to the use of power in practice and
- Rack (2000) showed that worldview bias happens – reinforces disparity between parties (Laue and Cormick were right)

# Religion is Already Here

- Religion - always been part of conflict resolution processes
- Religious leaders solve conflicts in their communities and amongst their 'flocks'.
- **Peace churches** - MCC, AVP
- Many major conflicts now involve values conflict or **religious conflict** as key components.



## For Instance:

- Mennonite Office on Justice and Peacebuilding and the Methodist JustPeace Center
- Christian Mediation Network, part of the American Association of Christian Counselors
- GNII (Global Negotiation Insight Initiative), and the ACR Spirituality Section
- Faith-Based Diplomacy, Peacebuilding and Inter-Religious Dialogue (Appleby, Gopin, Abu Nimer)

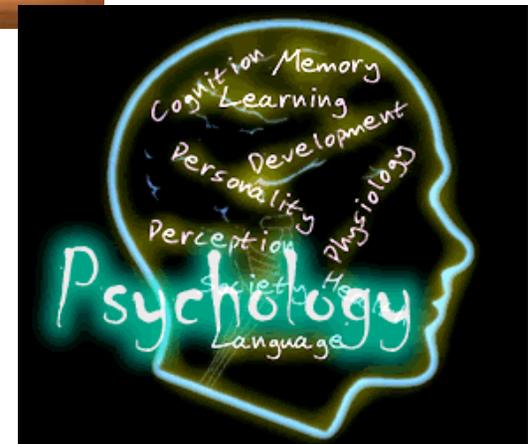


# Conclusions

- Neutrality doesn't protect the self-determination of parties
- Parties and mediators make decisions based on their values
- Religion engages people at the metaphoric and narrative level - very powerful location for transformation (for good or ill)

## So...If this has some value...?

- We decided to look at see Law and Psychology – framing disciplines were doing?
- Wanted to look at:
- Can we safely put religion into processes while protecting self-determination and why do it?



# Psych Overview

- Huge literature in psych – multiple books and journals on this
- What can they teach us?
- Issues around protecting clients' self determination very heavily researched – much more than in our field

# Psych

■ Three key responses:

- a) by training psychologists to understand the importance and [role of faith in client's lives](#);
- b) by striving to acknowledge and understand how the [practitioner's values impact their work](#); and
- c) by using that [self-awareness](#) to create and maintain [good boundaries](#) as a primary protection for clients.

# Training

- \* Call for more training to understand the importance of religion and spirituality for clients.
- \* Maybe we need this, too

Who Says I Need More Training



# Self-Awareness - Boundaries

- ▣ Concern:
  - ▣ That therapists will impose their own religious views (**countertransference**)
    - ▣ Issue of **over-identification** (pushing client to be like you)
    - ▣ **Avoidance** (shutting client down because they are not like you)

# Avoidance

- For example, "some therapists may have been raised in orthodox religious homes and disassociated themselves with their family's religion...[and] continue to wrestle with unresolved theological questions that make them anxious when religious or spiritual topics arose. When such anxiety strikes therapists, they may (consciously or unconsciously) redirect a therapy session toward another topic" because of their own feelings, not in response to the need of the client (Wiggins, 2009, p. 55).

# Over-Identification

- ▣ Therapists can also be too invested in clients going in a particular direction.
- ▣ This is clearly an issue for client self-determination.



# Solution

- ▣ Instead, therapists are trained to **stay focused on the purpose of the process and the needs and goals of the client and to keep good boundaries** (Wiggins, 2009, p. 57).



# How?

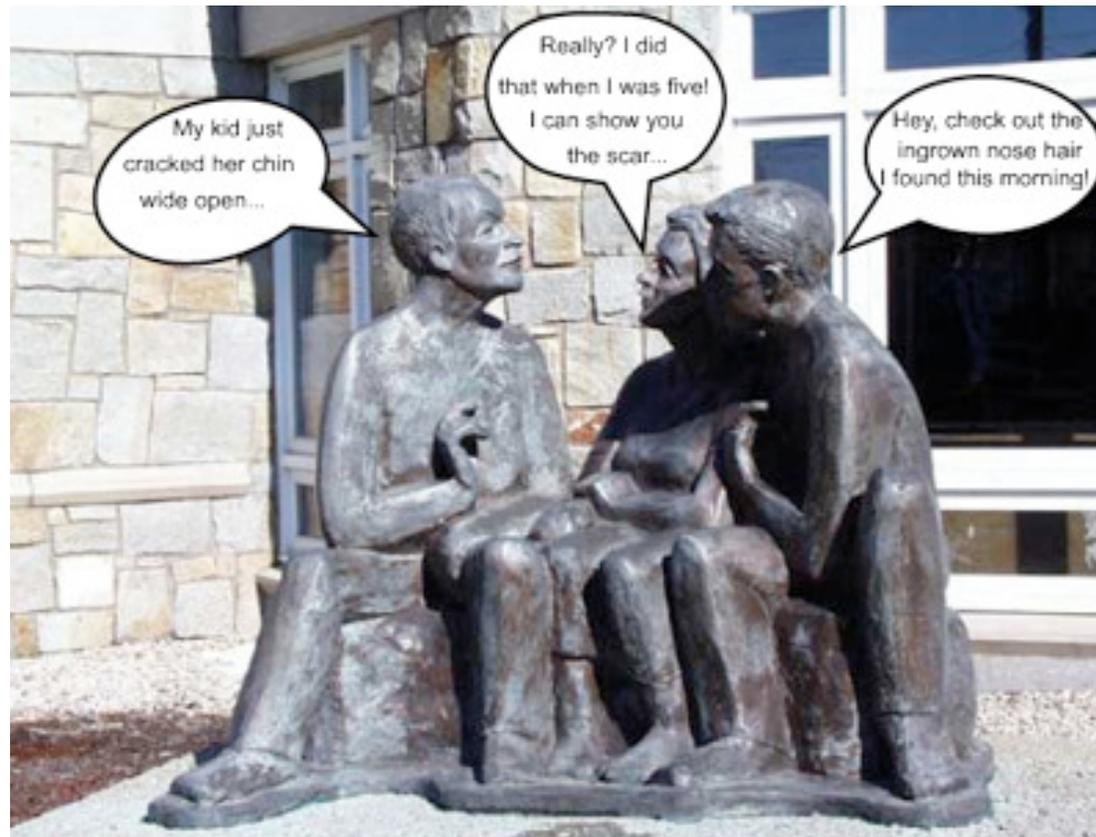
- **Tools for self awareness**
  - Working with an expert from the therapist's religion to engage unresolved issues
  - Doing a **genogram** of your family history around faith (A genogram is a map of patterns of "transmission of family patterns across generations" (Wiggins, 2009, p. 60)
  - Writing a **spiritual autobiography**, or using guided journaling.
  - Goal: **self assessment tool** to look own intergenerational spiritual **patterns** and their own **responses**.

# Transparency

- One way to protect clients
- Being open and explicit with clients about their values and beliefs when appropriate
- But at the same time are strongly affirming their clients' right to disagree with them



# Self-disclosure



- Self-disclosure is one way to do that:
- Can include stating the therapist's values regarding spirituality as it relates to therapy (Leach, Aten, et al 2009).

# Sample intake form

- For example, in a sample intake form, the therapist may write:
- I specialize in [type of cases]...My therapy work is characterized by holism and focuses on the ways people make meaning of their life circumstances. Holism means that I assess health and wellness in mental, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual facets of experience. People seem to benefit from therapy the most when thinking, feeling, behavior, and action are all included in the work (Leach, Aten, et al., 2009, p. 81).

## Intake Q

- ▣ Another way is through your intake questions
- ▣ Find out: Are spiritual or religious issues important to this client and the case?
- ▣ Ex: "Has your spirituality or religion been involved in the way you dealt with your problem? If so, in what way?" (Pargament and Krumrei, 2009, p. 100).

# We Already Do Some of This

- Life –Choice dialogue
- Public Conversation Project:
  - questions that make space for multiple opinions
- We have a lot of processes we already do that do this – dialogue, open-ended questions, unloaded language, good listening, etc.
- A lot of mediation training works at mediator self-awareness around culture and race, for instance. We are arguing that it would be important to expand that to include faith and spirituality.

# Example from Dr. Goldberg

- God at War and Peace class
- How to make space for faith without imposing? Recruited from all religious and belief groups on campus and Atheist club
- Ground rules – respect, and learned about and heard from multiple traditions including Dawkins who posits that religion causes war
- So by the time the students became facilitators for an Interreligious dialogue
- Able to sit with opposite view – hold space for participants
- Raising awareness – so not uncomfortable in moment so react in a way that shuts down or pushes parties

## Self-Reflection/Awareness Questions

- Individually reflect on:
- What are your reactions to faith and religion?
- What in your family history of past experience lead you to those beliefs?
- In what way might you want to be careful that your values do not influence the parties'?

# Law Overview

- ❑ Law has much smaller but active literature
- ❑ Of most relevance to us – work on
- ❑ What supports ethical behavior
- ❑ What nourishes burned out practitioners



# Law - Ethics

- Hall: how being a good person connects to following the legal rules, "one can be a complete sleazeball, from the standpoint of morality, and never violate a single rule in the law governing lawyers" (Hall, 2005, p. 23).



# Spirit

- Law like ACR has a code of ethics
- Why do or don't people do or do not live the principles?
- Hall argues that cutting off emotions, values, and spirituality does not support ethical practice.
- For instance he argues for grounding practice in spiritual love because "to love spiritually gives us more objectivity and allows us to see within the person and not just respond to what they present. When we detach ourselves from the person, then we view them so superficially that we cannot honestly serve them" (Hall, 2005, p. 26).

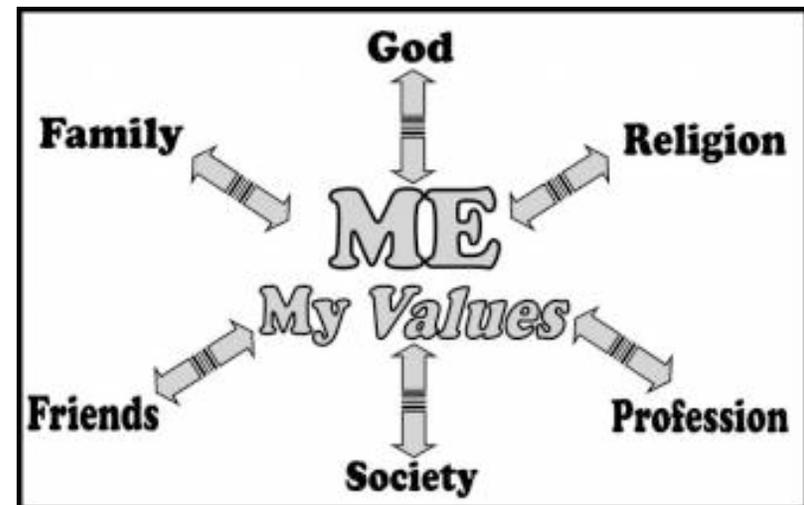
# Goal

- In essence, Hall argues that:
- Authentic practice springs from a **deep engagement with**, and an ability to "**articulate and commit**" to the **deepest meaning** in our lives (Hall, 2005, p. 33).



# Solution

- Implication?
- Understanding and thinking about **what it means to live our values** might be useful for this field, too
- What really makes for ethical practice?



# Burnout

- Hall also argues that it is important for lawyers to care for and value themselves, saying that a failure to do so makes it easy to "overwork and adopt negative coping mechanisms", (Hall, 2005, p. 31)



# Our field

- An example from our field:
- Small claims – see the same patterns over and over
- Can fall into ruts – make assumptions – detach – judge
- Ever had that experience?
- Do you think being grounded in something that gets you out of your framework to something bigger – helps this?

# Self-care



*Is your Self Care being nurtured?*

Can spirituality and religion be a source of self-care?

# Hall

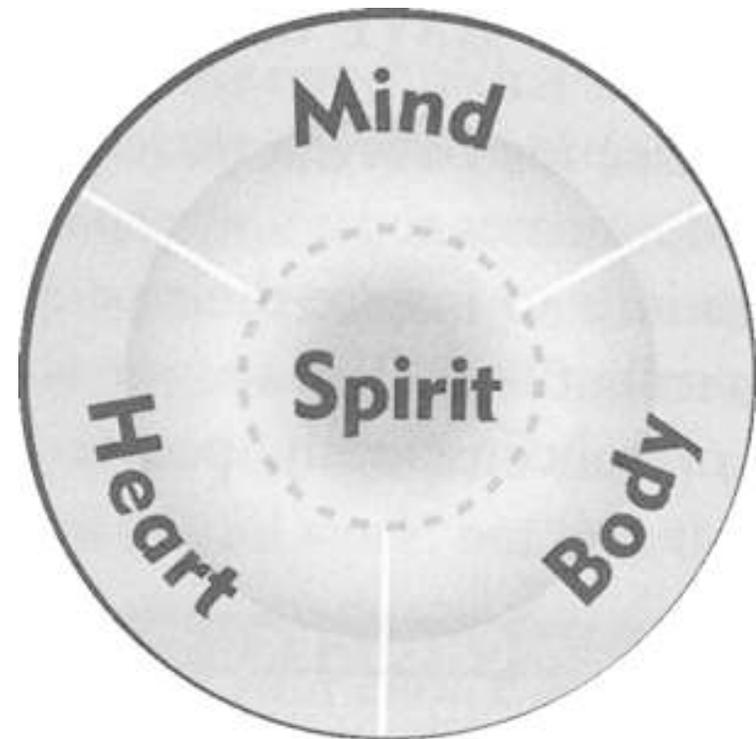
- Faith, in its deepest and most meaningful sense, involves a sincere...belief in the ultimate goodness within the universe and people...For lawyers it means a rejection of the cynicism that pervades the profession, and the resurrection of our individual responsibility to change the situations we encounter. To have faith in our clients' ability to benefit from their interactions with us cannot be determined by whether they win or lose. We must begin to believe in them as much as we believe in their case...to have this level of faith requires that we bring more of ourselves to the process, and that we transform sterile business encounters into life affirming relationships (Hall, 2005, p. 41).

# Proposal

- We have proposed a new model: tentatively called 'Wisdom Conflict Resolution'
- Premises - in order to protect the self-determination of parties we need to
- Know our values and talk about them and help the parties know and talk about theirs
- Learn from psychology how to develop and maintain good boundaries
- Be honest and develop processes that are whole and grounded in the whole reality of the parties involved, including ourselves

# Wisdom Conflict Resolution

- How can we incorporate our whole selves into the process and make the process responsive to the whole needs of parties?
- Drawing on Lederach and Davidheiser and engaging
- Mind, Body, Heart,



# Universal Stages of Conflict

- Enter Cooperatively
- Gather Perspectives
- Locate Conflict
- Arrange – Negotiate
- A Way Out -  
Agreement



## Transforming Conflict

“The efficacy of much third party peacemaking or mediation is linked to the creation of a special social space in which the conventions and scripts of everyday life are loosened, enabling person and social transformation.”

-Davidheiser



# Stages of Transformation

- **Separation** – movement from regular life to the sacred
- **Transition** – entry into a liminal space where transformation can occur
- **Incorporation** – Where the change is reintegrated into normal life and participants are returned to day to day life

-Davidheiser

<b>Conflict Stage: Separation/ Enter Cooperatively</b>	<b>Community Mediation</b>	<b>Ho'oponopono</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪(Neutral third party, unknown to both parties) sets expectations and ground rules (speak one at a time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪(Kahuna or family elder) asks parties to speak honestly and clearly in order to set right what was wrong</li> <li>▪Set intentions, as they shape the world around you</li> </ul>
<b>Somatic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Table arrangement (sit side by side or across)</li> <li>▪Greet, shake hands</li> </ul>	
<b>Emotional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Get focused, eliminate distractions</li> <li>▪Be positive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Self Reflective</li> </ul>
<b>Spiritual</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Who you are shapes the shift</li> <li>▪Opening Prayer</li> <li>▪Connect with the Source</li> </ul>

<b>Conflict Stage: Separation/ Gather Perspectives</b>	<b>Community Mediation</b>	<b>Ho'oponopono</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Storytelling, uninterrupted time</li> <li>▪ Open-ended questions</li> <li>▪ Monitor interaction</li> <li>▪ empowerment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statement of problem</li> <li>▪ All parties do self-scrutiny (including the leader)</li> </ul>
<b>Somatic</b>		
<b>Emotional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Empathy (to allow venting)</li> <li>▪ Breaks (if overwhelmed)</li> <li>▪ Recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All parties involved in self-reflection, including emotions</li> </ul>
<b>Spiritual</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Get intellect out of the way to hear the divine</li> </ul>

Conflict Stage: Transition/ Locate Conflict	Community Mediation	Ho'oponopono
<b>Cognitive Knowing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ID key issues, prioritize</li> <li>▪ Separate people from problem</li> <li>▪ Separate positions from interests</li> <li>▪ Reframe</li> <li>▪ Empowerment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Figuring out what went wrong</li> <li>▪ Discuss individual conduct</li> <li>▪ Ho'omalua (silence) – foster self inquiry</li> </ul>
<b>Somatic Knowing</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ho'omalua (silence) – allows the body to rest</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional Knowing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Empathy</li> <li>▪ Breaks</li> <li>▪ Recognition</li> <li>▪ Bias awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ho'omalua (silence) helps calm tempers</li> <li>▪ Direct negative feelings at the leader</li> </ul>
<b>Spiritual Knowing</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Honest confessions to the gods of wrong doing and resentments</li> </ul>

Conflict Stage: Transition/ Arrange - Negotiate	Community Mediation	Ho'oponopono
<b>Cognitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Generate Options</li> <li>▪Use objective criteria</li> <li>▪Agent of reality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Repentance</li> <li>▪Restitution</li> <li>▪Reflect on what kind of person you want to be</li> </ul>
<b>Somatic</b>		
<b>Emotional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Empathy</li> <li>▪Stroking</li> <li>▪Set aside emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Forgiveness</li> </ul>
<b>Spiritual</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪Working with divine to cleanse internal patterns</li> <li>▪Set things right with others and the Gods</li> </ul>

<b>Conflict Stage: Incorporation Way Out – Agreement</b>	<b>Community Mediation</b>	<b>Ho’oponopono</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	•Develop clear, realistic commitments	•Restitution
<b>Somatic</b>	•Shake hands	
<b>Emotional</b>	•Stroking	
<b>Spiritual</b>		•Closing prayer

## Example of Positive Potential

- One of the earliest problem solving workshops
- 1977 Sadat goes to Israel – 70 % problem
- 1980 first group problem solving meetings – tell traumas again and again, interrupt each other
- Turning point – interaction between an Egyptian man and an Israeli woman – recognized both driven by fear:

- Mr. Ramadan (Egyptian), a scholar – monologue about need for a Palestinian state. Ms. Agmon (Israeli) asked him how he could convince her not to fear a Palestinian state.
- He answered “I do not believe that you are afraid; Israelis are never afraid.” She was appalled and the exchange quickly ended.
- Next day he asked to speak, had grappled with all night – could he trust that she was sincere? Decided to consult the Qur’an – found three passages that spoke of Moses’ fear – said “I never thought that Moses was afraid. But now I know that since Moses was afraid, you can be too. So I believe you, Nechama.” (Volkan, 1997)

- On the surface you'd expect him to be pleased that an enemy was afraid – but might have been hard to share a sense of victimhood with her. Part of what made his hate possible was a belief that she didn't have emotions – non-human. This interaction humanized her.
- “As a result of coming face-to-face with his ‘enemy’ and discovering some unexpected empathy for Agmon, he consulted the Qur’an for help. Then he experienced the sudden connection between emotional experience and intellectual understanding that rehumanized the Israelis. In acknowledging their human identity, Ramadan also had to acknowledge that they had a grievance and negative emotions pertaining to it.” (Volkan, 1997, p. 34)

## Get into small groups and think about:

- In small groups of 3-4:
- First take a minute or two to think individually. Remember a time when faith or religion were salient or important in a process – your own faith, or that of parties’.
- Think about and then write a sentence or two on:
- What would you do or not do again? What can we learn about integrating faith into process from that incident?

Or...

- In small groups of 3-4:
- What do you think about this framework/model? Is this an advancement? A risk? Troubling? A relief? An opportunity to grow as a field? What are your thoughts?

# Final Q & A



Any final questions?

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