

## **Nurturing Our Humanity: How Domination and Partnership Shape Our Brains, Lives, and Future**

### **Discussion Questions**

- How is it possible that it was only 50 years ago that gender studies became part of higher education curriculum, and why is it still marginalized when socialization by gender is key to how children learn what it means to be a human?
- We've long known from psychology that what children experience and observe has a huge impact on how they think, feel, and act as adults. Now *Nurturing Our Humanity* presents findings from neuroscience showing that these childhood experiences actually shape our brains. Why is this still not part of what people are taught in academic discussions about sociology, political science, anthropology, etc.?
- People like to stay in their comfort zones yet, as Einstein said, we can't solve problems with the same thinking that created them. How can we best help people understand and use the new paradigm of the partnership-domination cultural scale?
- Social biologists and many evolutionary psychologists have written extensively about evolutionary imperatives that make top-down, domination relationships appear inevitable —rooted in our archaic human history. But actually the evidence is strong that foraging societies, which is how we lived for millennia, are the original partnership societies. These societies were egalitarian, peaceful, and valued women and men equally. How can we dislodge old beliefs that maintain domination systems?
- *Nurturing Our Humanity* shows that domination systems are basically

trauma factories. The Adverse Childhood Experience studies<sup>1</sup> show that a huge percentage of Americans carry traumas from their childhood, yet there is denial—and at best marginalization—of this major issue. What can we do to show the connection between the politics and economics of domination systems and domination-oriented family relations? How can we best use *Nurturing Our Humanity* to change this?

- *Nurturing Our Humanity* shows that the nations that have moved more towards the partnership side of the partnership-domination social scale rank high not only in economic performance but also in happiness. How can we show the benefits of building partnership-oriented societies where caring for people and nature are top social priorities, and the so-called feminine is no longer devalued so economic and social policies are informed by partnership values?
- Why, when there's a pandemic of violence against women and children, much of it in families, is ending these human rights violations not a top international priority? How can we get media to connect the dots between what children first experience and observe in their families—like learning that violence is normal and even moral—and all the violence in our daily headlines?

## Notes

### 1. Adverse Childhood Experience studies

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html>