

# Prof. Rex Li's Writings

**Category:** Psychology

**Sub-category:** Multiple Intelligences

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**Title:** Howard Gardner's Respectful Mind

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**Summary/ Abstract:** This is a summary of Gardner's ideas on respectful mind based on Chapter 5 of his *Five Minds for the Future* (2008). It turned out that this is a personal narrative with disparaging reference. I try to detect some underlying principles in group dynamics and sociality.

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## Summary and Review of Howard Gardner (2008)

### *Five Minds for the Future*

#### Chapter 5: Respectful Mind

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In this Chapter, Gardner again showed his erudite scholarship and disparaging readings. (see below) Like before he keeps his personal narrative style as he takes on this new subject. In the forgoing 3 chapters, Gardner had done extensive research and mastered knowledge on the topics. He had written books on them – disciplined mind, synthesizing mind, creating mind. In the new topic, he hasn't written much before. What should readers expect here, something refreshing or unique?

It turns out that Gardner is not offering any theory; it is just a personal narrative with disparaging references:

- (1) Claude Levi – Strauss on Social groups (p.104)
- (2) Home sapiens beautifying themselves with beads for group symbols (p.103)
- (3) Sociobiology and evolutionary psychology explanation (p.105)
- (4) Genocide (p.106)
- (5) Xenophobic inclination and poet Auden “We must love one another or die” (p.107)
- (6) Toddlers empathy, self-centeredness and group distinction. (p.107)
- (7) Age 5: group inclusion / exclusion & moral understanding (p.108 – 109)
- (8) Brown vs Board of Education (1954): Black children preferred white dolls (p.109)
- (9) Yarrow Dunham research on prejudice. (p.110)
- (10) Superficial and pseudo respect in American corporations (p.111 - 112)
- (11) False respect of Rex (p.112 - 113)

- (12) “Political correctness” ≠ genuine respect (p.113)
- (13) German classroom (1912) – “one must hate the neighbors” (p.115)
- (14) Facing History and ourselves courses (p.115)
- (15) Successful Team Work – Amy Edmondson, David Garvin and Michael Roberts (p.117)
- (16) Xerox’s PARC – John S. Brown and how to change corporate culture. (p.117-118)
- (17) Rodney Kramer’s authoritarian rule. (p.118)
- (18) Gardner’s view on French Veils and Danish Cartoons. (p.118-119)
- (19) Education doesn’t bring respect / tolerance: Berlin Wannsee Conference, 1942 (p.120)
- (20) Samuel Oliner on childhood values of rescuers in Nazi-Germany (p.121)

risk to themselves, elected to hide Jews or other hunted individuals. According to Samuel Oliner, rescuers appeared quite ordinary on the surface; they resembled many others who were bystanders and even some who actively aided the Gestapo.<sup>14</sup> Closer study revealed telltale differences. Rescuers were marked by a childhood during which their parents avoided physical punishment, opting instead for lucid explanations of rules and practices. The rescuers stood out from their fellow citizens in the strong values—often but not invariably religious—that they absorbed from their parents; a constructive and optimistic stance that they assumed toward life; feelings of connectedness to others, even those from a different group; and above all, an intuitive (indeed instinctive) reaction that what was being done to the innocent was wrong and that they themselves were capable agents who ought to (indeed, who must) take corrective action.

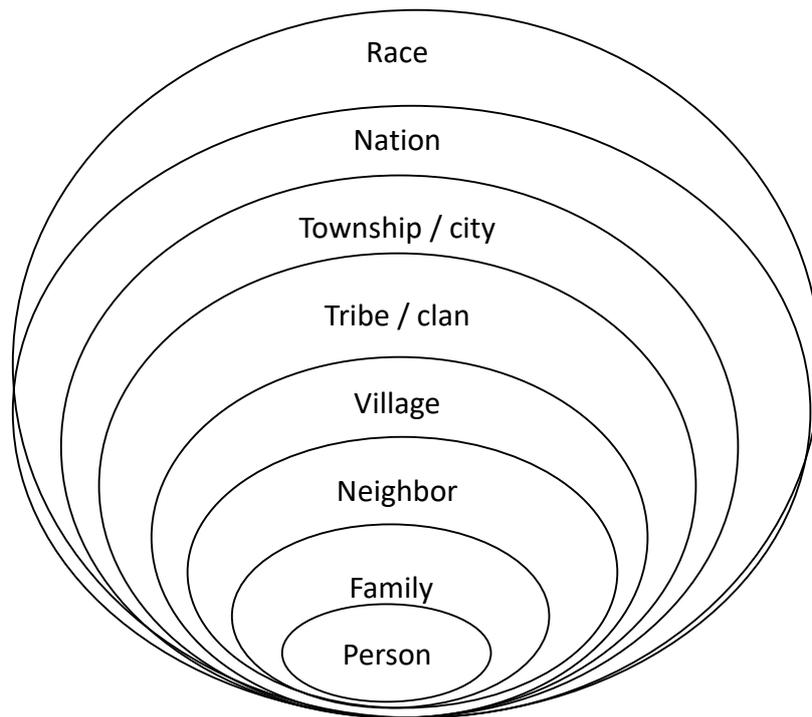
- (21) Musical work to bridge culture Edward Said, Daniel Barenboim (p.121-122)
- (22) Yo-yo Ma and Silk Road Project. (p.122-123)

(23) Commissions on truth and reconciliation

Hatred → tolerance → respect (p.123-124)

R: (1) So, Gardner has no theory but only narrative. Maybe he hasn't dug deep in related anthropological and psychology research. May be he wrote too hastily.

(2) If group is the cause of hatred or respect, we should study more. Here is a taxonomy:



Underlying it is the development of language culture, and value within a social / political setting. Some plausible principles are:

- (1) All groups tend to perpetuate and expand
- (2) Culture permeates, grows and evolves with groups and environment.
- (3) Groups are multi-dimensional in values and relationship
- (4) When a weaker group doesn't want to be conquered, or assimilated they propose "respect" and "tolerance". (Also stalemate situation)