

Appendix

Methods of inhibiting and amplifying outrage from injustice

In February 2005, a group of us sat down and considered in turn each of the methods of inhibiting outrage, thinking of key techniques found in the case studies with which we were most familiar: Susan Engel, the corporate disasters of asbestos and Bhopal; Truda Gray, defamation and the Vietnam war; Samantha Reis, psychological techniques; Kylie Smith, labor disputes; Steve Wright, the technology of repression; and myself, the Rodney King beating and whistleblowing.¹ We brainstormed techniques individually and collectively. We then did the same for methods of countering inhibition or, in other words, of amplifying outrage. This is an edited summary of what we came up with. Many more methods could be added.

Some Methods of Inhibiting Outrage

1. Cover-up

- Denial: false statements, lying by omission, obfuscation.
- Public relations and spin-doctoring: creation and slanting of news.
- Media: news routines (e.g. usually adopting police viewpoints; usually taking corporate perspectives).
- Organizational (e.g. government and corporate secrecy; police code of silence).
- Legal (e.g. official secrets; 30-year rule for release of government documents; sub judice rules).
- Physical: destruction of documents.
- Group dynamics: groupthink (mutually promoted thinking within the box). This is enforced by devaluation and intimidation of those who challenge the dominant line.

1. Andrew Herd, who is researching backfire and refugees, joined us in one session.

- Arena transfer: moving the issue to another arena where it has less visibility (e.g. defamation actions move issues from the public arena to the legal arena).

2. Devaluation

- Dehumanization: treating or referring to people as animals, inanimate objects, statistical abstractions, or side effects (“collateral damage”).
- Labeling: categorization (e.g. reducing victims to a medical category); stereotyping; name-calling.
- Fear-creation: suggesting ideas of what might happen.
- Attributing blame to victims, including via belief in a just world (e.g. rape myths; lifestyle assumptions).
- Rhetoric and selective attention by governments, corporations, think-tanks, and the media (noting the media’s focus on negative behavior).
- Besmirching reputations: finding, publicizing, and manufacturing dirt (e.g. on Rodney King).

3. Reinterpretation

- Perpetrator’s genuine framework or ideology: a system of categories, labels (e.g. “reform”; “they attack, we defend”), language (e.g. removing undesired emotional connotations), etc.
- Rationalizations (e.g. it’s for the good of people; it’s to protect against a feared thing).
- Lying: cover stories (e.g. to explain spying), sometimes using an official group to legitimize the lie. It may be difficult to distinguish between lying (conscious deceit), selective perception, and genuine belief.

- Minimizing: saying it's an isolated incident, only a few people were involved, the harm wasn't that great, and/or it doesn't matter.
- Doublethink: holding and expressing contradictory images (e.g. equating commercial interest with consumer interests through the rhetoric of choice).
- Doublespeak: euphemisms; jargon; obfuscation; vagueness.²
- Unspeak: embedding assumptions in language.³
- Blaming others.
- Blaming individuals while denying system failure (e.g. blaming workers, making accusations of corruption).

4. Official Channels

- Systems of laws and regulations designed to keep challenges under control and out of the public eye (e.g. industrial relations).
- Court cases (targeting individuals rather than the system).
- Inquiries, commissions (set up to give credibility, but often not acted upon).
- Expert pronouncements.
- Consultants chosen to give preferred recommendations.
- Consultation processes (e.g. environmental impact assessments with mandated community consultation but no requirement to take any comments into account).

Why Official Channels Inhibit Outrage

- Belief in a just world, which encourages people to believe that official channels dispense justice.
- Slowness, complexity, dependence on experts, imbalance between resources of dominant groups and challengers (all leading to disempowerment).

2. On doublethink and doublespeak, see Robert Jackall and Janice M. Hirota, *Image Makers: Advertising, Public Relations, and the Ethos of Advocacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 140–44.

3. Steven Poole, *Unspeak*TM (London: Little, Brown, 2006).

- Jurisdiction problems (e.g. in relation to globalization and corporate responsibility).
- Distancing of the issue from personal responsibility.

5. Intimidation and Bribery

Intimidation

- Belief system destabilization: threat to just world belief.
- Arrest: charges, prosecution, frame-up, imprisonment.
- Legal action: risk of loss; court formality and complexity.
- Degradation: intimate attack (too embarrassing to reveal); exposure of damaging information.
- Surveillance.
- Theft, burglary (encouraged by police or not pursued by police).
- Employment attacks: bullying, demotion, relocation, dismissal; loss of customary benefits and opportunities.
- Physical attack, “accidents.”
- Torture, assassination, bombings, bloodbaths.
- Threats: of any of the above.

Bribery

- Conformity: psychological comfort of being part of a group.
- Maintenance of relationships: avoidance of ostracism.
- Promotion.
- Settlements: out-of-court settlements, no convictions of the guilty, “compensation not justice.”
- Dropping of threats.
- Escape (e.g., asylum seekers allowed to leave detention if they leave the country).

Some Methods of Countering the Inhibition of Outrage or, in other Words, Amplifying Outrage

1. Countering Cover-up

- Belief systems: blame others or systems, not oneself.

- Paradigm: describe reality in ways that reveal information and ideas.
- Consciousness raising: put people together to bring out suppressed information and perspectives.
- Information gathering: research the topic, research cover-up, develop the capacity to do research.
- Evidence: have evidence that upsets people (causes outrage).
- Agents: cultivate whistleblowers, leakers, internal sympathizers, investigative journalists.
- Credibility: collect credible evidence, have authoritative sources, independent observers, believable photos.
- Communications medium: have avenues to communicate with an audience, including mass media and alternative media.
- Language: use different language to make the challenge; point out language used in cover-up.
- Arena: move the issue from private to public (e.g. take information about domestic violence beyond the family) or from foreign to domestic.
- Organizational support: have allies (unions, academics, action groups, etc.) to challenge cover-up, put pressure on media, give credibility, plan strategy.
- System change: reduce barriers to perpetrators speaking out (as in truth and reconciliation commissions).

2. Countering Devaluation

- Humanization: humanize targets; personalize them; make them seem normal, like others; show they have thoughts, feelings, motivations, families; move the focus from a component of a person (“refugee,” “amputee”) to the whole person (note: this may not work for group injustices).
- Balance theory: promote myriad positives about a person, creating a general positive image, so people will reinterpret specific negatives to be compatible with the overall positive view.
- Support: provide assistance to targets to reduce the impact of attacks.
- Social roles 1: put targets into valued social roles (e.g., family member, worker, group

member), with valued people (e.g. people with intellectual disabilities in valued groups, not with other devalued people).⁴

- Social roles 2: have valued people voluntarily join a devalued role (e.g. non-Jews wearing a yellow star in solidarity).
- Social roles 3: proudly adopt a stigmatizing label, transforming it (e.g. “gay,” “dissident”).
- Imagery: ensure targets are associated with positive images (names, neighbors, logos, etc.).
- Competencies 1: increase the competencies of targets (e.g. competencies of people with intellectual disabilities to dress well, maintain hygiene, participate in conversations).
- Competencies 2: increase the personal capacity of targets to psychologically survive devaluation, humiliation, and direct attacks, rather than succumbing and conforming to negative expectations.⁵
- Competencies 3: establish credibility of witnesses and analysts by well-written materials with high-quality data.
- Double-standard comparisons: point out that valued people fit into the devalued category (e.g. state terrorism).
- Other comparisons: use historical examples of devaluation (e.g. slavery) that are now discredited; make comparisons to other countries and other issues.

4. Wolf Wolfensberger, *A Brief Introduction to Social Role Valorization: A High-Level Concept for Addressing the Plight of Societally Devalued People, and for Structuring Human Services*, 3d ed. (Syracuse, NY: Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency (Syracuse University), 1998), gives numerous ways to challenge devaluation through putting people in valued social roles and increasing their competencies.

5. For surviving and countering shaming at work, see Judith Wyatt and Chauncey Hare, *Work Abuse: How to Recognize and Survive It* (Rochester, VT: Schenkman, 1997).

- Direct challenge: confront and rebut derogatory statements or images.⁶
- Counterattack: find and expose dirt on perpetrators (but be careful, because this tactic might backfire); reveal histories of oppression or abuse, identifying systemic factors.

3. Countering Reinterpretation

- Ideology: expose the assumptions underlying the other point of view; reveal ideology for what it is.
- Evidence 1: present facts, data, pictures, statistics, examples.
- Evidence 2: expose lies; show consequences of other side's actions; talk about who benefits; show interests behind the other side.
- Evidence 3: demand that perpetrators produce evidence for their claims.
- Credibility: use independent experts to support your interpretation.
- Reiteration: present the evidence and return to it in the face of reinterpretation.
- Framework: use your own framework to explain things; critique the other side's framework.⁷
- Fairness arguments: use (1) abstract arguments about rights; (2) historical comparisons to show accepted standards; (3) current examples (e.g. exorbitant pay to senior executives).
- Alternatives: present alternative ideas, actions, and solutions.
- Presence: accompany the message (e.g. give talks).
- Language: use suitable language that supports your framework and evidence; relabel

6. Jackall and Hirota, *Image Makers*, 139, say that removing stigma usually requires "symbolic inversion," a dramatic challenge to conventional images: "A cardinal rule of public relations is that one must respond to charges made against one; to be silent is to consent to the accusations."

7. George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green, 2004), is a highly accessible and practical approach to framing of conservative and progressive policies in the United States.

others' misleading terms; use revealing terms; coin sound bites or memes (e.g. "state terror," "capital strike").

- Humor: make fun of perpetrators' ideas and presentations (e.g. through cartoons).

4. Countering Official Channels (OCs)

- Avoidance: don't use OCs.
- Discrediting OCs 1: reveal limited terms of reference, hypocrisy, bias, corruption, vested interests, failure to deliver justice. (This works better for those with weaker just-world beliefs.)
- Discrediting OCs 2: use humor
- Improved OCs 1: insist on openness, independence, and fair procedures.
- Improved OCs 2: have own evidence, witnesses, and supporters present during hearings (validate victims by peer group presence).
- Improved OCs 3: use OCs cleverly (have good lawyers, use technicalities).
- Improved OCs 4: pick the most suitable OC; change to a more favorable forum.
- Improved OCs 5: develop networks of supporters in different arenas (lawyers, action groups, sympathetic insiders, journalists) to put the squeeze on OCs.
- Improved OCs 6: make the case highly prominent so the wrong verdict/conclusion causes increased outrage.
- Improved OCs 7: pick test cases carefully.
- Dual track: use OCs in tandem with publicity and mobilization.
- Alternative OCs: set up own panels, courts, commissions (e.g. a people's commission into state crime).
- Alternatives 1: propose/use alternative channels entirely different from OCs (e.g. personal negotiation rather than courts).
- Alternatives 2: use direct action (e.g. boycotts) and all sorts of other non-OC actions.
- Counterattack: target individual OC members, giving them a negative personal face.

5. Countering Intimidation and Bribery

- Belief systems 1: powerholders are expected to meet higher standards of justice, so for them to be seen to use intimidation and bribery constitutes an admission of guilt.

- Belief systems 2: intimidation can polarize reactions, causing some to keep quiet but others — who see intimidation as a clear injustice — to speak out.
- Time frame: adopt a long term perspective to develop the capacity to survive short term attacks.
- Support: have alternative reference groups to counter ostracism and help victims.
- Rationality: encourage rational responses to intimidation and bribery (take action, join a group, recognize limits of action) rather than irrational responses (denial, blaming, reinterpretation).
- Reinforcement: intimidation and bribery are forms of positive or negative reinforcement or punishment, so positively reinforce speaking out.
- Resilience: develop personal capacities to resist.
- Collective action: organize, use networks, operate in existing or new groups to reduce the threat to individuals (e.g. worker groups, petitions that challenge repressive laws).
- Anonymity: speak out with less risk.
- Exposure: document intimidation and its consequences (e.g. effects of plastic bullets; atrocities), collect multiple cases to show a pattern, and publish the documentation; deter attacks by being prepared to expose them.
- Visibility: develop a high profile so attacks are more public and consequently less likely (e.g. police informants may be in more danger when they take new identities under police protection).
- Refusal to make legal settlements: insist on being able to speak out.
- Speaking out: speak out or continue your behavior even though you've been bribed; take the money and recycle it.
- Reframing: turn attacks into human interest stories; arouse indignation; gain media coverage in advance of attacks.
- Safety: set up refuges from attack (e.g. alternative treatment centers to avoid police entering hospitals).
- Counter-intimidation (e.g. posters of rogue police, countersuits against intimidatory lawsuits) — but be careful not to nullify outrage from the other side's intimidation.