Emotion, Alienation, and Narratives: Resolving Intractable Conflict

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This article explores the role of emotion and alienation in protracted conflict and makes suggestions as to how they might be managed. First we note the scant attention given to these topics in the mediation and negotiation literature. Then we show how emotional and relational issues are related to theories of economic and political interests, on the one hand, and narratives and ideologies of conflict, on the other. We focus on the way alienated relationships impair communication and the way they generate intense emotions, especially shame and anger. In our view, secret (unacknowledged) alienation and shame are the primary causes of intractable conflict. Finally, we propose a role for mediators in the acknowledgment of emotion and alienation as a way of resolving intractable conflicts.

> If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find
> sorrow and suffering enough to dispel all hostility.
> >   Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Most training for negotiation and mediation barely mentions feelings and emotions. Much of the literature on mediation states or at least implies that emotions should be ignored, as if both sides of a dispute can be coaxed into behaving rationally. And although Fisher, Ury, and Patton (1991), in the most popular book in this field, suggest that emotions need to be dealt with first, before substance, their discussion is brief and casual, and the only emotion they specifically name is anger. They seem to assume that anger is a simple and unitary emotion and give only brief hints about managing it.[1] We propose that the lack of detailed attention to emotions and relationships is the biggest gap in our understanding of conflict.

Of course, there are mediations in which emotions can be safely ignored. In such situations, the parties' concerns over substance can be negotiated

directly, and resolution or compromise can be reached quickly. For the average mediator, simple conflicts like these may occur in the majority of cases. There are many mediations, however, in which one or both sides seem intractable. In some of these cases, there is flagrant hostility. In others, both sides are courteous but remote. In both of these situations, headway toward settlement is slow or absent. We propose that in seemingly intractable conflict, headway can be made if the mediator is skilled enough to help the parties explore not only the substantive issues but also the emotional and relational side of their conflict.

Managing Anger

An example of the need for further training in emotions and relationships is provided by the topic of anger management in current mediation and negotiation texts. The advice given in the literature is to allow venting of anger—"letting off steam" (Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 1991). Although this advice is right for some cases, for others it is inadequate or even destructive. Just as making distinctions between kinds of snow is important for a skier, distinguishing kinds of anger is essential for a mediator and negotiator.

The mediator should certainly encourage the venting of one kind of anger: pure anger that is unalloyed with other emotions. This kind of anger mobilizes the intellect of both speaker and listener, is not inappropriate or excessive, and does not lead to name calling or disrespect. People who express anger constructively may provide listeners with a rapid, exact, and comprehensive description of their grievances and needs. This kind of anger marshals respect for the speaker and is informative for the listeners.

Unfortunately, this kind of anger is quite rare. Most anger displays in negotiation, and indeed, in the rest of life, are not pure anger, but anger alloyed with other emotions, such as disgust, contempt, or feelings of rejection or humiliation. These alloys seldom lead to constructive responses; indeed they almost always lead to excess and putdowns that are disruptive. (There is a partial recognition of the mischief caused by shame admixed with anger in Stone, Patton, and Heen, 1999.)

This problem is illustrated by a incident reported by Saposnek (1983), involving a couple referred to as Joan and Paul in mediation of a custody dispute: "In the middle of a heated exchange, a wife said to her ex-husband, 'You never paid any attention to the children, then you left me, and you're not getting the children now or ever'" (p. 185).

Does the mediator intervene or allow the husband to reply? If the mediator does intervene, what would she say? We return to this situation after framing the negotiation of conflict within a larger context, the interplay between ideology and narrative, substantive interests, and emotional and relational issues.

Theory: Ideology and Narratives and Economic and Political Interests in Conflict

Ideology seems to be an important element in intractable conflict. Typically it provides justification for actions, as is the case when one or both sides demonize the other and idealize themselves. Without fail, this process prolongs and intensifies conflict.

Ideology gives rise to (and is generated by) the story that each side tells to itself and others about the conflict. This story contains crucial elements that can either perpetuate or resolve conflict—the identity that each side awards to itself, the history and future of the struggle—and generates the explosive emotions connected with the conflict. Changes in the ideology and its accompanying narratives can change the nature of the conflict.

But adherents to an entrenched ideology or narrative may resist even verbal changes. Aggressors often feel that being victimized themselves justifies their aggression. Spouses who abuse their partners often justify their aggression as if the actions of the partner caused their violence. Men who beat their wives often argue that the wife was the true culprit, because of her taunts or insults, unfaithfulness, disobedience, or some other action culpable in the husband's eyes.

The victim ideology is a potent force in aggression not only between persons but also between groups. From news reports, it is clear that Serbians think of themselves as victims, which they use to justify their aggression. And it is true that Serbians have been victimized for hundreds of years. What is left out of the Serbian narratives is the fact that as well as being victims, they are also perpetrators. Their ideology and narrative is defensive, in that it distorts their role in generating conflict with other groups.

How can entrenched narratives be changed? Stories that express hidden emotion may be a beginning. An example is provided by the "Speak Bitterness" meetings in the early days of the Chinese communist revolution. Before they took power, Chinese communists attempted to liberate the peasants from their history of suffering and despair by social-psychological means. They had been victims of oppression for so long that they had lost hope. In the Speak Bitterness meetings, they were allowed to tell their stories of oppression. This process resulted in mass weeping. The meetings seemed to build hope among the peasants and allowed them to mobilize in support of the revolution. After the communists took power, they used similar meetings as a means of domination. But earlier they played a part in causing profound changes in narratives and behavior. The "truth telling" that has recently occurred in South Africa may also have had a similar effect in allowing both black and white citizens to express their suffering.

Marx's Theory of Conflict

These examples suggest that changing ideology and narrative can be effective in ending conflict, but also that ideology and narrative itself is a product of more primitive causes. Theorists have long debated the relative importance of ideology and material interests. In this debate, Marx's theory was most powerful. In his theory of conflict, he proposed that ideology is only a superstructure; location in the means of production is the substructure. That is, Marx thought that ideology was a product of political and economic interests. Later Marxians, especially communist theoreticians, elevated this crude proposition to the central core of their theory.

Marx, however, had qualified the proposition in several ways. First, he allowed that certain middle-class intellectuals, like himself, would forsake their class interests to become the vanguard of the proletariat. What force could bring these intellectuals to forsake their class interests?

Marx's theory of alienation implies such a force. It suggests that in addition to economic and political causes of class conflict, there are relational and emotional ones. The middle-class intellectuals who formed the vanguard had presumably become alienated from their class. More generally, Marx proposed that persons in capitalist societies become alienated not only from the means of production but from others and from self as well. That is, capitalism reflects and generates disturbances in social relationships and in the self. In his review of empirical studies of alienation, Seeman (1975) found evidence of both kinds of alienation: alienation from others and from self (which he referred to as self-estrangement).

Marx went on to implicate the emotions that accompany alienation. He proposed that it gave rise to feelings of "impotence" (shame) and "indignation" (anger) (Marx, in Tucker, 1978). Marx's theory of alienation proposes that the causes of class conflict are not only political and economic, but also relational and emotional.

Although Marx supplemented his theory of the political and economic causes of class conflict with a theory of emotional and relational causes, there is a great disparity in his development of the two theories. The political and economic theory is lavishly elaborated. The bulk of his commentary on alienation takes place in his early work. Even there, as in later works, the formulation of the theory of alienation is brief and casual. It is easy to understand why Marx's followers have also made it secondary to material interests.

Preliminaries to a General Theory

Our theory of emotional and relational causes of intractable conflict develops the effects of alienation, particularly disturbances in communication and emotion, beyond Marx's formulation. Like capitalism, the emotional and relational system in modern societies is a partially autonomous system. The two systems

interact in complex ways. In intractable conflict, the importance of emotional and relational motives seems to wax in more or less the same degree as material interests wane.

For example, in Northern Ireland, the parties in conflict long acted as if economic incentives were of little concern. There are four parties to the conflict—the Protestant and Catholic factions in Northern Ireland, England, and the Republic of Ireland—and all four are expending vast amounts on engaging in or defending against aggression. England, the largest group, is expending perhaps $6 billion a year to keep the peace by show of force. The other three groups are expending equivalent amounts relative to their smaller sizes. All are risking bankruptcy. Even if a settlement is reached, we still need to know why it has taken so long.

Most of the experts on the conflict in Northern Ireland believe that the impediments to peace and reconciliation were deep-seated emotions. Here is one example:

> Anyone who studies Northern Ireland must be struck by the intensity of feeling which the conflict evokes. It seems to go beyond what is required by a rational defence of the divergent interests that undoubtedly exist. *There is an emotional element here, a welling-up of deep unconscious forces.* It is worth examining what contribution psychology can make to an explanation of the conflict [emphasis added; Whyte 1990].

Whyte does not indicate, however, what these emotions might be, nor do any of the other experts who hold a similar opinion.

The materialist (realist) approach to conflict assumes that political and economic forces are the most important causes, with emotional, relational, and symbolic causes subsidiary. This approach may be true in some cases, but in intractable conflict (variously referred to, for example, as status, prestige, honor, or glory), it is probably not. Intractable conflicts seem to be fueled by nonmaterial as well as material concerns.

Hitler's motivation provides an example. In his writing and speeches, he provided a material motive for German aggression: room for the German people to live (Lebensraum). But there is a powerful subtext in the same writing and speeches: revenge for the humiliations that the Germans had suffered, which he thought would restore community and pride to the German nation (Scheff, 1994). Hitler was a master at exploiting emotions to his own ends and used them to manipulate the German people.

We propose that ideology and narratives are important elements in all intractability, but that they are products of political and economic, and emotional and relational, interests. It seems to us that most negotiation techniques ignore emotional and relational concerns. Perhaps interventions need to be developed to acknowledge and change the emotional and relational world of the adversaries.

One direction for stuck negotiations would be to pay particular attention to emotional and relational issues, and thus negotiate the relationship between the adversaries. In relationship mediation, one would appropriately acknowledge the suffering of the parties in such a way that might allow both sides to feel deeply heard. This kind of mediation could lead to an immediate change in the mood of the negotiation.

Perhaps the biggest block to progress in negotiating stuck conflicts is that one or both parties feel that their stories have not been told or, if told, not heard. When both parties feel deeply heard, the mood may change to the point that negotiation can begin. The mediator's key task in such cases is to help the parties to formulate their stories in a way that does not ignore the emotions and to be sure that when they are told, they are acknowledged.

Emotions and Alienation in Protracted Conflict

The integration of political and economic, narrative, and emotional and relational interests into a single program of negotiation has yet to be accomplished. This article is only a first step in that direction. We address two kinds of protracted conflict: interminable quarrel, characterized by irrational anger, resentment, or hatred, and impasse, in which both parties are more or less polite but negotiation has stalled. These conflicts are dominated by a seemingly impenetrable mood of either hostility or remoteness. Can mediators influence the mood of a negotiation?

Theory. Our theory is that when a solution or compromise cannot be reached, the problem may lie hidden in the emotional and relational world.

Relational dynamics concern the social bonds between and within the disputing parties. In our theory, bimodal alienation (isolation between the disputing groups and engulfment, or fusion, within each group) causes protracted conflict (Scheff, 1994). These dynamics, especially the fusion part, are hidden from the participants. Engulfment means that members give up part of their own self in order to be loyal to the group but are unaware of what they have lost (Seeman's self-estrangement). Fanatical nationalism ("My country [gender, race, ethnicity, family] right or wrong") is the result. It is much easier to imagine union with the unknown members of one's sect (referred to as imaginary communities) than to do the demanding work of making relationships in one's real interpersonal network more livable.

Emotion dynamics involve mixtures or sequences of emotion (as in the shame-anger or shame-shame spirals). In interminable quarrels, spirals of shame and anger (humiliated fury, helpless anger) within and between the disputing parties, with the shame component hidden from self and other, cause intractability (Retzinger, 1991; Scheff, 1994). Both Gaylin (1984) and Gilligan (1996) propose shame as the cause of rage. In impasse, both shame and anger are hidden. In both cases, it is the hidden shame that does the damage, because it blocks the possibility of repair of damaged bonds. To the extent that shame

is hidden from self and others, one cannot bring one's self to connect with the other side, leading to more alienation, and so on, around the loop. Hidden shame and alienation are the emotional and relational sides of the same dynamic system, a cycle of violence.

An example comes from an interview with John Silber, the former president of Boston University and still a powerful conservative force in Massachusetts politics (Milburn and Conrad, 1996). Silber's approach to political issues is a prime example of the politics of rage in the United States. As Milburn and Conrad (1996) suggest, it was an outburst of rage during a television broadcast on the eve of the 1992 election that seemed to cost him the race for governor.

In an earlier interview, Silber had told the interviewer that his sixth-grade teacher had laughed at him for wanting to be a veterinarian, since Silber had a withered arm. When the interviewer asked him how he felt about being laughed at, Silber replied that he was not humiliated; rather, the episode made him stronger. In the framework of our theory, this episode can be interpreted to mean that Silber's rage as a person and as a politician might arise from the denial of shame. It is not alienation or emotion alone that causes protracted conflict, but their denial by the participants. We propose that the denial of emotion and alienation leads to intractable conflict.

At first glance, this proposition seems counterintuitive. First, it violates the realist approach in political thinking: that all conflict involves material interests. It also violates the rationalist approach, which considers conflict to be the outcome of conscious intentions. Since rationalism is pervasive in the social sciences, we will consider this issue further.

The therapeutic approach runs counter to rationalism, especially psychodynamic theories of therapy, which posit unconscious motives. This approach has had little impact on theories of conflict, because most social scientists reject therapeutic approaches as irrelevant to collective behavior, and psychodynamic psychologists have shown little concern for large-scale conflict.

But in world literature, there is a much broader rejection of rationalism, implied in the quest for self-knowledge. Long before Freud, the Greek philosophers proposed that the goal of philosophical thinking is knowledge of the self; by implication, human folly is a result of lack of self-knowledge. This thread forms one of the central concerns in both ancient and modern literature. For at least three thousand years, stories, myths, fables, satires, and, more recently, novels have explored the theme of the dire consequences of lack of self-knowledge, epitomized in one of Goethe's (1985) dramas: "The gift of the great poet is to be able to voice his suffering, even when other men would be struck dumb in their agony."

Still more closely related to our treatment of intractability is a comment by the late Helen Lewis (1971), who said that most of us would rather turn the world upside down than turn ourselves inside out. This is the theme of Scheff's (1994) treatment of the Franco-German wars (1870–1945). The French took

their defeat at the hands of Prussia in 1871 as a collective humiliation. Rather than acknowledge this feeling, they plotted revenge on the Germans, resulting in their instigation, with Russia, of World War I. After their defeat in 1918, it was the turn of the Germans to experience defeat as a collective humiliation. Hitler's appeal to the German people involved exploiting this feeling. Hitler's own biography appears to be a classic example of the need to turn the world upside down rather than discover and acknowledge one's own feelings, since he was extraordinarily shamed and shame prone from childhood.

Just as lack of knowledge of self lies at the heart of the emotional drive toward intractability, so lack of knowledge of the other is the key to alienation. We learn about self through knowing others, and vice versa. Impairment of knowledge of the other damages knowledge of self, and vice versa. Denial of emotion and of alienation go hand in hand. We propose that intractability arises out of lack of knowledge of the emotional and relational world, that is, denial of alienation and emotion.

Practice. Our practice follows from the premise that intractability arises from lack of knowledge of self and other, from denial of suffering.

Acknowledging Shame and Alienation. To begin to resolve a stuck conflict, mediators must help the clients acknowledge, or acknowledge for them, at least a small part of their alienation and hidden emotions in a way that leaves some of their dignity intact. When this has occurred, real negotiation can begin. (Although Stone, Patton, and Heen, 1999, do not develop the idea of acknowledgment of hidden emotions, their discussion of venting implies that it is a key element in dealing with difficult negotiations.)

For alienation, mediators learn to identify patterns of alienation and the ensuing dysfunctional communication between and within the disputing groups. And for emotion, they learn to identify cues to unacknowledged emotions in the discourse of the disputing parties.

Special training is necessary for detecting shame, because most of it is disguised or denied. (See Retzinger, 1991, 1995, for cues to hidden anger and shame, and see the appendix of this article.) Following Helen Lewis (1971), we find that most shame occurs in either the overt, undifferentiated form or the bypassed form. In the overt type, there is intense emotional pain, but it is misnamed or encoded ("I feel miserable [hurt, insulted, inadequate, a failure, foolish]"). In bypassed shame, there is virtually no emotional pain. Instead, there is obsessive rumination, incessant talk, or hyperactivity. In this form, one can be in a state of shame without feeling ashamed (see Silber episode, above). Bypassing appears to be the primary form that men use for denying shame. Their arrogance and aggression serve to mask hidden shame.

Accurately reflecting alienation and unacknowledged emotions back to the disputing parties can help them to feel heard. But the mediator needs great skill to detect the undercurrents of denied emotions and alienation, and tact to reflect them back in a form that will not embarrass the clients.

This practice is a form of crisis management, not psychotherapy. The mediator is quickly in and out, entering the clients' emotional and relational

world only long enough to get the negotiation process unstuck. The mediator's accurate reflections of the clients' hidden feelings allow them to communicate better and to feel deeply heard. We believe that the basic stuckness of protracted conflict is a product of clients' not feeling heard by each other, the mediator, and the world at large. This failure is mostly due to the clients themselves: most omit their emotions from the stories they tell. Nevertheless, it is these emotions that are driving their intractability.

For example, the sticking point for the nationalist Catholics in the Northern Ireland conflict may have been that after six hundred years of humiliation by the English, they still have not found a way of acknowledging their feelings of shame and humiliation. They have been masking their humiliation by anger and aggression for so many generations that they can no longer access it without outside help. Feelings of humiliation were not acknowledged in the Northern Ireland peace negotiations, which have dealt only with substance rather than relationship (Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 1991).

Here we take a step toward describing the way shame generates anger and, more generally, identifying and untangling the strands of hidden emotions and alienation, and thus dysfunctional communication, in protracted conflict:

Topic versus manner (Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson, 1967, and Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 1991, make what seems to be the same distinction, calling it substance versus relationship). The negotiation of most protracted conflict seems to be entrapped in a succession of topics, with little or no attention to the relationship between the disputants, especially the emotional relationship.

Respect versus disrespect. Often respect issues are subtle rather than flagrant. Typically disputants deny that their verbal and nonverbal communications may be insulting to the other party. Indeed, although each party is supremely sensitive to the disrespect in communications of the other party, they are often mostly or even completely unaware of the disrespect in their own.

Triangling. This is a variation on topic versus manner, with the topic being an absent third party (Bowen, 1978). For example, in Northern Ireland negotiations, although there are actually four parties in the impasse, seldom are all of them present at a particular meeting. Those who are present may blame the absent party in order to avoid emotional and relational issues among those present.

Emotion Analysis. The most accessible emotion for many people is anger, but anger is usually a secondary emotion. Underneath the anger is usually a primary emotion, commonly referred to as hurt. Emotion analysis is a way of clarifying the hurt and locating it within the relational matrix of conflict. Our findings suggest that the dominant component of hurt, at least the kind of hurt that leads to hatred and aggression, is hidden shame. (See the extended example in Scheff and Retzinger, 1998.)

Given our emphasis on hidden shame and anger, we advise mediators and negotiators that clients' anger can be encouraged or tolerated as long as it is not damaging the bond between them. Since most displays of anger and rage are destructive, mediators should be trained to interrupt most expressions of anger immediately, not even allowing the other party to respond.

The custody dispute between Joan and Paul (Saposnek, 1983) that we referred to previously in the article provides an example. The wife has said, "You never paid any attention to the children, then you left me, and you're NOT getting the children now or ever!" Should the mediator intervene at this point or allow the husband to respond? According to our theory, the mediator must intervene in order to avoid escalation.

Joan does not discuss her feelings directly, but they are implied. That single sentence contains three statements that show a sequence of perceived insults and humiliations, leading to angry revenge.[2] First, Joan complains about and blames Paul, implying that he is an inadequate father. Then she reveals a context for intense humiliation: "You left me" (he severed the bond between them). The third breath is a threat of angry revenge: to withhold the children from Paul. All three statements are potentially humiliating for Paul: he is the one at fault with the children, at fault with the marriage, and is threatened with separation from his children (as he has separated himself from Joan). There is a mountain of both anger and shame. At this point, the mediator intervened before Paul had a chance to reply:

> The anger and hurt you feel right now is not unusual, and it is very under-
> standable. It is also not unusual for a parent who was not involved with the
> children before a divorce to decide to become sincerely involved after
> the divorce. Allowing that opportunity will give your children a chance to get
> to know their father in the future in a way that you wanted in the past. But
> give yourself plenty of time to get through these difficult feelings [Saposnek,
> 1983, pp. 185–186].

This is a crucial moment for intervention: the mediator acknowledges and reframes for both parties in a way that helps them to begin building a new bond: that of coparents. At the same time that the intervention deflects potential humiliation, the mediator interprets vulnerable feelings for both parents, legitimating their anger and hurt (shame).

The mediator interrupted the cycle in which the disputants had been entangled, and in a way that did not further humiliate either party. The intervention was paradigmatic; although it saved face, it did not endorse the position of either party. The mediator was able to remain neutral and did not become enmeshed in the family conflict. Saposnek describes the effects of the intervention:

> On hearing this the husband kept quiet, for he knew that the mediator's
> remark implied support for his continuing relationship with the children, yet
> presented it in a way that allowed both him and his wife to save face. He then

tearfully expressed his sincerity in wanting to become more involved with the children. The wife cried and was able to constructively express her hurt feelings at being left by the husband. Negotiations then became possible [p. 186].

By interrupting the quarrel cycle and expressing shame and hurt for the clients, the mediator appears to have avoided further escalation.

This incident illustrates repair of the relationship in several ways. First, it suggests that in order to build a new bond between the disputants, the mediator must be active rather than passive. Social bonds are at risk in all encounters; if they are not being built, maintained, or repaired, they are being damaged. A fallacious result of cathartic theories has been the unfortunate notion that a passive mediator is allowing the parties to "blow off steam." There can be little benefit from contempt, disgust, or ridicule. On the contrary, these types of emotional expression are harmful because they damage bonds even further.

The mediator's intervention illustrates key components of repair: saving face (avoiding further shaming transactions) and helping clients to acknowledge their hurt. In the case of Joan and Paul, the mediator appears to have detected the potential for humiliation of the husband in the utter rejection implied in the wife's comment:[*3] "You don't count; it doesn't matter to me what you say, think, or feel." The old bond between wife and husband has been broken. If the mediator allowed this comment to pass, it would become more difficult to form a new bond as coparents.

Most of the components for repairing the bond are present in this single intervention:

- The source of impasse, seen in the sequences of Joan's first utterance
- Face saving (respectful tactics)
- Acknowledgment of feeling and the state of the bond
- Knowledge of interacting systems
- A secure base provided by the mediator for exploration

Although the intervention is masterful, the author does not use theory in generating or explaining it or provide a method for identifying shame and anger sequences. The intervention was apparently based on the author's intuitive response to the underlying emotions, which in turn was based on years of experience with similar situations. Our theory of conflict offers a way of justifying such interventions, and training new mediators and negotiators to have similar intuitions without waiting for years of experience.

Conclusion

The mediator's accurate reflections of the state of the bond and emotion can change the mood of a conflict, allowing real negotiation to begin. The basic task is to help the clients formulate their stories so that they do not

ignore the emotional and relational components, and then be sure that these complete stories are heard and acknowledged. Even if the clients cannot truly hear each other's stories, it is important that the mediator hear them.

We propose three stages for the resolution of protracted conflict (and they are the opposite of the typical three easy steps in self-help books because these are three increasingly difficult steps):

1. Train mediators. Mediators learn to identify unacknowledged emotions and patterns of alienation, including their own, as a tool for changing the mood of negotiation.
2. Conduct the negotiation. The mediator reflects back the clients' unacknowledged emotions and alienation, allowing resolution.
3. Returning home. The clients reflect back their constituents' unacknowledged emotions and alienation, building support for the mediated solution.

This last step has a utopian ring to it, but it may at least allow us to see the magnitude of the problem. This skill may have been at the heart of Desmond Tutu's management of the ending of apartheid in South Africa, but is rare among mediators. Perhaps an emphasis on the relational and emotional world could create a new generation of mediators and negotiators for resolving intractable conflict.

Appendix: Retzinger Cue List for Shame and Anger

The markers listed here (verbal, paralinguistic, and visual) are context related; that is, their relevance depends on the relationship between self and other. The mediator needs to look for a constellation of markers in context.

Verbal Markers

Shame
Alienation: rejected, dumped, deserted, rebuff, abandoned, estranged, deserted, isolated, separate, alone, disconnected, disassociated, detached, withdrawn, inhibited, distant, remote, split, divorced, polarized
Confused: stunned, dazed, blank, empty, hollow, spaced, giddy, lost, vapid, hesitant, aloof
Ridiculous: foolish, silly, funny, absurd, idiotic, asinine, simple-minded, stupid, curious, weird, bizarre, odd, peculiar, strange, different
Inadequate: helpless, powerless, defenseless, weak, insecure, uncertain, shy, deficient, worse off, small, failure, ineffectual, inferior, unworthy, worthless, flawed, trivial, meaningless, insufficient, unsure, dependent, exposed, inadequate, incapable, vulnerable, unable, inept, unfit, impotent, oppressed

Uncomfortable: restless, fidgety, jittery, tense, anxious, nervous, uneasy, antsy, jumpy, hyperactive

Hurt: offended, upset, wounded, injured, tortured, ruined, sensitive, sore spot, buttons pushed, dejected, intimidated, defeated

Anger
Cranky, cross, hot-tempered, ireful, quick tempered, short fuse, enraged, fuming, agitated, furious, irritable, incensed, indignant, irate, annoyed, mad, pissed, pissed off, teed off, upset, furious, aggravated, bothered, resentful, bitter, spiteful, grudge (the last four words imply shame-rage compounds)

Other Verbal Markers

Shame
Mitigation (to make the situation appear less severe or painful); oblique, suppressed reference (for example, the use of *they*, *it*, or *you*); vagueness; denial; defensiveness; verbal withdrawal (lack of response); indifference (acting cool in an emotionally arousing context)

Anger
Interruption, challenge, sarcasm, blame

Shame-Rage
Temporal expansion and condensation or generalization ("you always . . ." or "you never . . ."); triangulation (bringing up an irrelevant third party or object)

Paralinguistic Markers

Shame (*vocal withdrawal and hiding behaviors and disorganization of thought*)
Overly soft tone, rhythm irregular, hesitation, self-interruption (censorship), filled pauses ("uh"), long pauses, silence, stammer, fragmented speech, rapid speech, condensed words, mumble, breathiness, incoherence (lax articulation), laughed words, monotone

Anger
Staccato (distinct breaks between successive tones), loud tone, heavy stress on certain words, sing-song pattern (implying ridicule), straining, harsh voice qualifiers

Shame-Rage
Whine, glottalization (a rasp or buzz), choking, rising and falling tempo or pitch

Visual Markers

Shame

Hiding behavior: the hand covering all or part of the face; gaze aversion, eyes lowered or averted

Blushing

Control: turning in, biting, or licking the lips, biting the tongue; forehead wrinkled vertically or transversely; false smiling (Ekman and Friesen, 1982)

Other masking behaviors

Anger

Brows lowered and drawn together, with vertical lines appearing between them

Narrowed and tense eyelids in a hard, fixed stare; may have a bulging appearance

Lips pressed together, the corners straight or down, or open but tense and square

Hard, direct glaring

Leaning forward toward the other in a challenging stance

Clenched or waving fists, hitting motions

Source: Retzinger (1991, 1995).

Notes

1. Although they reported and tried to deal with rage in their attempts to mediate intense international conflicts, Rogers and Ryback (1984) have no theory of emotions or relationships and do not mention emotions other than rage. Irving and Benjamin (1995) consider emotions only in general and abstractly. This article deals with the meaning of empathy in mediation (Bush and Folger, 1994) at the level of specific emotional and relational processes.

2. The analysis of this episode from Saposnek's book (1983) is based in part on Retzinger (1991).

3. As in linguistics, the asterisk signifies a counterfactual—a statement that is only implied by what was said.

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