

THE SCIENTIST AND THE HUMANIST

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UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS DOES INTERGROUP CONTACT IMPROVE INTERGROUP HARMONY?

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This chapter is about Elliot Aronson and also about Gordon Allport, both of whom I met in the fall of 1959 when I became a new graduate student in Harvard's Department of Social Relations. Elliot would surely have been my PhD advisor had he not moved to Minnesota in 1962. That was when Gordon Allport took pity on me because not only Elliot but everyone else with whom I had worked during my first few years at Harvard had departed to other academic pastures.

My starting motivation for PhD training was to avoid being drafted into the U.S. Army. America was not then at war, but the Cold War fueled an active military draft. By national policy, student deferments were used to encourage men toward socially useful careers. If there had been a draft deferment for aspiring bebop trumpet players, I would not now be writing this chapter. (What, I wonder, would have been the societal and scientific effect if there had been a draft for women, who would then have sought the deferment shelter of graduate schools at a rate similar to men?)

Harvard's Social Relations Department reflected an interdisciplinary spirit that took similar form at several other universities, combining sociology, social anthropology, social psychology, and clinical psychology. (That combination existed as a Harvard department from 1946 until the early 1970s, at which time the partnering disciplines gave up

and reidentified with their respective primary disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and psychology.) In 1959, *Social Relations* was distributed widely across the Harvard campus. Elliot had been given office and research space in a *Social Relations* outpost at 9 Bow Street, a three-story frame building about three blocks from Harvard Square and outside the Harvard Yard. Probably the most influential coincidence of my Harvard career was that, shortly after arrival, I was given a desk at 9 Bow Street, even though my primary research activity was assisting Richard L. (Dick) Solomon in studies of avoidance conditioning in dogs, in a lab in the fourth-floor attic of Emerson Hall in the Yard.

Elliot was fresh from Stanford, where he had assimilated so much of the spirit of his mentor and PhD advisor, Leon Festinger, that he eventually was expected to channel that spirit after Leon left social psychology in the mid 1960s. Preceding Elliot to Harvard by one year was someone who was close to Elliot and also influential to me—Merrill Carlsmith, who had also worked with Leon at Stanford, but as an undergraduate. Merrill was the becoming-famous coauthor of what social psychologists ever since have simply called “Festinger and Carlsmith 1959,” the article that directly confronted cognitive principles of Festinger’s (1957) dissonance theory with the reward and incentive concepts of Hull–Spence behavior theory. In my professional naiveté, I did not immediately understand the revolutionary importance of Merrill’s work with Leon, nor the similar importance of the already published affirmation of dissonance theory’s effort-justification principle—pulled off by Elliot as an empirical tour de force, working together with Jud Mills at Stanford (Aronson & Mills, 1959).

Thankfully, Merrill was not overly taken with his own achievements. He took me under his wing, nurturing what eventually became a finely honed ability to read almost anything critically (except my own work, of course), and also beating me mercilessly in games of Go. Merrill’s kindness made it impossible for me to be jealous of his achievements or even of the fact that Elliot obviously loved Merrill more than he loved me. Working incredibly productively in just a few years at Harvard, Elliot and Merrill produced the studies that established the empirical basis for Elliot’s self-concept interpretation of dissonance theory, which I settled on as my favorite form of the theory after several competing interpretations had appeared in the 1960s and 1970s.

I felt very privileged to have been adopted by the small group that included Elliot, Merrill, and another new Harvard faculty member, Walter Mischel. At Bow Street I began to learn how to read my own work critically. I was shown how to do this by Elliot and Walter, who would take all opportunities to make fully clear to me just how much

my writing could be improved. Combining sarcastic humor with their writing suggestions, they taught me the irreplaceable value of having teachers and colleagues who care enough to devote a portion of their waking hours to telling you just how you can improve yourself. I am still blessed with colleagues who will do that for me, including a few for whom I am prepared to do likewise by modeling toward them my approximation of the style that Elliot and Walter modeled for me. Elliot and Walter remain ready to straighten me out whenever I provide the opportunity. It is sad that Merrill, who died so young in 1984,¹ no longer participates in those tradeoffs and does not have the chance to reflect, along with the other contributors to this volume, on how Elliot's work touched his life.

My reflection about Elliot's work focuses on the contact hypothesis, which holds that under the right conditions, interactions between members of two initially hostile groups can overcome preexisting antipathy. The important question is: What are those "right conditions"?

Elliot's development of interest in intergroup contact came in the 1970s. That was during the first of several extended episodes in Elliot's career when he turned his attention to using social psychology to solve a societal problem. Elliot might never have mentioned the contact hypothesis in my presence at Harvard. However, in effect, he mentioned it to me annually for most of the quarter century during which I taught undergraduate social psychology courses at Ohio State and the University of Washington, using Elliot's *The Social Animal* as the main course text. Elliot's "Prejudice" chapter made the contact hypothesis very familiar to me and also brings Gordon Allport into the story.

Gordon Allport was a formal man. Alas, I never got to call him "Gordon." Over 40 years later, the closest I can get to treating him familiarly is to use his initials (GWA), a liberty I shall take for the remainder of this chapter. By my present standards, GWA was relatively young (in his early 60s) while I was at Harvard, but he was more than 40 years my senior and had a greater aura of elderly eminence than any other Harvard professor I encountered. Tom Pettigrew, who knew GWA far better than I did, tells me that this impression was created by GWA's shyness, something that never occurred to me.

I have been asked quite a few times what it was like to work with GWA and how he influenced me. There is irony here. In my career, I have taken up three major topics that GWA contributed to: attitudes, the self, and prejudice. He was the authority on attitudes in the 1930s, on the self in the 1940s, and on prejudice in the 1950s. I took those topics up in the same order, respectively, in the 1960s, the 1980s, and close to 2000 (yes, it took me longer to work through each). The irony:

In my years at Harvard, GWA was no longer interested in those topics and I was only just beginning to be interested in attitudes. When I later began working on those topics, his published work of three to five decades earlier was still definitive and shaped my approach in each case. His scholarly attention to detail and accuracy also resonated and stayed with me—although some of my advisees have been inclined to see this as compulsiveness.

I have wondered what GWA would have thought of my work on the topics to which he had made such major contributions. My first answer is not encouraging, because he apparently had no sympathy for the experimental social psychology movement that was inspired by Leon Festinger and in which I was being indoctrinated by Elliot, Walter, and Merrill. GWA's disdain for experimental social psychology never appeared in anything that he published or anything I ever heard him say. However, I did discover a note that he, as my dissertation chair, had sent with a copy of my dissertation to one of my dissertation committee members. I treasure that note, which I later found between pages of the copy of my dissertation that came back to me from that committee member. The adjectives "constipated," "rigid," and "fashionable" all appeared in immediate proximity to "experimentation." GWA was a scholar of the first order and had great respect for data, but little fondness for the highly creative and sometimes deceptive methods that Elliot and Merrill (Aronson & Carlsmith, 1969) later described as "experimental realism."

I hope nevertheless that GWA would find something of value in the recent work in which I have tried to bring together the topics of attitudes, self, and prejudice, even though that work is rooted in the methods of experimental social psychology. GWA died in 1967. Were he alive today, he could not help but notice how much I was influenced by his work. If he could spot his parental influence on me, perhaps that would be enough to give him a positive (implicit, of course) attitude.

My repeated exposure to the contact hypothesis through *The Social Animal* became valuable background when, relatively recently, the Implicit Association Test took my career on an unpredicted journey into research on prejudice. In the rest of this chapter I try to merge Elliot's and GWA's insights about the contact hypothesis, along with those of other students of the contact hypothesis, especially Tom Pettigrew (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Because of my come-lately interest, I am much less expert than these others. What prompts me, nevertheless, to take up the topic is the growing evidence that intergroup relations are impaired by implicit attitudes and stereotypes that are far more pervasive than are their parallel overt forms (cf. Dovidio,

Glick, & Rudman, 2005; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009; Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2007). These recent demonstrations of the pervasiveness of implicit biases necessarily challenge aficionados of the contact hypothesis to find ways to increase the effectiveness of intergroup contact in producing intergroup harmony.

GWA'S RECIPE

In the 1954 case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the United States Supreme Court found that racial segregation of American public schools violated the United States Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment. The *Brown* decision led many to expect that desegregation of schools would soon follow and, furthermore, that there should follow a rapid warming of black-white race relations in America.

The expected warming did not occur. American federal courts went slowly (described ironically as "all deliberate speed," with "deliberate" being the operative word) in obliging school districts to implement desegregation programs. In a preface to the 1958 edition of *The Nature of Prejudice*, GWA wrote: "The delay has given time ... for fierce disagreement to arise among authorities occupying strategic roles in the hierarchy of law enforcement" (reprinted in Allport, 1979, p. xxi).

In the late 1960s, more than a decade after *Brown*, American courts at last started to order implementation of school desegregation in communities that had not already achieved desegregation on their own. Here is what Elliot observed in Austin, Texas, shortly after federal court orders had produced the start of school desegregation efforts there in 1971:

Because Austin had always been racially segregated, white youngsters, African-American youngsters, and Hispanic youngsters found themselves in the same classrooms for the first time. Within a few weeks, long-standing suspicion, fear, and distrust between groups produced an atmosphere of turmoil and hostility. Fist-fights erupted in corridors and schoolyards across the city. (Aronson, 2000–2009, para. 1–2)

The contact hypothesis, of course, suggested the contrary—that desegregation would produce a thaw in race relations (see Stephan, 1978). The intuition underlying the contact hypothesis is that face-to-face contact between mutually distrustful groups should allow members of each group to discover that their counterparts are also ordinary human beings. Through direct experience with the other group, contact

should dispel stereotypes and erroneous expectations. Stereotypes should be replaced by recognition that the other group's members are normal people, fundamentally similar to those in one's own group.

Historical roots of the contact hypothesis are reviewed in the opening pages of Tom Pettigrew and Linda Tropp's (2006) comprehensive meta-analytic study. The following statement by GWA in *The Nature of Prejudice* (Allport, 1954) is often quoted as *the* definitive statement of the contact hypothesis:

To be maximally effective, contact and acquaintanceship programs should lead to a sense of equality in social status, should occur in ordinary purposeful pursuits, avoid artificiality and if possible enjoy the sanction of the community in which they occur. The deeper and more genuine the association, the greater its effect. While it may help somewhat to place members of different ethnic groups side by side on a job, the gain is greater if these members regard themselves as part of a team. (p. 489)

Later writers distilled this statement by GWA into what is widely accepted as a recipe for effective intergroup contact, having four ingredients:

1. Members of the contacting groups should have *equal status*. For example, in contact between two nations that are in conflict, the representatives of each nation should have similar status in their respective governments. It is interesting that GWA's first sentence said that the contact situation "should *lead to* [emphasis added] a sense of equality in social status." This led me to wonder whether GWA was more willing than were later writers to consider the effects of contact in situations that did not start with equal status. I am grateful to Tom Pettigrew for pointing out to me that GWA's prior statements did indeed specify equal status as a starting condition (e.g., Allport & Kramer, 1946).
2. Members of the contacting groups should have *shared goals*. For example, both nations might desire peaceful and economically prosperous relations.
3. Contact should be *authority sanctioned*. For example, leaders of major international powers or of international organizations such as the United Nations might make clear their approval of the negotiations.

4. Contact should occur in the context of *cooperation* rather than competition. For example, representatives of two conflicting nations should see that they have more to gain by working together with each other than by remaining opposed.

Of course, negotiating an international conflict bears almost no resemblance to the situation that Elliot found in the schools of Austin, Texas, in 1971. After he had visited and observed classrooms in several of Austin's schools, Elliot saw that three of the four ingredients of the contact recipe were generally missing. In particular (1) there was nothing approaching equal status of white, black, and Latino students; (2) there were no important shared goals; (3) yes, there was authority sanction, but it may have been more the authority of federal courts than the enthusiasm of local school authorities; and (4) rather than cooperation among white, black, and Latino students, those groups were more likely to be competing and fighting with one another.

Particularly telling were Elliot's observations in the routine classroom situation in which teachers ask questions and students are called on to answer—a situation in which students compete for the teacher's attention and praise. (Elliot's description of this can be found in the "Prejudice" chapter in all editions of *The Social Animal*.) Minority students, who were newly arrived from less challenging classrooms, frequently lost those competitions. They could lose either by hesitating to raise their hands or, when called on, by failing to give correct answers.

Elliot responded to these multiple deviations from optimal contact by inventing a new format for classroom work that supplied the missing ingredients. In his invention, the Jigsaw Classroom (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997), students were organized into racially mixed small teams that worked together on assignments. The need to complete assignments provided the shared goals ingredient. The jigsaw name came from the device of giving each team member a different piece of the material needed for the team to complete the assignment. The group task thus became the equivalent of completing a puzzle for which all team members had equal shares of the needed information. The need for all team members to contribute to the solution provided the cooperation ingredient. The equal status ingredient came from preparing each student to provide contributions to the group project that were equally essential.

In introducing the Jigsaw Classroom in Austin, Elliot and his collaborators showed that the jigsaw method not only improved intergroup harmony but also improved performance by minority students, even when it was used for as little as an average of one hour out of the

classroom day. These initial successes in Austin were rapidly followed by successes in other cities.

Despite the repeated demonstrations of its success in field experiments, the Jigsaw Classroom now has only limited adoption in American school systems. (Unfortunately, there are no good data on the Jigsaw Classroom's penetration of American schools. When I recently asked Elliot about this, he told me that he has never encountered an authoritative survey of the extent of its use.) Perhaps one reason for the limited adoption is that few current American schools have the types of racially mixed classrooms that initially motivated Elliot's invention. Why do present-day American schools have so few classrooms with more than token racial mixture? The explanation can be found in actions of American courts after 1980. After a period of court-mandated integration efforts between 1970 and 1980, American courts started making decisions that allowed a gradual return to levels of racial segregation approximating those of 1970 (Orfield & Lee, 2004, 2006). Many Americans now seem content with this retreat from active desegregation. Part of the reason is that there was (and still is) wide dislike—by school administrators and by parents of both majority and minority children—for programs that oblige children to be bused for long distances to attend an integrated school. Segregation of schools will likely not disappear until residential segregation disappears.

FOUR CASES OF CONTACT

My tribute to GWA's and Elliot's work on contact attempts to advance their shared cause by considering the (at least mildly puzzling) juxtaposition of four well documented illustrations of successful intergroup contact. Only the first illustration included all four ingredients of GWA's recipe. For the other three, the challenge is to understand whether their sometimes striking deviations from GWA's recipe were merely exceptions that prove the rule or, alternately, clues to possible alternative recipes for effective contact.

Prototypical Equal-Status Contact

In 1971, C. P. Ellis was a white labor union official and also an avowed racist who was a leader of Durham, North Carolina's, Ku Klux Klan. Ann Atwater, also of Durham, was a black civil rights activist. When Ellis died in 2005 at age 78, a *New York Times* obituary described Atwater and Ellis as "the unlikeliest of friends." Like Austin, Texas, in 1971 Durham was experiencing turmoil surrounding school desegregation. Along with several other community leaders, Atwater and Ellis participated in a series of meetings that were organized to solve

Durham's school desegregation difficulties. After 10 days of meetings, Atwater and Ellis developed a friendship that eventually led Ellis to renounce both his Klan membership and his racist beliefs. In later years, Ellis and Atwater often appeared together publicly as advocates of racial harmony.

The meeting of Ann Atwater and C. P. Ellis appears to have been a perfect convergence of the four ingredients of GWA's recipe: equal status, shared goals, support from authorities, and cooperation. It was also a striking instance of contact leading not only to personal friendship but to a broader acceptance of the other's racial group.

The most remarkable feature of the Atwater-Ellis friendship may have been the attention that it received at Ellis's death, including coverage in the *New York Times* (November 11, 2005) and on National Public Radio (November 8, 2005). There must have been many other communities in which pairs as initially antagonistic as Atwater and Ellis were similarly brought together to manage difficulties of desegregation. If the contact recipe worked even 10% of the time, shouldn't friendships such as that between Atwater and Ellis have been commonplace enough not to merit the national attention occasioned by Ellis's death? Does that attention tell us that effective operation of the contact recipe may not be so routine? A related observation at the international level is that there have been many occasions on which Palestinian and Israeli representatives have met with all four ingredients present. Why did this not, long ago, produce peace and amity in the Middle East?

Two Bank Robberies

On August 23, 1973, during an attempted bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden, a police officer was shot and injured by the lone robber. The robber proceeded to keep police at bay by threatening to harm four hostages inside the bank. Hoping for a speedy resolution, the police allowed a friend of the robber to enter the bank. However, once inside the bank the friend became a second captor. After five days of standoff, the police tear-gassed the bank, the two captors surrendered, and the hostages were freed without injury. The Stockholm bank robbery survives in our memories because of a surprising observation that emerged in later news reports: The hostages came to like their two captors.

In early 1974 in Berkeley, California, heiress Patricia (Patty) Hearst was kidnapped by a group that identified itself as the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA). Two months later, she was photographed during a bank robbery, holding a rifle. Hearst then informed the press that she was an active member of the SLA, henceforth to be known as "Citizen Tania." Occurring so close in time, the Stockholm robbery

and the Hearst kidnapping prompted popular belief that there might be a general phenomenon of captives becoming attached to captors. The label “Stockholm syndrome” has since been widely attached to this circumstance.

What about the recipe? Which ingredients were present? This is answered more easily for the Stockholm robbery, which was more in the public eye than the Hearst kidnapping. Two of the ingredients of GWA’s recipe were absent. There was no equal status. Captors and captives do not have equal status. There was also no authority sanction. The captivity was illegal and the police sought to end it. What about shared goals and cooperation? At the start, there were no shared goals. The captors wanted to escape and the hostages wanted to be rescued. The fourth ingredient, cooperation, was also missing at the start. However, by the end things may have changed if the hostages concluded that they would be in the same danger as their captors if the police invaded the bank (which they did). The captors and hostages may have begun to see themselves as potentially cooperating allies with a very important shared goal of survival.

The Loan of a Book

In 1736, 30-year-old Benjamin Franklin arranged to borrow a book from a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly who had opposed Franklin’s aim to become clerk of the assembly. Franklin was without doubt displeased with the legislator, whom he described as having given “a long speech against me, in order to favour some other candidate [i.e., for the position of clerk].” The following paragraph is Franklin’s description of what followed.

Having heard that he had in his library a certain very scarce and curious book, I wrote a note to him, expressing my desire of perusing that book, and requesting he would do me the favour of lending it to me for a few days. He sent it immediately, and I return’d it in about a week with another note, expressing strongly my sense of the favour. When we next met in the House, he spoke to me (which he had never done before), and with great civility; and he ever after manifested a readiness to serve me on all occasions, so that we became great friends, and our friendship continued to his death. (Eliot, 1909, pp. 94–95)

Brief as it is, Franklin’s remarkable story challenges our understanding of the conditions of friendship formation. Two of the contact recipe’s four ingredients were lacking. There was no sanctioning authority

and status was unequal. The Pennsylvania Assembly member had high status by position and clearly had the power to influence an important outcome for Franklin. Franklin also put himself in the lower status role of help seeker. Why did the simple act of requesting a loan of the book so dramatically improve the relationship? The distinctive characteristic of Franklin's story was helping. Franklin arranged for an enemy to help him by lending a book.

After writing all of this, I made the welcome discovery that I must first have encountered the story of Franklin's borrowed book in *The Social Animal*. Elliot had used the story in his chapter on interpersonal attraction to illustrate a nonstandard means of producing liking (e.g., Aronson, 1992, p. 351). That placement delivers a useful message: Rather than thinking that special methods are needed to reduce prejudice, why not apply the full armory of methods known to be effective in increasing interpersonal attraction to the task of reducing prejudice?

Helping is fundamental to many human relationships, such as parent-child relationships and charitable giving. Helping is likewise central to situations in which professionals such as nurses and teachers give assistance that often far exceeds the expectations of the help-giving jobs for which they are paid. On the surface, it may appear that the benefits of these helping relationships go entirely to those who receive help. However, an enduring bond may develop between help giver and recipient. That bond can be as cherished by the help giver as by the receiver.

A Remarkable Second Baseman

In 1947, Branch Rickey was president of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Rickey had a plan to combine a benefit to professional baseball (racial desegregation) with a substantial economic benefit to the Dodgers. He had the prescience to believe that a young ballplayer from the segregated Negro League, Jackie Robinson, could be the key to two profitable outcomes for the Dodgers—a possible league championship and an increase in ticket sales.

The success story of Branch Rickey's hiring of Jackie Robinson has been told many times (see especially Pratkanis & Turner, 1994a, 1994b). That success must have depended partly on Robinson's personal characteristics. Robinson endured and tolerated abuse from many white baseball fans in Brooklyn who were not ready for "their" team to have a black player. Robinson likewise tolerated what must have seemed an endless stream of insults from supporters of Brooklyn's opponents, both on and off the field, as he traveled to play in other cities. On the baseball field, Robinson was simply outstanding. He received Major League Baseball's Rookie of the Year award in 1947 and the National League's

Most Valuable Player award in 1949. His on-field performances helped the Brooklyn Dodgers to become National League champions in 6 of his 10 years with the team.

The story of the integration of Major League Baseball is a story of successful intergroup contact that lacks the main ingredient of GWA's recipe. Was there authority sanction? Yes. Rickey and other baseball officials provided it. Were there shared goals? Yes. Robinson's teammates wanted to win and other teams in the league must have appreciated the increased audiences that he helped to attract. Was there cooperation? Although some resisted, Rickey was able to get many others to support the integration effort. Also, Robinson and Rickey were certainly cooperating. The missing ingredient was equal status. In 1947, Robinson's first year with the Dodgers, there must have been few settings in which he had status equal to others. In his most important relationship—with Rickey—Robinson was clearly lower in status. On the baseball field, the reverse may have been true. By virtue of his ability, Robinson was ultimately higher in status than most others. But, as the only one of his race on the field, his status was different from all others and not equal. In off-field settings, because of the generally poor treatment of blacks in American society, Robinson was often very visibly lower in status than others. During his first year with the Brooklyn Dodgers, it could not have been possible for Robinson to feel that he had status equal to others on the team.

Do the Four Cases Prove Anything?

In the case of Atwater and Ellis the four-ingredient contact recipe worked perfectly. In the other three cases, contact succeeded despite one missing ingredient (Robinson and Rickey) or two missing ingredients (the two bank robberies and Franklin's borrowed book). Although these cases offer no scientifically adequate basis for drawing conclusions, they encourage us to think that there may be useful alternatives to GWA's four-ingredient recipe for effective intergroup contact.

ANOTHER RECIPE? (HELPFUL CONTACT)

With a long and distinguished past, the contact hypothesis and GWA's recipe will certainly continue to guide scientific thinking about how to improve intergroup relations. But GWA's recipe may have achieved such stature as to have blocked attention to other effective strategies. Still, occasional voices have suggested that alternatives to GWA's recipe warrant serious consideration. In their review of more than 500 reports of investigations of the contact hypothesis, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006)

described the broad support achieved by the contact hypothesis, but also concluded that “Allport’s conditions should not be regarded as necessary for producing positive contact outcomes” (p. 766). In similar spirit, John Dixon, Kevin Durrheim, and Colin Tredoux (2005) pointed out that there are relatively few situations of natural intergroup contact in which all four ingredients of the recipe can be found.

In wondering about other recipes, I found it difficult to resist focusing on a characteristic that was prominent in the successes of Franklin’s borrowed book and Rickey’s integration of Major League Baseball—the act of one person helping another. Perhaps this is the basis for another effective recipe, which might be called *helpful contact*. This almost certainly is not a single-ingredient recipe. Besides helping, other possibly necessary ingredients are (a) that the recipient welcomes the help and (b) an expectation by both helper and recipient that the recipient will benefit enough so as not to need help indefinitely. These additional ingredients may separate effective forms of helpful contact from acts of help that are condescending or patronizing, or acts in which the recipient is coerced to accept help, such as in an abusive relationship (see Fisher, Nadler, & Whitcher-Alagna, 1982, for a theoretical interpretation of negative responses to help by recipients).

Some instances of what appears to be helpful contact have occurred on a massive scale in recent history. Consider the difference between international relations following World War I and those following World War II. Policies pursued by the victorious Allies after World War I left Germany downtrodden. Would Germany’s pre-World War II international stance have been different had the United States and its allies pursued policies that took a more helpful approach toward their defeated enemy? After World War II, the United States did just that. In the form of the Marshall Plan, America took the lead in assuring the reconstruction of Germany and took similar steps to assist Japan. In the decades following World War II, America’s relations with its recently defeated Japanese and German enemies were, remarkably, much more favorable than were its relations with the Soviet Union, which was the geopolitical descendant of America’s wartime ally, Russia.

A region of more recent hostilities is the Middle East. Might the current atmosphere differ from its present instability and tenseness if Israel had instituted major aid programs for its defeated enemies after the Arab–Israel wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973?

Helpful contact has certainly existed for millennia as an effective strategy for establishing interpersonal friendship and favorable intergroup relations. Nevertheless, social psychologists have not identified helpful

contact as a distinct strategy for achieving intergroup harmony nor has helpful contact received any fraction of the half-century of sustained scholarly research attention received by the equal-status contact recipe.

CODA

In closing, I cannot resist noting that one sustained instance of helpful contact, provided by Elliot—along with Walter and Merrill—to me, a lower status would-be member of their group in 1959, produced warm relationships that have now lasted more than half a century.

NOTE

1. A warm remembrance of Merrill Carlsmith by several Stanford faculty colleagues can be found at <http://histsoc.stanford.edu/pdfmem/CarlsmithJM.pdf>.

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