Tia Rich: My name is Tia Rich and it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this conversation this evening, truly a unique opportunity of wise hearts, kind minds coming together to help us consider this question of the power of humanization. Thank you for coming to participate in the conversation. The arc of the evening will flow with some introductions of each of our conversationalists and then we'll have a little moment of experiential discovery of the power of humanization, and then we'll open up the conversation for a half-hour at the end when there will be a Q&A.

Tonight we have three panelists. We welcome Dr. Bandura, author of the 2016 book “Moral Disengagement.” This book inspired the creation of tonight’s conversation about the power of humanization to bring out the best in ourselves and others. Professor Bandura, as you may know, is a Stanford Emeritus after teaching at Stanford for 57 years. He is the most cited psychologist since World War II and the most cited living psychologist. He is the father of social learning theory, made famous through his 1960’s bobo doll experiments where children learn novel styles of aggression from aggression’s televised modeling. Last May, President Obama awarded Dr. Bandura a National Medal of Science for his extraordinary innovation and pioneering work in social cognitive theory that has served as a rich resource for academics, practitioners, and policymakers across disciplinary lines. In fact I had the joy of first meeting Dr. Bandura as an 18-year old taking an undergraduate class from him, and his insights and academic scholarship have led to this moment where the knowledge of social learning theory to help a community learn new skills, create new cultural norms, is the foundation for Contemplation By Design where Stanford is helping us all to experience the power of the pause.

Next we have Professor Alia Crum. Dr. Alia Crum is a Stanford Assistant Professor of Psychology and last month she received the distinction of becoming one of the only psychologists to receive a new innovator award grant from the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Crum studies how mindsets can be changed through intervention to affect organizational and individual performance, physiological and psychological well-being, and interpersonal effectiveness. Her research has included collaboration with Stanford’s Dr. Abraham Verghese who received a 2016 National Humanities Medal for his emphasis on empathy for patients in an era in which technology often overwhelms the human side of medicine. I had the joy of first meeting Alia when she kindly gave me a ride from one of the Stanford satellite campuses back to the main campus, and during that short trip together, we talked about camping and what kind of vehicle I should buy next, and I knew right away that she knew the power of humanization.

We are also very delighted to have Dr. Tom Schnaubelt, who is the Executive Director of the Stanford Haas Center for Public Service, which connects students to service, scholarship, and community partnerships that promote a just and sustainable world. Tom is also the Resident Fellow in Branner Hall and has a lot of contact with Stanford students.
Branner Hall is Stanford’s public service dorm. His career is focused on fulfilling the public purpose of higher education by connecting academic and community work through initiatives in a wide range of academic settings. I know how human and humane Tom is because he gets up every Tuesday and Thursday morning and meets a group of us at the Stanford track for sunrise exercise in which we talk about the matters of the world while we’re also taking care of our mind, body and spirit. He had pioneered and established the Cardinal Service program which some of you may know about. It’s a bold, university-wide commitment to elevate and expand service as a distinctive feature of the Stanford education.

We’re going to shift now to invite each of you to consider this question. What happened in your life that woke you to the power of humanization? Take a moment. What memory comes to mind? I invite you to take a moment to get comfortable in your body, adjust your seating so that you feel at ease, and come into your breath, and just feel the fresh energy of life entering your nostrils and flowing into your body and then let go of what is no longer necessary as you exhale. And with your in-breath, receive this moment, the age that you are right now, how your body feels right now, how human you are. Let the grasping, analytical mind quiet and enter the full body. Exhale deeply and inhale completely. Then bring to mind someone you know. Just think of their face. And think about how they are also human in their body, that they take breaths, just like me. Think about how they took their first step, just like me. Think of the fact that they fell in love at some point, just like me. That they had aspirations and goals that they reached, just like I have, that they had disappointments and sorrows and losses, just like I have. That they wish to be healthy, just like I do. They wish to be happy, just like me. They wish to be free from the causes of suffering and to know peace. And then turn to the person sitting next to you and just say the word “Peace.” This is a small exercise of the power of humanization. And I’m going to begin by asking to share with us his life experience of when he woke to the power of humanization.

Tom Schnaubelt: Thank you Tia. I’m the public service person here and it seems appropriate that I tell you what’s sort of my conversion story as my experience for thinking about humanization. For my undergraduate degree I had studied physics, and people are often like “Wow, physics to the Haas center. How did that happen?” It happened actually in graduate school, while I was studying education at the University of Michigan, and we were actually studying things like John Dewey from a very abstract point of view. And I was getting frustrated, because I felt that this was the preeminent person thinking about experience and education and experiential learning, and I was quite unhappy. So I applied for a program, and I know that there’s a few students in here who are a part of ASB (Alternative Spring Break) so I’m sorry because you’ve heard this story before.

10:00
So I applied for that program and went on what was the most transformative educational experience for me. We studied that year what the Army Corps of Engineers’ work along the Mississippi River was doing to communities. And that year also happened to be a year where they had a flood. It was a catastrophic flood in an area called Hull, Illinois. And we went, about
twelve of us from the University of Michigan, and worked on Marguerite’s house, which had been completely wiped out. So we were rebuilding Marguerite’s house for about a week. We were one of several teams of people that were coming in to rebuild a house, and in fact the whole community had been destroyed by the flood. It was both the connection to the students that I went with and to Marguerite that opened my eyes to the connectivity, the power of education as a tool for humanization, and what had seemed so dead in the class for me, studying John Dewey and experiential learning, came alive for me when I actually started doing it. But it’s also because of that connectedness to the students that I was with that really opened my eyes to the power of humanization. So I would say that was my sort of epiphany moment for this work.

If I could be afforded one slightly newer story, I actually learn this every day too because Tia mentioned that I’m a Resident Fellow. I actually see Ross here, who used to be a Resident Fellow. If you talk to any Resident Fellow on campus, you know that one of the ongoing themes is about when people park in our parking spots, we get a little upset. I had this anger within me every time someone would park in my parking spot. And so I decided at one point, I drive an old 1978 Volkswagen camper van, and I made a sign online that looks very official, it’s a metal sign, and it says “Tom’s 1978 Volkswagen camper van only.” And I put that sign up. That was a year ago. Nobody has parked in that spot since. And the reason is, it sits right next to my wife’s parking spot, who has the normal sign, and people come and park in that one, and the spot next to it, which has the same sign. But they won’t park in my spot, and I think it’s because of the humanization. It’s actually not a sign that looks like an official Stanford sign. Somebody went through a lot of trouble to make this sign, somebody named Tom who has a very specific kind of car that I don’t have. So every day I think that as the power of humanization right in front of me.

Tia Rich: Mhmm, thank you Tom. Alia, let’s hear your story.

Alia Crum: Thank you Tia for having us, it’s truly an honor to be amongst these two very special people to share this evening with all of you. I hope you can hear me, can you hear me okay? No? Okay, I’ll speak up. So my story also begins with a 1968 camper van, but my story starts with a camper van because I attribute my appreciation for this idea of the power of humanization in medicine, which is what I do a lot of research on and I’ll talk about that later, to my parents. The reason is that they came to Aspen, Colorado in 1968 in a camper van. And they were searching for something. I think they were both struggling with anxieties and just the clutter and the chaos of the world. And they said, you know, let’s just go follow our hearts. And they ended up in this small town of Aspen, Colorado that’s basically been built on this mantra of connecting the mind and the body and the spirit. So Aspen is now known for being the home of Gucci and Prada, but it wasn’t originally designed that way, it was originally designed a place to go be in the mountains, be in the wilderness, to ski and appreciate your body but to also connect inward to the soul and to spend time with others and have conversations. So I grew up in a very interesting family. My father taught Transcendental Meditation, my mother and wrote and directed children’s plays, and together they created this foundation called Windstar. It was created with John Denver, the singer and songwriter.
They would host these weeklong retreats where people would come to study martial arts, they would meditate, they would talk with people like Bucky Fuller about environmental issues, and I really was raised in this world. I talk about it now to my friends, and they’re like “That’s crazy!” but to me it was just normal, right? To be singing songs and practicing aikido and meditating every day, I didn’t realize that was strange until I got to Harvard where I did my undergraduate work and started to realize two things. One was that people really hadn’t been exposed to the power of being with each other, sitting with each other, singing with each other, thinking with each other. And I was fortunate to work with Tal Ben-Shahar, who taught a class at Harvard called Positive Psychology, essentially a lot of these things, mindfulness, gratitude, connection, and it ended up being the most popular course at Harvard. Over 900 students took it one year, and it just really opened my mind to the importance of going beyond the intellect and going a little bit deeper into the soul as the heart of human connection.

Tia Rich: Thank you Alia. Al, we’d love to hear when you woke to the power of humanization, and when you feel comfortable, go ahead and transition into telling us about your work on humanization.

Albert Bandura: Okay. My humanitarian mission is really a reflection of my life path. I grew up in a very evolving environment that matches the main theme of this gathering. My parents migrated to Canada from Eastern Europe in 1900, and my father was a track-layer for a railroad, and when he got enough money, he bought a homestead, which consisted of heavily wooded acres and he had to cut those things down manually. The homesteaders were really the pioneers of the nation. They had to build their own homes, their own screws, their own churches, each farmer was contributing one day a week to work the roads and so on, so I grew up in a very communal setting with the ethic that our well-being is socially connected to promoting the well-being of others. And then in my academic work, I focused on how to bring out the best in others, relying heavily on people’s sense of individual and collective efficacy that they have to power to have the influence on the direction their lives take. And then I wrote the book on self-efficacy, as it’s called. It essentially described how you build people’s sense of efficacy, how do you explain the mechanisms by which it works, and how do you apply it? This core belief is really the foundation of human aspiration, motivation and accomplishment. Unless you believe that you can effect change by your actions, you don’t have any incentive to act or persevere in the face of difficulties. So this theory, then was applied widely in the field of education, health promotion and disease prevention, in the treatment of depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, addiction.

It was also applied in the management of organizational behavior, and finally participation in social and political change. And then the most ambitious application was global, where we were able to devise a method that was raising the national literacy that was enhancing the status of women in societies in which they were marginalized and they are denied their freedom and
dignity. We were promoting planned child-bearing to break the cycle of poverty and to curtail the historic population growth, and we were curtailing the spread of the AIDS epidemic, and then the most important application was how to preserve a habitable planet because that’s the most urgent challenge that’s facing humankind in this century. So that’s my short answer as to humanity.

To describe some of our applications, my more recent work has tried to address the morality in people’s lives, and the most striking finding in this work is the extraordinary power of humanization. Here’s a telling example on the battlefields of Flanders in World War I. The Germans and the Allied forces are in their trenches about to launch a bloody assault. It’s Christmas Eve and the Germans put up some Christmas trees and they’re singing Christmas carols. And before long the Allied forces are singing carols as well. They banter back and forth, and then they declare a one-day truce. So early in Christmas Day, they get out of their trenches and they exchange rations, they exchange photographs of their families, their girlfriends, their children, they exchange souvenirs from their military garb, they get food from the neighboring place, and they have gourmet meals, they have a makeshift orchestra, they’re playing soccer, and they’re drinking liberated cognac. And now it’s time to go back into the trenches, and as they’re leaving, they’re instructing themselves to stay low in the trenches. At dawn they’re commanded to fire and they say that they can’t. They’re nice guys. So they’re threatened with a court martial and they still have an option. They shot above the trenches. One of the soldiers wrote to his girlfriend saying we spent the last two days trying to knock down the stars. What a fantastic transformation within one day, based on a sense of common humanity because as they were exchanging this information, they were really learning empathic understanding.

25:00
They realized that they had a lot in common, namely that they had the same concerns about their families, their children, and this is probably one of the most striking examples of the power of humanization.

The other one is in My Lai. Hugh Thompson is the key pilot. He’s there on a killing mission to smoke out the Viet Cong and then the Calley battalion could wipe them out. As he’s flying over My Lai, he suddenly realizes he’s in the midst of a brutal killing. He spots a women who is terrified, she’s holding onto a child and she has a little boy who’s holding onto her foot, and when he looks at this woman he says “They’re looking at me for help, and I can’t turn my back on them.” So he lowers his helicopter in the line of the fire and instructs his gunner to turn on our own soldiers if they move in on the family. And so he saves that family. And then he flies the helicopter to the ditch where there are a whole bunch of bodies and the U.S. soldiers are shooting into the bodies. And he sees a two-year old clinging to the hand of his mother, and he says “I have a two year old at home.” Here again, you have the sense of common and shared humanity, and once you begin to see the similarities, you get this fantastic response of humanization and fantastic moral courage.
In this work, there was a huge moral paradox in which otherwise considerate people are behaving inhumanely but still maintaining a positive self-regard and living in peace with themselves. I became interested in knowing how can people adapt in this moral paradox, and I discovered that there are eight mechanisms by which people can disengage their morality. They can strip morality from the harmful conduct, they can disallow responsibility for it by diffusion and displacement of responsibility, they can minimize the harm that’s being caused. For example in environmentalism, global warming is a hoax. If it’s a hoax, it isn’t going to motivate you to make any changes, and finally they dehumanize the ones they are mistreating as somewhat less than human. I wrote a book that was published recently on moral disengagement and how people can do harm and live with themselves. But I really focused the book not only at the individual level but at the social systems level.

30:00
The moral disengagement in the gun industry, the tobacco industry that kills about a half a million people annually in the United States, the finance industry that got us into this financial crisis, the death penalty, terrorism and military counterterrorism in which we manage to destabilize the entire Mideast, and finally the promotion of environmental sustainability. We have to confront the scourge of moral disengagement if we’re going to promote humane societies. We have to make it hard for people to remove humanity from their harmful conduct. If the public was aware of these mechanisms of moral disengagement, they could see through them and make them ineffective, and we need to build humane societies through moral engagement for an inclusive, socially just, and humane society.

Tia Rich: Al, thank you for sharing the roots in your personal childhood and insight about how the community’s well-being comes from social connection and the moral engagement, and then taking that to inspire us all with guidelines and concrete examples of where the dehumanization, the disconnection, happens. I know, Alia, that some of your work has really focused on moments in healthcare where humanization can be supported or diminished. Would you tell us a little bit about that work you’ve done and any other work you’d like to share?

Alia Crum: So there’s many places in our world where we are disconnecting from ourselves, we’re finding ways to disconnect from others, and the area that I’ve been working in along with many of my labmates who I see here, my grad students and others, is the domain of healthcare. We’ve made incredible progress in our healthcare. We’ve figured out how to map the human genome, we’ve figured out how to mold technology to create materials that function as human joints. The amount of technological and scientific advancement in medicine has been quite miraculous. And yet we’re still at a place in time where one in two adults is suffering from a chronic disease, yes, that stat is correct, that’s 50% of Americans are suffering from something like a heart disease, a cancer, a diabetes, obesity, and what we start to realize when we recognize that is that all of these great advancements are good but might be missing something even more fundamental. That is the social and the psychological connection or caring that goes into the curing of individuals. So we’ve done a number of different studies starting to tease apart this and you’ve seen it consistently in the clinical drug, right? We know that the mind and our
social connection with the doctor, the relationship, matters because when we compare a drug to a placebo effect, what we often find is that even if the drug works slightly better than the placebo, the placebo works very well alone. What’s fascinating about that whole process is we use that in the science of medicine to determine whether we can market this drug or not. So it’s useful in the science, we systematically subtract out the power of the placebo response.

35:00
But in the practice of medicine, those forces, how do you connect with the doctor, what you think about the medicine, how do you feel as a human being, if you think this is going to work for you, for your unique case of this disease, that that is constantly in the middle of any single therapeutic encounter, any treatment that we take, any medicine that we take, that’s alive and at play. So we’ve tested this. We’ve designed a doctor’s office in our lab in the psychology office. We call it the Mock-tor’s office. And we have members of our lab, actually we have a Doctor Hardabeck in the audience here today, he’s actually a member of our lab, and what he does is he’ll create an allergic reaction to the participant. Don’t worry, this is all IRB approved, we’ve gotten ethics approval for this. He creates an allergic reaction. And then what he’ll do is he’ll put on a cream. And the cream will be a placebo cream in all cases. But in half the cases he’ll say “This is an anti-histamine cream, this is going to make your rash and irritation go away.” Or in another set of cases he’ll say “This is a histamine agonist, it’s going to make your rash and irritation worse.” What we find is that what he says, the mindset that he creates about the cream changes the physiological reaction. So when you believe that it’s going to get better, the reaction size decreases. When you believe it’s going to get worse, the reaction size increases. Now that’s interesting by itself, but what’s more important in the context of humanizing is that what we find is that we can change the effect of that expectation based on how our physicians are acting toward the person. So in some cases we’ll have our physician be very cold and disconnected, spend most of their time looking at the computer, asking very robotic questions like date of birth, any history of allergy. And in other cases we make the human side come alive. So instead of looking at the screen, he’s looking at the person, not the patient, the person. He asks, where are you from? When were you born? Oh, I have a cousin from Colorado. Creating that human connection. What we find there is when that human connection, when that warmth is created, the healing improves. It essentially boosts the efficacy of the belief that they’re going to heal. The humanization of medicine boosts the belief in that medicine, which in turn recruits the body’s ability to heal. We can’t discount this. I’ll stop there.

Tia Rich: Tom, tell us about your work.

Tom Schnaubelt: So the work that I do and its relationship to humanization, I wanna start by actually saying that service can be one of the most dehumanizing actions that one can take. And I wanna say that because it’s actually a paradox of the work that I do that if it’s not done well, can be dehumanizing to the people that are ostensibly being served. I will tell you a short story that happened to me just this week with my daughter who is looking at these programs in that are summer programs to go overseas and do some work in a developing country. My daughter is a junior in high school. I won’t reveal the high school, though. She’s thinking about
the summer between her junior and senior year, and we go and visit this program. There was a panel of people who had done this program. One of the students talked and said, “We were staying at this home with this family, and they didn’t wanna have us serve them, but we had to force them to let us serve them.” And I sat in the back of the room going, wow. That must have felt really demoralizing and dehumanizing to the family that they were actually working with. So we talked about that on the way home, and it was actually one of those really hard moments for my daughter, where she was really excited. She got pumped up by these students, and I began to sort of pull the curtain back, if you will, and talk to her about the ethical dimensions of the work of doing service. Part of our work at the Haas Center is actually to deconstruct this notion of service for students or have them deconstruct that notion, to make it more humanizing. And the way that we do that is through a certain set of ethical and effective service principles.

40:00
The first of which is reciprocity. So thinking about the fact that you’re not just on a community or on a person but you’re actually working with those folks. That they’re coming to you with something to provide you as well. Whatever that is, it may be learning, it may be their own history that they’re bringing to you. So a lot of our work is tied up in those ethical and effective service principles. Other principles that we have are reflection. We know if people go out into a community that’s different than what they’re familiar with, they’re at risk of actually reinforcing negative stereotypes that they have of a community. But if you’re not doing some sort of preparation work, which is another one of our principles, and then actively reflecting and thinking critically about what just happened in the work that you do, you risk dehumanizing folks. The last principle that we have is humility, making sure that you’re thinking about who you are in the context of the community or the culture or the people that you’re serving. And that you’re not going there to say, I’m here to fix you, I’m here to make things better for you. So this is part of our work to make sure that the work of service is not done in a way that is dehumanizing but rather is humanizing.

Tia mentioned Cardinal Service. This is a new initiative here at Stanford that has four different dimensions. What we’re trying to do is elevate service as a distinctive feature of a Stanford education. And we’re doing it through the Cardinal Quarter, which is an intensive, quarterlong, public service experience off campus. 492 students last year did a Cardinal Quarter, which was in a public service setting. It could be at a nonprofit, or a public sector role in different communities across the world, or even in a private sector job that’s actually got a public interest role or a social responsibility element to it. The second element is the Cardinal Courses. Some of you may know the term service learning. Here at Stanford, we’re taking this double entendre and saying let’s call them Cardinal Courses. These are courses that embed a community experience that’s tied to the learning objectives of the course. Those two are both quarter-long, 10 weeks in duration. What we’re trying to do is say that Cardinal Commitment is when we stretch that out to at least a year-long commitment to an issue or an organization that a student cares deeply about. And the fourth element is Cardinal Career. That’s where we’re hoping to unveil for other students the kind of career you might have that is going to be an effective way to create positive change in the world. And again, they don’t have to all be traditional nonprofit
roles, they could be public sector, they could be in the private sector, but really channeling for them, here are the number of opportunities that you can get involved with that can have a public interest. So I thought that rather than me telling you all of the great stuff of how that’s humanizing, that it might come through if I shared with you some quotes from students. I’ll share two quotes. The first is from one of our Helper Family International Fellows. This person did their experience in Berlin this past summer, and this was a Jewish student that was working for an Israeli organization helping Syrian refugees. This person says, “As a rising sophomore I hadn’t expected to be able to make a direct impact on a crisis that seemed so far away. It was by no means an easy summer and I confess I’m struggling to figure out how I’m going to explain the gravity of the situation to people here at home. I’ve had the opportunity to grow close to several refugees. The resilience of the people I met left me optimistic for them, though very discouraged by their current circumstances. I’m incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have an impact on their lives and confirm that refugee work is what I’d like to pursue after I graduate.”

Another experience I wanna cite is a student that took Dance 100. This is a course that involves dance, movement and medicine. “The thing I loved most was the authentic and deep level of immersion. We weren’t observing as outside parties. Rather we were just as integrated as the people in the class who have Parkinson’s disease. This allowed me to understand and empathize with their adversity. I saw the other dancers in the class less and less as patients and more and more as just people and friends.

45:00
It became a community for me, one that I will continue to be a part of beyond this course.”

So you can see the power of these experiences in much the same way as the soldiers that were crossing Flanders field. I don’t want to put it as that stark, that was dramatic, but these are smaller experiences that bring out the humanization aspect of our education.

Tia Rich: Very inspiring. Now that we’ve heard the inspiration, and we have the aspiration to be human and to support others in being human, we’re going to shift now to talking a little bit about tangible steps for how we can support humanization. So we’re gonna give a go at this movie clip again, which is from “To Kill a Mockingbird.”

(Film clip)

Scout: I can’t see Atticus. (runs over through crowd of men) Atticus? Hey Atticus.

Atticus: Jim, go home. And take Scout and Gil home with ya. (Jim shakes head) Son, I said go home. (Man picks up Jim).

Scout: What are you doing, let him go, let him go!

Atticus: That’ll do, Scout! (pulls over children)
Scout: Ain’t nobody gonna do Jim that way.

Man: Now you get ‘em outta here, Mr. Finch.

Atticus: Jim, I want you to please leave.

Jim: No sir.

Atticus: Jim!

Jim: I tell ya, I ain’t going.

Scout: Hey, Mr. Cunningham. (Cunningham looks away) I said hey, Mr. Cunningham. How’s your entailment getting along? Don’t you remember me, Mr. Cunningham? I’m Gene Louise Finch. You brought us some hickory nuts one early morning, remember? We had a talk. I went and got my daddy to come out and thank you. I go to school with your boy. I go to school with Arthur. He’s a nice boy. Tell him hey for me, won’t ya. You know something, Mr. Cunningham? Entailments are bad. Entailments...Atticus, I was just saying to Mr. Cunningham that entailments were bad. But not to worry. Takes a long time sometimes. What’s the matter? I sure meant no harm, Mr. Cunningham.

Mr. Cunningham: No harm taken, young lady. I’ll tell Wally you said hey. Let’s clear outta here. Let’s go, boys.

Tia Rich: Let yourself just be with what you’re feeling in this moment. I find these scene a wonderful reminder of the power of humanization. The moment when the child connects through the fear and speaks the truth from her heart with empathy. And now we’re going to turn to how do we support the ability to be Scout? How do we have the ability to speak in the moment when there is fear? How the helicopter pilot, as Dr. Bandura said, had the moral courage to sweep down and recall this two-year old child. In Contemplation By Design we offer you the framework from contemplative practices of PEACE: Pause (Quiet your analytical, frightened, grasping, clinging mind), Exhale, Attend Mindfully, Connect to Nature, Yourself, and Others, and from that place of connection, Express from Your Heart Authentically. This arc of skills that are shown here come from the wisdom traditions that are old and offer many meditation practices, but simple practices.

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A colleague who’s in the audience here, Dr. Robert Horowitz, has demonstrated that just a brief, less than three minute pause of self-compassion and breathing can help us to reconnect and refresh our compassion, not only our self-compassion but our compassion to others. So now we’re gonna turn it back to the conversation, and I’m going to begin with Al, and ask him to come back to the eight mechanisms that you’ve identified so skillfully and just talk a little bit
about how we can work with those eight mechanisms and recognize where we might disconnect. Just even to list them again as a reminder. Where are those places that we disconnect so that we can be alert as an individual and as a citizen to take steps to help bridge the bond back to connection? Thank you.

Albert Bandura: Well the eight mechanisms of moral disengagement can be reversed. The way in which you promote inhumane behavior is providing moral justification for it. So you have ISIS, who are beheading people, they’re forcing women into sexual slavery, and they’re doing it all in the name of Allah. And Voltaire put it well when he said, “Those who can get you to believe absurdities can get you to do inhumanities.” So the first area for change is to cut through the moral justification. In some cases it’s economic justifications. For example I mentioned that the tobacco company products kill about half a million people annually. This is not an individual matter. In order to do that, you have to have a whole bunch of systems that are morally disengaging. You have the executives who deny that it has any adverse effects, you have bright advertisers who figure out how to get kids hooked on cigarettes, you have farmers who see this as a regular life path rather than a problem, we have our politicians who block most regulation of tobacco products. If you plot the correlation between the amount of money they get for their campaign coffers, the correlation is about 0.80. And then we have our trade representatives who threaten embargoes if disadvantaged countries are putting any barriers to the dumping of cigarettes, and so on. So as you see, we’re really dealing not with just an individual matter, but with entire social systems. And that’s what I emphasize in the book on moral disengagement.

The second is the displacement and diffusion of responsibility. And here you counteract that by essentially breaking down these systems of deniability. So usually when transgressions are exposed, the upper echelon blames rogue elements down the responsibility chain, and they directly set up mechanisms of disengagement. For example, in the Reagan administration Poindexter set up a system of deniability so that they could keep him uninformed about selling illegally arms to Iran and then using that money to try to overthrow the Sandinista regime.

55:00

So they had a sophisticated method of deniability. They can be denying that they knew about it, and there’s a lot of intentional blindness. The way in which organizations operate, they set it up so the higher echelon cannot be held responsible. The diffusion of responsibility is where there are so many people involved that no one is responsible. Napoleon once said that collective crimes incriminate no one. We can’t allow this diffusion of responsibility in which no one can be held accountable. On the matter of denial or minimalization of consequences, I use that example that if you claim that global warming is a hoax, then we have to really rely on our science to inform us of what the consequences are of different practices. And then we should not allow the dehumanization of people, and we can’t allow dividing people into in-group and out-group members and then attributing all kinds of inhumane and animalistic motivations to the out-group. A current example we’re being tortured with is Trump’s vulgar dehumanizing and separating of people between those who applaud him and anybody else who might criticize him. The concern here is not Trump but why do we have 40% of our people applauding him?
We can take each mechanism of moral disengagement and reverse that to develop programs to do that. Now there are about three to four pathways that we can readily use to address the issue of humanization and a sense of shared responsibility. The first is that we have to get to know each other. That was the mechanism that was operating on Flanders fields. They simply got to know each other and they realized a common sense of humanity. The other is that we need to link our well-being to our public policies. Let me give you an example. In California, both the prisons and higher education compete for the same general fund. In the past, the prisons got about 20%, and our higher education got the rest. Over time, the support for higher education has been declining, about 13%, where as the funding for prisons has risen 440%. It costs us about $74,000 a year to imprison an inmate. Not only is the imprisonment serving no purpose, but it also leaves people in fear of victimization, and it denies our freedom. Now we can then invest our money in developing our youth and enabling them to lead a productive, pro-social life. Hawkins did a study in which he had both the parents, the teachers and the children assisted in better ways of handling the educational experiences.

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The parents were instructed on how they can support the children’s educational engagement, and then they were also given instruction on child-rearing practices that would be beneficial. The teachers were instructed on how to motivate children who were disinterested in school and how to promote cooperative learning in which each student can build on whatever strengths they may have. The children were taught how to manage conflicts and how to assume some responsibility for them. Six years later, at the end of high school, the schools that had this program had fewer dropouts, higher educational development, much less violence, much less heavy drinking, fewer teenage pregnancies. So the public should be confronted with these two alternatives. Do you want to pour your money into incarceration, or do you wanna pour your money into education? Because they would then see that their self-interest is served better by the positive program rather than by incarceration.

A third approach that’s heavily used by Tom’s program is civic engagement. One of my honors students, Tommy Tobin, presided over a large program of Stanford and hunger. They would go to our dorms and diners there and pick up food that was prepared but not eaten. Then they would collect the food and take it over to charities who would then provide it to the needy. Within the four years that Tommy was here, they collected 14,000 pounds of food. That would amount to 3,000 a year. I gather the program is still running.

Tom Schnaubelt: It is. You might see a guy with a bike that has a little cart behind it. They’ve modified a bike so they can carry more food.

Albert Bandura: Yeah. Now Tommy is in Law School at Harvard, and he now participates in international conferences in food security. He writes letters to the editor and papers on hunger. So that experience has really shaped his career and I think he’s probably gonna have a career
in addressing the issue globally of food security, which is gonna be a growing problem. So these are things that we can do that we know work, it’s just a matter of putting them into practice.

Tia Rich: Thank you. Alia, Tom, would you like to speak to this question? And then we’ll open it up to Q&A.

Tom Schnaubelt: Sure. I’ll pick up right where you left off with Tommy Tobin. I think one of the ways that we can foster greater humanization, and this is going to surprise everybody in the room, is to have more programs like the one Tommy participated in. I think we need to focus on creating educational opportunities that are experiential. I think having an attention to ethically exposing people to activities and experiences of difference, especially seeking out ways in which we can do that where difference may be invisible to people. One of the things that happened today that I’m proud of my students for, and proud of Tia because it was her idea, was that the students in Branner Hall invited the dining hall staff and the custodial staff to join them for the Carillon Concert and have lunch with them.

1:05:00
I think just thinking about the ways that people and the experiences that might be not the easy ones, the ones where you’re looking at who’s invisible, who am I not paying attention to, and then going out of your way to make them more visible to you and have a personal connection. I’ve actually been thinking a lot about the ways in which our physical spaces promote humanization. One of the things that’s really cool about the Haas Center is if you go there, most people think it was an old home. It would’ve been a huge home if it actually was a house. But it was built to look like a home. You walk in, and it’s got a big staircase, and it’s got some couches, and I think that the spaces that we create in and of themselves promote humanization. I think that thinking about your office, and what do you have up on your walls, and what do you showing. In what ways can you humanize yourself to the people who are coming in to your own office spaces? There’s a beautiful juxtaposition and it happens serendipitously if you walk into the Haas Center. There’s a mural and it was done by the Music, Mural and Arts program in collaboration with the staff. This is before I got there, it’s this triptych that ends with this beautiful John Gardner quote: “What we have before us are breathtaking opportunities disguised as insoluble problems.” It’s a very colorful, very optimistic painting where there’s a person in a headdress that’s exploding into books that fly away. It’s very liberational. That is juxtaposed immediately opposite to a painting by Jared Cowen who made this painting of the Rwandan genocide. It’s equally as colorful but it’s jagged and a very disturbing painting where the Tutsis are locked in a church with the clergy. Hotel Rwanda is based on the idea that these folks were going to be murdered. I frequently bring people into the Haas Center and I talk about the fact that these are very different views of the world. One has a sense of community, a sense of belonging, a very warm painting. It draws you in. And the other one is dark, it’s disturbing. And what I find that happens at the Haas Center is that we want to use that juxtaposition of space and art to say to people that you’re all welcome here, it doesn’t matter how you’re approaching or why you’re coming to this. But we want you. It doesn’t matter whether you’re coming here
because you have this warm sense of community that you want to find, or you see something really dark in the world, and you can’t just sit idly by and let it happen.

The other thing that I’d be remiss to say because Tia’s here and she works out with me in the morning, is that working out is a great way to humanize. It’s more than just being with the people that you’re working out with, because I find that the days that I get exercise and stretch, I’m much more present with people in my work.

The last thing I’ll say...I’m bringing it down, (to Albert Bandura) you were all about these big policy things but I’m trying to bring it down to like pictures in the office. The last thing that I wanna say is that I think that we have to rediscover the art of conversation. We were talking about this before, we don’t wanna demonize technology, but when I saw my daughter just last night, we’re all sitting in the kitchen, and my daughter and I are sitting there, and she’s on her phone, and we say “Hey, can you put that down? We’re having a conversation.” I wanna talk about conversation in a different way because I read this fascinating article last year and it was Robert Schrader who wrote it. He identified five dynamics that when we’re in conversation with other people, we’re not really in authentic conversation. I wanna share these five things with you, and then I’ll pass the mic.

The five ways that we fail to understand the other well. The first is when we homogenize the other. We don’t see them as being different than us. The second is when we colonize the other. That the other is inferior to us in some way and somehow needs to be elevated where those differences disappear. The third is when we demonize the other and we see them as this threat that we have to expunge. The fourth is when we romanticize the other, they’re held to be so superior in their otherness and so exotic that it doesn’t threaten our way of seeing or being. The last one is when we overly pluralize. This is a debilitating relativistic sense of indifference in which there’s no way that we could possibility know the other because they’re just too different than us. I love these as reminders about how we need to be with other people, and that we have to bring back that art of conversation, not mediated through technology but face to face.

Alia Crum: How are you guys doing? Okay. I’ll just make a quick point and we can move to questions. We all think it’s great to treat each other as humans when we like each other, right? When everything is going well for us. When we agree with what they say, and they are voting for the right person. It’s very difficult to get to that place in a moment of conflict or a moment of frustration or stress. And yet, I think the power of humanization is actually most potent during those moments of conflict and stress. To bring it down even further to what we can do in our lives on a day-to-day basis to connect with the power of humanization is to first realize the moments in which you feel angry, frustrated or annoyed by something that’s going on. I risk making it very personal here, but I’m going to do it anyway. We had some struggles with the technology and getting this working. It might have been frustrating. “Why isn’t this starting on time, why isn’t this ending on time, why don’t they know this, this is Stanford, why don’t we have

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the technology working?” What you might realize is if you could take that anger, that frustration as the opportune time to start to connect with the human element in the room. What we’ve learned today is that the wonderful gentleman in the back who’s been frantically running around trying to get this to work, on the way to work was in a car accident today. So let’s thank him, first of all. (Applause) I just point that out to realize that there are endless opportunities to recognize that frustrations and conflict can be easily understood by taking one moment to ask “Where’s this person coming from? What happened in their lives to shape the situation?” I’ll end with that, I think we should open it up for questions.

Albert Bandura: We can also start earlier. As a 91-year old, my neighbor decided that they wanted to raise they boys to be more altruistic, so they’ve arranged to have them bring my paper daily to the door. And then they have them on a program where they’re canvassing through homes and asking if they have any children’s books that they no longer use, and then they’re giving them to charities so that disadvantaged children can have the benefit of children’s books. So these are things that if you start very early, they have a tremendous impact.

Tia Rich: Raise your hand if you’d like to ask a question, please, and Ashley will bring the mic to you.

Audience member 1: Hi. I guess my question is for all of you but mainly Dr. Bandura because you briefly touched on it. With respect to climate change and protecting the environment, because in the end humans depend on the environment, I was wondering what your opinion is on the topic of animal agriculture and factory farming, which have been brought up recently as not being quite humane or being destructive to the environment and affecting humanity. What’s your opinion on the non-human animal fits into the picture of making the world more humane?

1:15:00
Albert Bandura: Could I get a little clarification on the question?

Tia Rich: I believe the question is how do you include animals in the construct of humanization and being humane and the impact of farming that is not as humane towards the animals?

Albert Bandura: Yes, a theory of moral disengagement applies to those situations, too. There are two ways of addressing the issue. One is the economic view that these resources are here and they should be exploited. And then you have the religious view that God placed these resources, they’re infinite, and they can point to the Bible where they’re instructed to exploit the resources and so on. So that’s one view in which you disassociate yourself from animals. They are simply things to be exploited. Then trees and other things are just products. The second view is that we’re living in a highly complex interrelated planet and that anything that is destroyed in this system can have important impact. For example, if those bumblebees are extinguished, we ain’t gonna have fruit and so on. That’s a very low creature but it can have profound effects. These are two examples in which we have one group that takes the position that humans are exceptional and at the top of the food chain, and then you have the other view...
that everything is interconnected and can have consequences. I might add that the problem we have here is the fantastic power of technology. I’m thinking here of the physical technology. We can wipe out part of the forest the size of New Mexico or Arizona in a short time. If Darwin were writing today, he’d probably be emphasizing the overwhelming human domination of the environment. That’s being used in many ways to destroy the environment. That’s why we now have the problem that if we don’t clean up our act, we’re gonna have a very hot planet in which you won’t be spending much time outdoors, the sea level rise will flood most of our low-lying cities, and the Gulf and much of Florida is going to be underwater. We’ll have very little biodiversity, and that can have very serious consequences. So these are two views of how we view our planet and how we treat it.

Jarring jump cut, add slide with: “Question on humanization and activism”

Audience member 2: Good evening. This question is primarily for Dr. Bandura but also for everybody on the stage as well. To start off with, I used to work for an environmental nonprofit. And I think had I read your book, Dr. Bandura, before I applied to Stanford, I may not be here. Just due to the questions you’re asking. Because it’s very easy to speak to someone on the street and say, “Hey, climate change is real and it exists” and they say “No, it isn’t.” So it’s easy to see moral disengagement, while at the same time, it’s easy for the activists to dehumanize the person that they’re talking to. That’s an issue that extends beyond the environmental movement into a lot of activist movements.

1:20:00
How do you as an activist with something that you’re passionate about prevent yourself from dehumanizing the person who opposes what you believe in? And I’d be interested to hear thoughts on how an activist can encourage humanization and decrease dehumanization.

Albert Bandura: In the Moral Disengagement book, I have a chapter that is 60 pages long that addresses all of these types of issues and how to mobilize people constructively for becoming much more engaged in trying to preserve this planet which we’re going to be passing on to our next generation soon, and so on. The problem is that we don’t have very many good models. What we need is inspiring models that are gonna bring us together. In the book I have a few examples of people who have been able to approach the issue with a sense of shared humanity, that we have to work on this together. And that’s one of the ways in which we make progress.

Tia Rich: May I just add here that David Brooks wrote a book titled “The Road to Character” in which he speaks to your question and says each of us can identify a personal cabinet of role models to employ who have done something that is an example of activism and social justice or community organizing in a way that we feel inspired by. So to seek those people out, even if they’re no longer living, if they’re only known to you through literature, but to find models, as Al was saying so you can know how to be active and human.
Albert Bandura: Mandela is a beautiful example in the way in which he handled the change from apartheid.

Tia Rich: Yes, Nelson Mandela’s reconciliation example. Alia or Tom, do you want to attempt to answer the question?
Alia Crum: I think that the tendency when we become passionate about something is to push for it and to go full in. “This is what I want to tell you, this is what I want you to get,” and if somebody is in opposition to that, what tends to happen is this fundamental truth in physics which is that force follows force blinds. So if I ask Tom to put up his fist, I can ask Tom, why are you pushing?

Tom Schnaubelt: I’m not pushing! (Laughter)

Alia Crum: So it’s interesting, right? I said Tom, put up your fist, I put up my fist, and as I push, I didn’t even say push back, he did it reflexively. We do this as humans. If somebody is pushing, we push back. We have to be careful. Tom, why aren’t you pushing now?

Tom Schnaubelt: Because I got tired. (Laughter)

Alia Crum: That’s a good answer, but why he actually isn’t pushing now is because while I was speaking to you, I backed off. 30, 20, 15 pounds back to nothing. What did he do? He backed down impeccably. So in conflict we tend to escalate, for many times for good reason. We want them to get what we get, what we find true, but that pushing creates more force. Backing down, hearing and acknowledging and understanding them, that creates a reflective process which can open up a sense of connection to each other.

Tia Rich: So thank you all for being part of this conversation and I wish you a lovely evening. Thank you.