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# When Major Challenges Hit Universities: Leading with Emotional Intelligence

*Applications to Challenging Leadership Situations and  
Reputational Attacks*

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Claudia Fernandez, DrPH, MS, RD, LDN  
Food Systems Leadership Institute  
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# The process of skills mastery

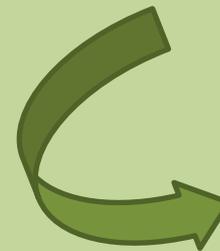


Unconsciously  
incompetent



Consciously  
incompetent

Consciously  
competent



Unconsciously  
competent

*Your emotions: Swallow....Wallow.....or Follow?*

# Too few people live together in Harmony...



It *is* true...Harmony is quite under-populated.

But maybe that's because we over-rely on the hard skills

But what do you do when something happens that has never happened before?

- Reputational Attacks
- Vast changes in the type of student who comes to campus... and subsequently into the workforce
- The politicization of the US reaching deeply into various quadrants of life

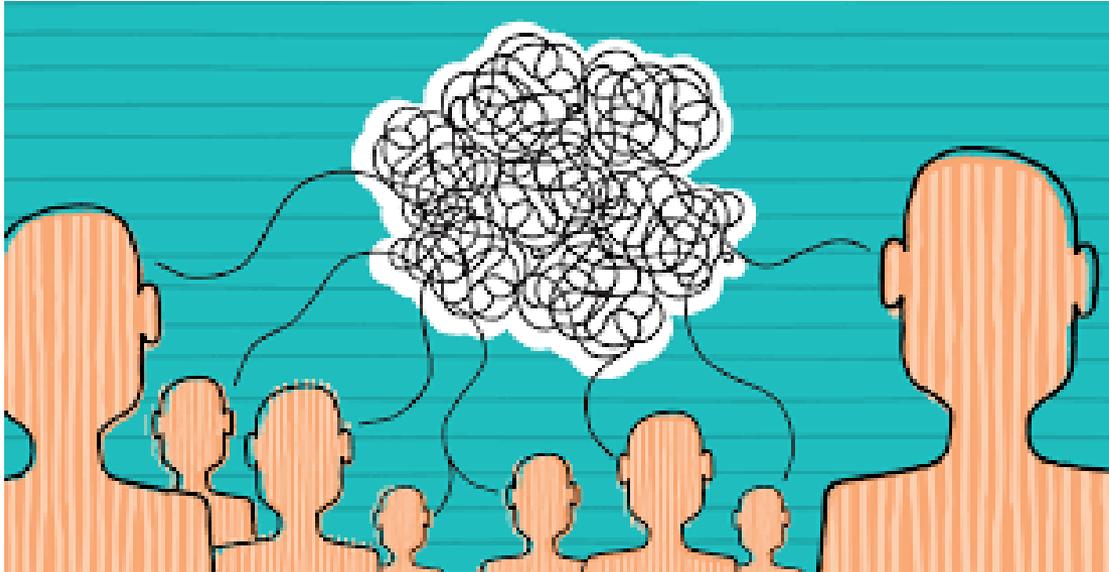
# The Key Skills of EI

- Accurately perceive the emotions affecting the group  
Emotion Management  
Internal and External Relationship Management
- The ability to interact with one another in order to respond to difficult challenges
- The ability to use awareness of whole to be flexible and direct behavior in a positive course
- The ability to act effectively as a group across organizational boundaries

These are the critical skill sets!



# Cultivating Harmony



*"How do you talk to people when we can't even agree on the facts?"*



Harmony can be a hard place to get to these days

# NOT ALL COMMUNICATION TACTICS ARE “FAIR” ONES

*“Guerrilla” communication tactics have a long history of use to manipulate others*

- Promoting false “facts” and “fake news” in order to get the story noticed
- Attacking opponents with unfounded—and unrelated—claims in order to do collateral damage
- Promoting sensational and inaccurate information to create distraction

# Reputational attacks can be as close as where you shop for food



Next time you go shopping look around...

We were caught off guard by a soup can—with a reputational attack stuck right on the label.



# You Wouldn't Let Your Child Smoke.

Like smoking, eating meat increases the risk of heart disease and cancer.

Go vegan! PETA

PETA has a long and famous history of using “guerrilla” communication tactics

Disseminating pseudoscience

Promoting spurious science with unfounded claims and conclusions that are not supported

Creating fear to influence behaviors unrelated to truth, science or fact

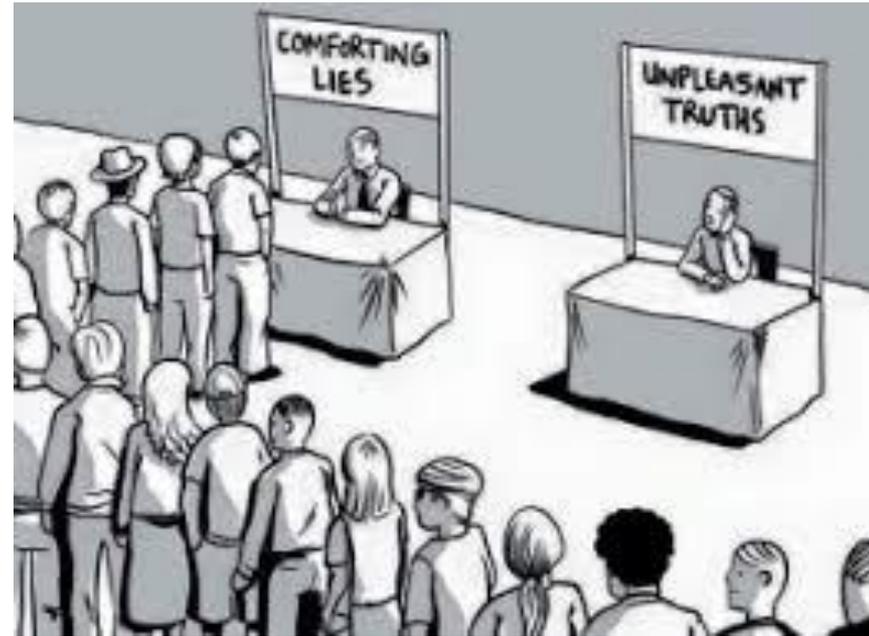
Advocating destructiveness and violence against those who are assumed to be “part of the system”: businesses, individuals and groups.



Collateral damage is the goal

# *Cognitive Dissonance*

A known phenomena in which people choose to see the world in a way that supports their beliefs.



When we express a belief, value, or attitude, we will behave in manner that will maintain consistency with the expression so as to eliminate or reduce tension caused by cognitive dissonance.

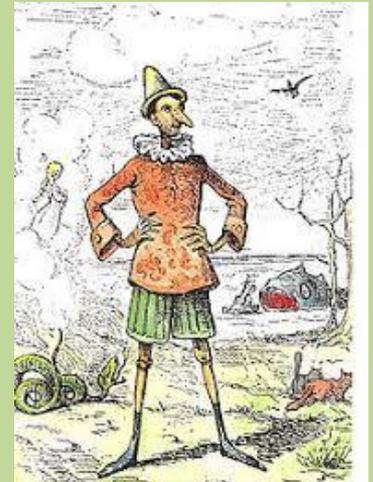
# *Expressive Responding*



A more recently documented phenomena in which people are

willing to champion obvious fabrications in order to support their beliefs

Facts, data, logic, and reason do not make a difference when people are knowingly willing to champion a lie. It's not about the truth. It's about the point they are trying to make.



Research surveys started to document this problem in early 2017.

Please look at the following two photos: Photo A and Photo B.



Which photo matches which inauguration?

No surprise, people choose to align the photo with their partisan beliefs. People believe what they want to believe.

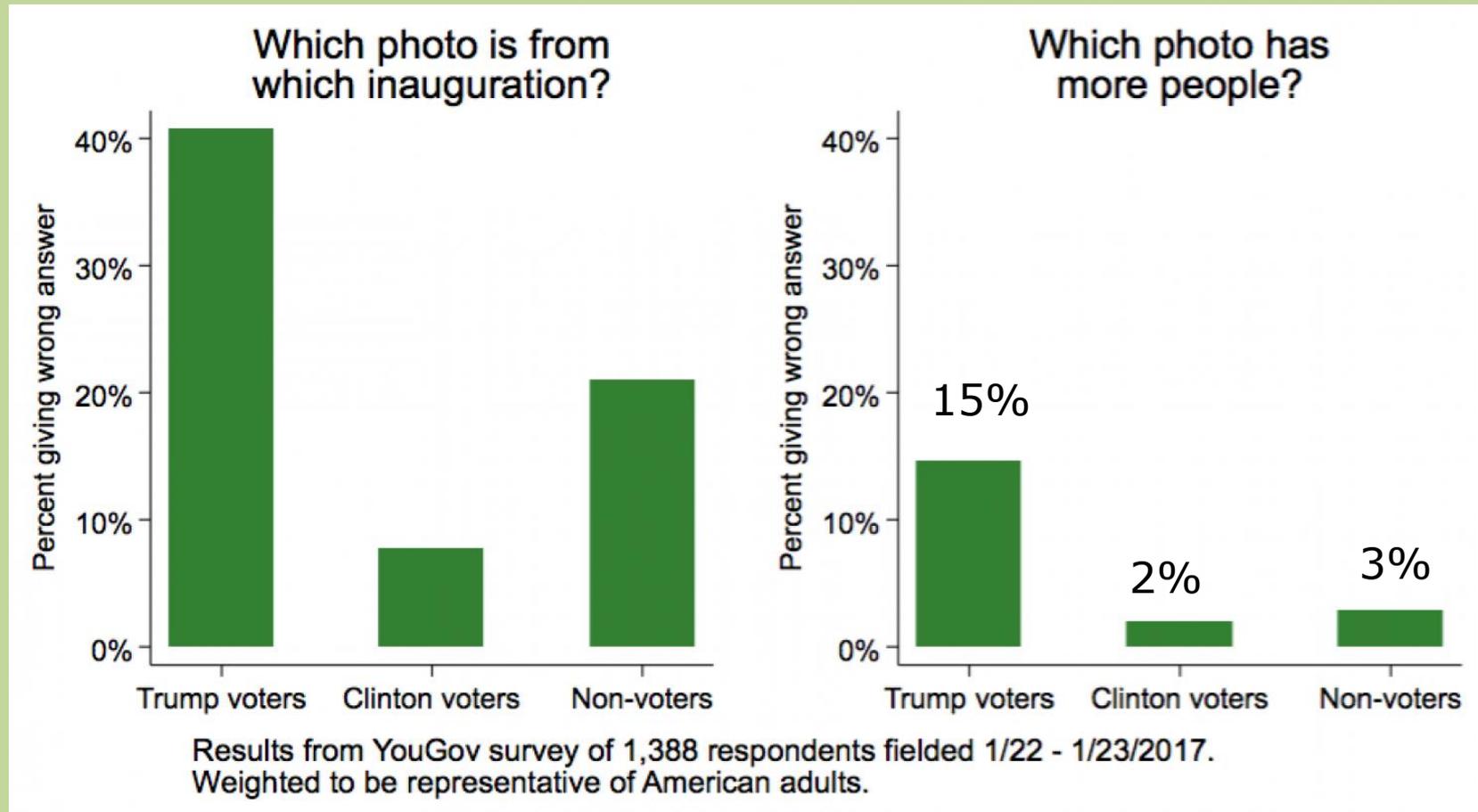
Please look at the following two photos: Photo A and Photo B.



Which photo has more people?

Photo A has more people

Photo B has more people



2-day survey of a representative sample of 1,388 American adults

**So... you will be leading in times of**  
**Guerrilla Communication Tactics**  
**Cognitive Dissonance**  
**Expressive Responding**

*As well as:*

- **Mis-information**  
*and*
- **Dis-information**



# Types of false information

Disinformation

Deliberate lie to mislead



Misinformation

Honest mistake

# Misinformation:

An honest mistake



## Misinformation

“Honest mistake”

Saturday January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 an alert about an incoming missile was sent via cellphone alert in Hawaii—but was sent in error. Widespread panic lasted for 38 minutes while the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency figured out the error that had happened

# Types of false information

## Disinformation

Deliberate lie to mislead



**HOAX!**

## Misinformation

Honest mistake

*Hoax: "a deliberately fabricated falsehood made to masquerade as truth"*

# Disinformation:

## Deliberate lie to mislead

**SPEED UP YOUR TWITTER MARKETING CAMPAIGN**  
100% INSTANT MONEY BACK GUARANTEE. NO PASSWORD REQUIRED.

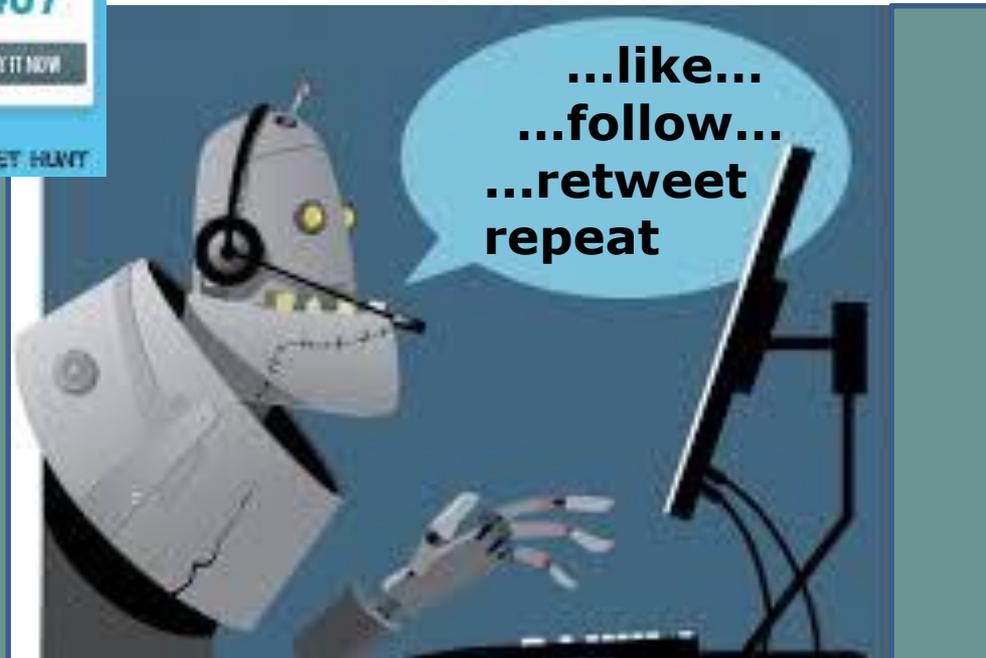
<b>10000</b> FOLLOWERS <b>\$97</b> TRY IT NOW	<b>5000</b> FOLLOWERS <b>\$67</b> TRY IT NOW	<b>1000</b> FOLLOWERS <b>\$17</b> TRY IT NOW	<b>25000</b> FOLLOWERS <b>\$227</b> TRY IT NOW	<b>50000</b> FOLLOWERS <b>\$467</b> TRY IT NOW
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ON SECRET HUNT

Devumi was selling bots which would endlessly like and re-tweet you to make you look like you were a social media influencer!

In a huge Twitter purge following a 2018 NYT article, newscasters, politicians and actors lost millions of fake followers.

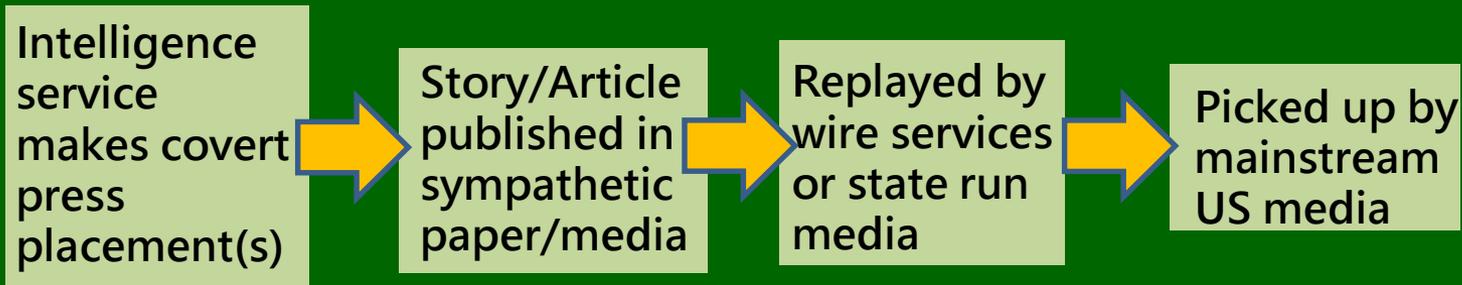
60 million automated accounts roam the world's largest social media platforms



# Leading in times of “Disinformation:”

Is a translation of the Russian дезинформация, transliterated as *dezinformatsiya*, started in 1923

## How Disinformation Can Be Spread



- Agents of influence
- Trusted contacts
- Sympathetic journalists



Yevgeny Primakov  
Head of Russia Foreign Intelligence 1992

Operation *INFEKTION* (1985) was a widespread Soviet attempt to influence world opinion to believe that the United States invented AIDS

# *The propaganda is happening here*



Russia is funding online articles that question the safety of genetically modified crops and biotechnology in an effort to hurt U.S. agricultural interests and sow public divisions, according to Iowa State University researchers.



The researchers said that if Moscow was able to turn U.S. public opinion against genetically modified organisms (GMOs), it could

hurt the U.S. agricultural industry, which relies heavily on genetically engineered crops, the [Moines Register reports](#).



Research by Dr. Carolyn Lawrence-Dill (FSLI Cohort 13) led to the discovery of Russian-based online and news-media infiltration to disrupt confidence in the US food system.

<https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/375655-russia-trying-to-sway-us-opinion-on-gmos-researchers-say>

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/money/agriculture/2018/02/25/russia-seeks-influence-usa-opinion-gmos-iowa-state-research/308338002/>

# *This affects your world too...*

***Russia Today: GMO mosquitoes could be cause of Zika outbreak, critics say***

30 Jan, 2016 17:12 /

“The latest contagious viral outbreak freaking out the globe, particularly women worried about birth defects, may have been caused by the presence of genetically-modified mosquitoes (GMMs) in Brazil, contend critics



of the superbugs... With international health experts convening in Geneva to discuss possible cures for the Zika virus, questions are being raised as to whether they are actually to blame.

While this Jurassic Park-type scenario could have been accidental, the recent UK TV series "*Utopia*" suggests it could be a deliberate plan to reduce the global population.”

***Make no mistake... this is disinformation and propaganda at its best***

# *“Dezinformatsiya” success at Mizzou in 2015*



**After a series of events (starting in 2010) inflamed racial tensions at the University of Missouri, Russian bots targeted the university with the aim to stoke fear and anger and damage the institution.**

Fake tweets and false information inflamed and augmented real protests, which quickly garnered national news coverage



Student protests, a hunger strike, a football team strike and other activism were a part of the protests.

<http://www.newsweek.com/russian-meddling-university-missouri-protests-808153>



## 2015 “Dezinformatsiya” success at Mizzou



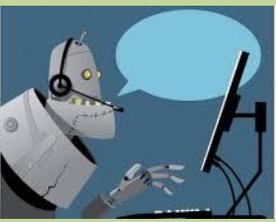
“The cops are marching with the KKK! They beat up my little brother! Watch out!” the tweet said. It included a picture of a black child with a severely bruised face.



Student body president Payton Head posted on FB: “KKK members were confirmed on campus.” having been misled and not understanding the tweet was fake.

National news networks halted coverage to revert to local camera feeds in search of violence, and news anchors read tweets that claimed there were shootings, stabbings and cross burnings.

Freshman enrollment  35% in the following 2 years



# *“Dezinformatsiya” will target you*

## **The next expected wave:**

You will receive tweets, emails, FB posts and other social media connections from people you know and respect

Your Chancellor. Your Dean. Your friend. A star athlete.  
Your student body president. A family member

You will be called to act—on highly inflammatory information. Fake information. You won't be able to tell it's fake.

The systems have already been infiltrated that convey who you trust. The new social media will target you from your trusted “in group”, and will seek to manipulate you... and every student on your campus or person in your worksite.

*We need to identify the apples of discord disguised as precious prizes and refuse to participate in the competition meant to divide us.*



Eris, Greek goddess of strife, tossed the ancient apple of discord towards Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite.

The apple, meant for the fairest goddess, fueled a dispute over vanity that resulted, eventually, in the Trojan War.

We are now living *The Illiad*.

--Tess Taylor 2018

“The Illiad”



Russia's trying to toss us an apple of discord. We mustn't bite.

By Tess Taylor, CNN 2.20.18



"The bots focus on anything that is divisive for Americans. Almost systematically."

-- Jonathon Morgan, CEO New Knowledge, in the NYT

"These Russian bots are bottom feeders meant to prey on American hate. Where we argue, they amplify. It hardly matters whether we fight about systemic misogyny or racism or a football player or a congressional memo -- a foreign power wants us hurt, baffled, confused, ready to insult and be insulted."

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/20/opinions/russia-mueller-bots-divisions-odyssey-tess-taylor-opinion/index.html>

This is  
real  
warfare

—  
***It's  
tech-  
warfare***

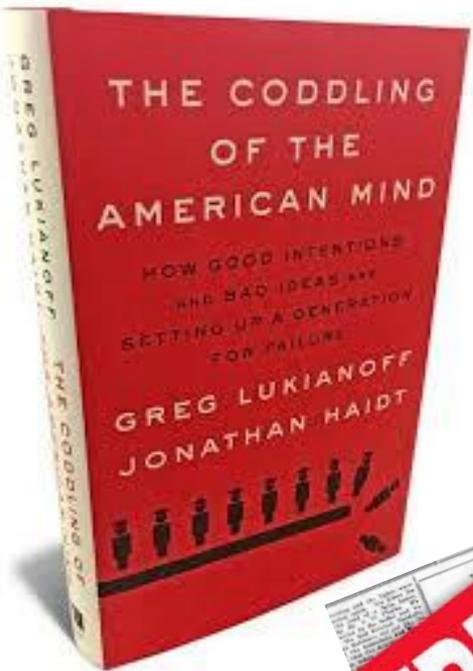
“The American project falters most when we allow ourselves to hate or fear one another, when we allow ourselves to act out of prejudice, anxiety and distrust.”

“...create discord and chaos amidst us, and then, they attack us from within by spreading misinformation we take into our own homes and lives each day through our smartphones. They want us distrustful and ambivalent, confused and full of hate.”



# Are you ready for today's protests on your campus?





Greg Lukianoff

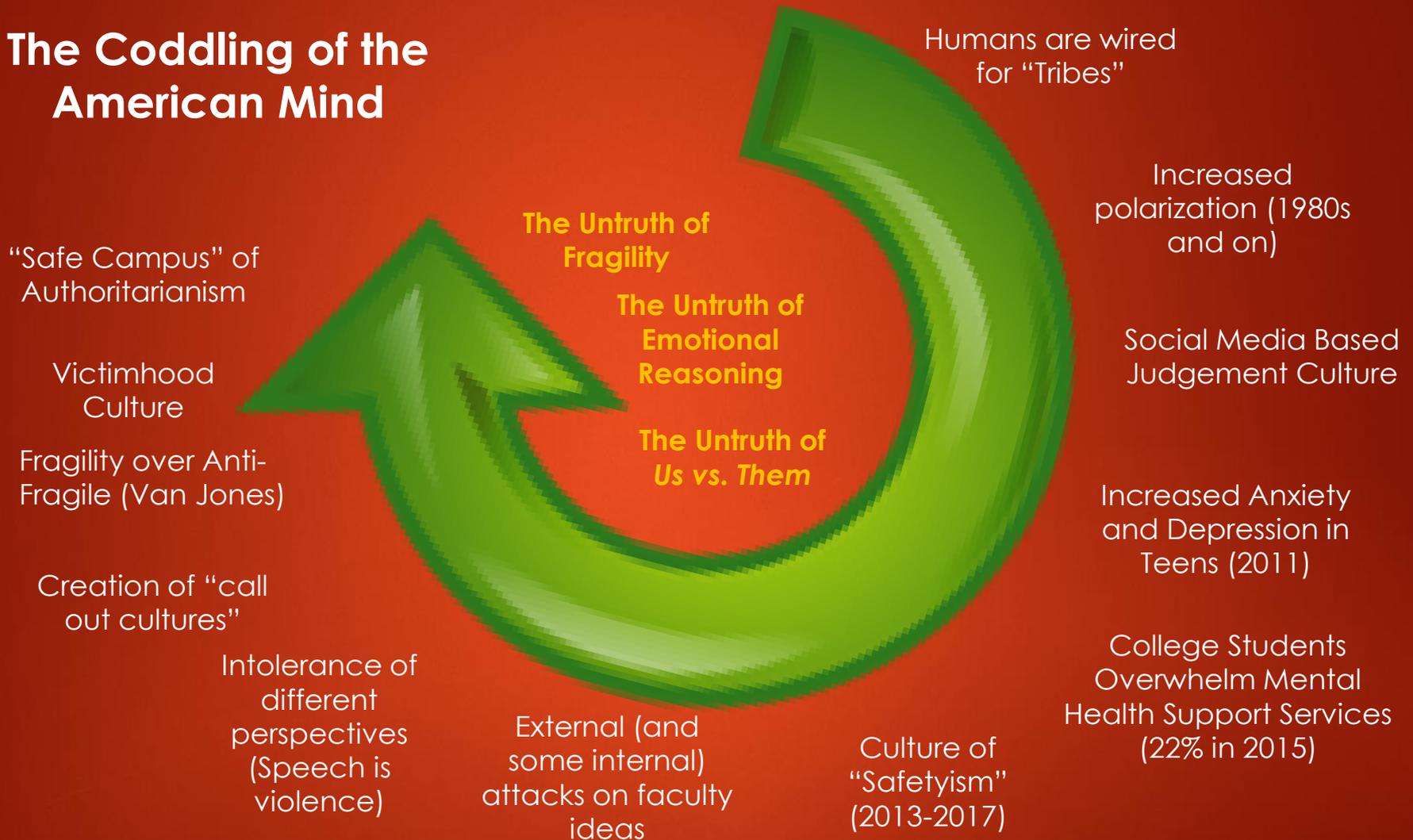
Jonathan Haidt



# The Coddling of the American Mind

<b>The Great Un-Truths</b>	<b>What that means...</b>	<b>How it shows up on campus:</b>
<b>The Un-Truth of Fragility</b>	What doesn't kill you makes you weaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Other people's ideas that are distasteful to me are actually dangerous to me and threaten my safety</li><li>• Unintentional slights and subjectively interpreted words are equal to actual aggression</li></ul>
<b>The Un-Truth of Emotional Reasoning</b>	Always trust your feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discomfort equals danger thus certain speakers must be shut down or disinvited</li><li>• Personal feelings matter more than another person's intent and more than data</li><li>• Self-fulfilling prophesy: labels create a looping effect</li></ul>
<b>The Un-Truth of Us vs. Them</b>	Life is a battle between good people and evil people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Call out and public shaming cultures rooted in common-enemy identity politics</li><li>• Life requires constant vigilance, fear, and self-censorship (walking on eggshells). Audiences are eager to watch people being shamed and they pile on; defending others is a risk.</li></ul>

# The Coddling of the American Mind



# Safetyism

- ▶ Because of paranoid parenting practices, an entire generation of children are geared toward “safety at all costs” and are ripe for the problems of “safetyism”.
- ▶ Should college students be kept “safe” from ideas?
  - ▶ Lukianoff and Haidt make a compelling case that students are not fragile, and rather than treat student like ‘candles in the wind’, universities should help to become *Antifragile*, as it is a life-long skill and one a democracy depends upon.
  - ▶ Ideas are threats to beliefs...but that doesn’t mean that the exposure to different ideas is necessarily traumatizing. Supporting that it is causes fragility.
  - ▶ When people shelter themselves from new ideas they become more narrow and more likely to suffer from iatrogenic trauma. “The culture of safetyism is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of human nature and of the dynamics of trauma and recovery.” Avoiding triggers is a symptom of PTSD—not the cure for it.
  - ▶ “Trigger warnings are counter-therapeutic because they encourage avoidance of reminders of the trauma, and avoidance maintains PTSD.”

# What we need to do

**"I don't want you to be safe ideologically. I don't want you to be safe emotionally. I want you to be strong. That's different."**

Van Jones, President Barack Obama's Special Advisor for Green Jobs

- ▶ Is an education intended to make people comfortable or to make them think? (Hannah Holborn Gray)
- ▶ Update admission preferences to highlight critical thinking skills, debate experience, etc.
- ▶ Create campus cultures that promote "antifragility" and resilience
- ▶ Teach students how to avoid cognitive distortions
  - ▶ Emotional reasoning; Catastrophizing, Overgeneralizing; Dichotomous thinking; Mind reading; Labeling; Negative Filtering, Discounting positives; and Blaming.
  - ▶ Nourish "dignity-based" cultures (rather than honor-based or victim-based)
  - ▶ The Cal Poly Strategy: build a better mousetrap!

**Psychological  
Principle**

# Wisdom

The Great  
Untruth:

**Young  
people are  
antifragile**

*Prepare the child for the road, not  
the road for the child.*

What doesn't kill  
you makes you  
weaker

**We are all prone  
to emotional  
reasoning and  
confirmation  
bias**

*Your worst enemy cannot harm  
you as much as your own  
thoughts, unguarded. But once  
mastered, no one can help you as  
much, not even your father or your  
mother. ---Buddha*

Always trust  
your feelings

**We are all prone  
to dichotomous  
thinking and  
tribalism**

*The line dividing good and evil cuts  
through the heart of every human  
being—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The  
Gulag Archipelago**

Life is a battle  
between good  
people and evil  
people

# You need an Enterprise Risk Management Strategy:

- Your organization has fire drills, tornado drills, maybe even active shooter drills
- Institutions need "Hate-attack" drills as well
- Create "Peace-Reactions" to counter attacks
- Prepare staff, students, stakeholders



We need to teach people to stop, reflect, think, pause, consider...

The only way to defeat hate is with love and respect. We must change the culture of our campuses & communities to respect and embrace one another.



And there are  
other challenges

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: A SAGA IN FIVE PARTS

# Scenario 1: *Something's brewing...*

Your role: Leadership team member, Chancellor's Office

- Part of multi-campus state-wide university system
- Most aspects of flagship school: "routine business"
- Only your school has a Confederate monument
- The Charlottesville "Unite the Right" march and subsequent removal of confederate monuments throughout the South stirs tensions on your campus.
- August 2017 —University Police Chief sends you a letter:

"recent events have served to transform" the debate around the Silent Sam monument "into a true public safety threat," specifically citing "the August 12<sup>th</sup> conflict in Charlottesville resulting in the tragic loss of three lives, and the toppling of the Civil War monument in Durham."



"Silent Sam" stands prominently in a frequently trafficked public green space on campus

# Scenario 2: *If ever there was a time when emotional intelligence was needed...*

- ▶ 2015: Gov. Pat McCrory (R) signed a bill that prohibits state agencies and local governments from dismantling any “object of remembrance” on public property that “commemorates an event, a person, or military service that is part of North Carolina’s history.”
- ▶ August 14, 2017: Confederate monument in Durham, NC toppled by protesters.
- ▶ August 20, 2017: Protesters sing “We Shall Overcome” and drape Silent Sam in black.
- ▶ August 21, 2017: An outside group organizes a rally on the campus. Communications reports to you that social media traffic seems to be increasing, with several thousand message and “hits”, with hints at a KKK rally.

## ▶ **What do you do?**



# Scenario 2: what happened

- ▶ August 21, 2017:
- ▶ Chancellor Carol Folt issued a message urging students not to attend the rally scheduled for the next day, "considering the potential for a highly charged atmosphere and the very real possibility for confrontation with outside groups." The rally was "being organized by groups not associated with the university... If we had the ability to immediately move the statue we would."



- ▶ August 30, 2017: Silent Sam is hit with a mixture of blood and red paint (again)

*Maya Little: "This statue, Silent Sam, was built on white supremacy. It was built by white supremacists.... These statues symbolize the violence toward Black people. Without that blood on the statue, it's incomplete, in my opinion. It's not properly contextualized."*

*And then a year later...*

# Scenario 3: Silent Sam falls

## August 20, 2018

### Silent Sam falls

On the night of August 20, 2018, the day before the 2018–19 school year began, another "Remove *Silent Sam*" rally was held, beginning with speakers at 7 p.m. The protest had been billed as a rally in support of graduate student Maya Little, whose original court appearance for defacing the monument was scheduled for that day. Protestors marched down and briefly blocked Franklin Street, Chapel Hill's main downtown street. In contrast with the 2017 rally, police stayed in the background, and video of the protest was reported as showing police moving away from the monument shortly before protesters pulled it down."



► **What do you do?**

# Scenario 3: The official response:

The morning after the topping, UNC issued a statement on [Twitter](#) which read:



"Last night's actions were unlawful and dangerous, and we are very fortunate that no one was injured. The police are investigating the vandalism and assessing the full extent of the damage".

A later statement from Chancellor Folt, UNC President Margaret Spellings, and other university leaders said:



"Last night's rally was unlike any previous event on our campus. This protest was carried out in a highly organized manner and included a number of people unaffiliated with the University. While we respect that protesters have the right to demonstrate, they do not have the right to damage state property."

# Scenario 3: School level response

SPH Dean Barbara Rimer writes to the school community:

- ❑ Citing a dissertation *Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina, 1793-1960*, by John K. Chapman (2006),
- ❑ Extensively discussing the hurt and impact on health resulting from inequity

“Sam was a relic of another time, a time most of us want to see behind us. Sam divided us, made us less than whole. Now, it is time to move forward, to reconcile the past and the present, the advocates for and against, past the hatred, bigotry and inequities that dominated the early twentieth century, and, sadly, continue. It is time for reconciliation. What now?”...We have a choice now. We can walk forward along the road to the future together, based on a commitment to equity in all domains, justice, diversity and inclusion, or dwell in the past..... I'd far rather dwell in the future. But first, we should talk.”



# Scenario 4: counter protests

- ▶ Non university people counter protest to restore the statue
- ▶ The Board of Governors called for the school to find a way to preserve the statue and requested a plan from University Leaders.

▶ **What do you do?**



# Scenario 4: counter protests

- December 2018: The Board of Governors denies the plan for a special building to house the statue and provide context

Thom Goolsby, Board of Governors member and former state senator: the law is "perfectly clear": "*Silent Sam* needs to go back up on that same spot. Anything short of that is giving into mob rule and anarchy, and I won't agree with it."



- December 2018: Teaching Assistants and some faculty refuse to submit fall grades in protest, which prevents fall graduation. This is reported to largely have student support.
- Dec 2018/Jan 2019: Individual schools start to discuss plans with students to find ways to protest, to some extent taking the matter in their own hands.

▶ **What do you do?**

# Scenario 5: an ultimate decision



## January 15, 2019:

- ▶ Chancellor Carol Folt decides that she *cannot sleep one more night knowing the very real risk this presents to our students*. Student safety “is my job”. (January 17, 2019)
- ▶ She orders the pedestal removed by mid-March, but has it taken down that night
- ▶ She tenders her resignation to the BOG effective at the end of the semester
- ▶ The Board of Governors accepts her resignation as of January 31<sup>st</sup> (2 weeks later)

# Disinformation, disruption, and reputational attacks are a reality that leaders face today



While these attacks present new challenges, through understanding and recognizing them, leaders and their organizations can blunt or avoid the damage and injury the attacks aim to inflict.

# Your Organization needs an Enterprise Risk Management Strategy:



- This must emanate from the leaders, not be kicked down in the organization
- This strategy needs to be created before it is needed, and not in reaction to the event.
- Your enterprise needs a communications playbook prepared in advance
  - *54% of universities are not ready to face a reputational event*

# How do you lead when facts don't matter?

- It is a false assumption that “data”, logic, reason will rule the day
- You risk being called “part of the liberal elite” when you use facts, science, logic, data, and reason
- What is the over-riding concern held by that individual?



This is about the FEELING FUNCTION: empathy, listening, caring, understanding the nature of fear.

# Why is emotional intelligence important for leaders?

## **Because leadership is about:**

- **Creating/changing the culture**
- **Enabling others to act (shared leadership)**
- **Inspiring a shared vision**
- **Modeling the way**
- **Encouraging the heart**
- **Fostering Adaptive Change**
- **Handling the unexpected...**

*Soft Skills*