Mutual of America Financial Group℠
Retirement Services • Investments

From Division to Dialogue

Advocacy That Builds Bridges



MATTHEW FLOWERS, CRPS®
Regional Sales Director
Direct: (414) 540-7014
matthew.flowers@mutualofamerica.com

Today's Discussion

How did I get here??

Understanding your own biases

Advocacy is a process

Understanding ≠ Agreement

Playing the long game

Final remarks



Everyone Wants Five Minutes

- Legislators face the same attention overload as CEOs
- Your mission is important, but relationships earn access
- Trust creates opportunity



ASK – LEARN – ALIGN

ASK	LEARN	ALIGN
Genuine Interest	Genuine Interest	Genuine Appreciation
Open-Ended	Unexpected Understanding	Connect Values to Mission
Motivating Values	Clarifying Questions	Shared Language
Priorities this Session	Take Notes	Shared Priorities
Connection to Mission		Mutual Benefits
		Real Story, Actual Impact

Self-Awareness
↓
ASK
↓
Curiosity
↓
LEARN
↓
Relationship
↓
ALIGN
↓
Trust
↓
Influence
↓
Change

Self-awareness creates humility.
↓
Humility creates curiosity.
↓
Curiosity drives questions.
↓
Questions create understanding.
↓
Understanding creates relationships.
↓
Relationships build trust.
↓
Trust creates influence.
↓
Influence makes change possible.

Daryl Davis

You can use my bus.

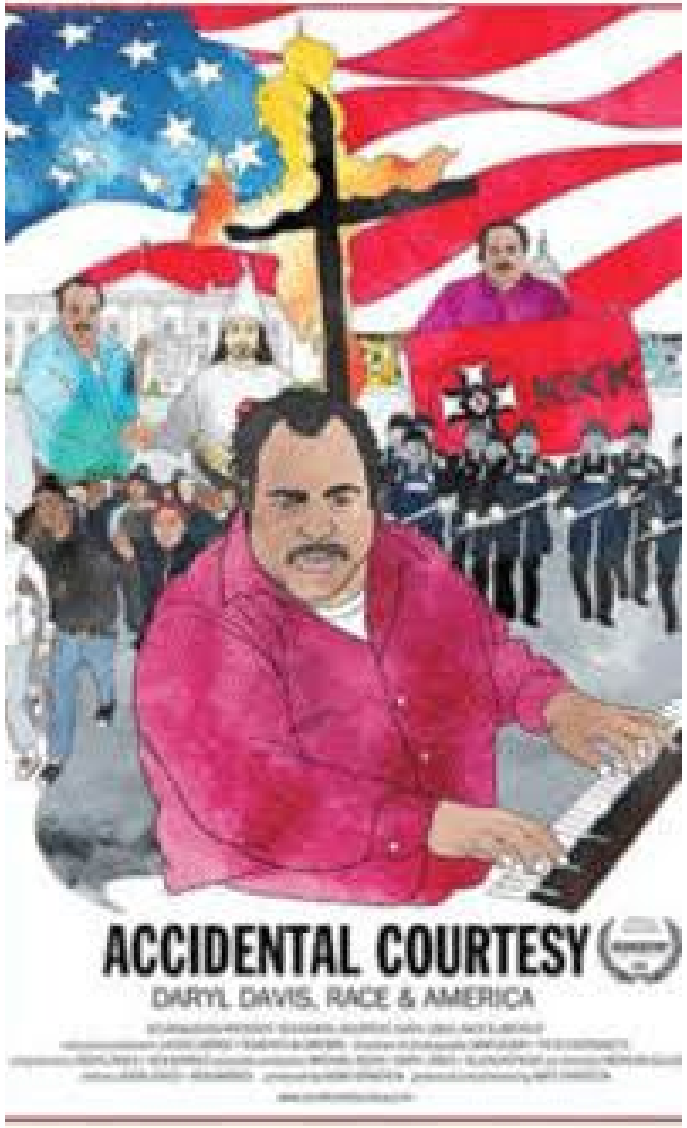
When to adversaries are talking, they are not fighting.

Understanding ≠ Agreement

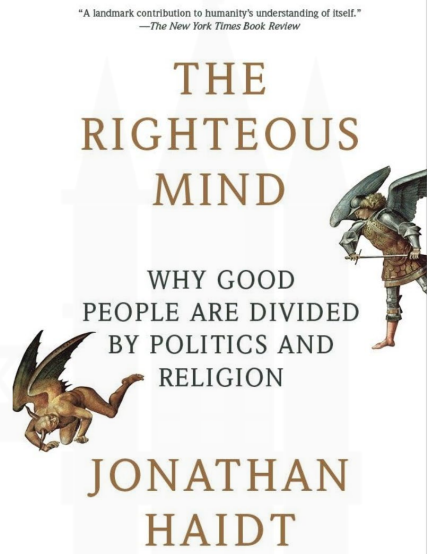
Understanding ≠ Endorsement

Learn the story behind the position

Empathy works in all directions



Understanding the Moral Lens Behind Beliefs



The Liberal Moral Profile

Haidt argues that liberals tend to place the greatest emphasis on:

- **Care**
- **Fairness**
- (to a lesser extent) **Liberty**

In Haidt's framework, liberals tend to view morality primarily through the lens of the **individual**.

The Conservative Moral Profile

Conservatives assign significant moral importance to:

- **Loyalty**
- **Authority**
- **Sanctity**

Preserving norms that hold communities together

NEWS FEEDS



People rarely change because they were defeated in an argument. They change when new information can coexist with dignity.

Know Your Own Story First

- What assumptions do I bring into this conversation?
- What experiences shaped my beliefs?
- What issues trigger emotional reactions in me?
- Am I trying to understand or trying to win?

Advocacy is not a Protest, it is a Process

"If you had experienced this, you'd understand"

Misuse of Data or Anecdotes

"That's wrong/That's incorrect"

Appeals to Morality or Emotion Over Policy

"It's common sense"

"Nobody supports this"

"This is a moral obligation"

Friendship Formula

P+F+D+I = Friend

Proximity – Frequency – Duration – Intensity

Rigid or Demanding Language

"This never works"

"This always happens"

Overgeneralizations & Absolutes

"You don't care/You're ignoring the issue"

"It's the right thing to do"

"This is a crisis"

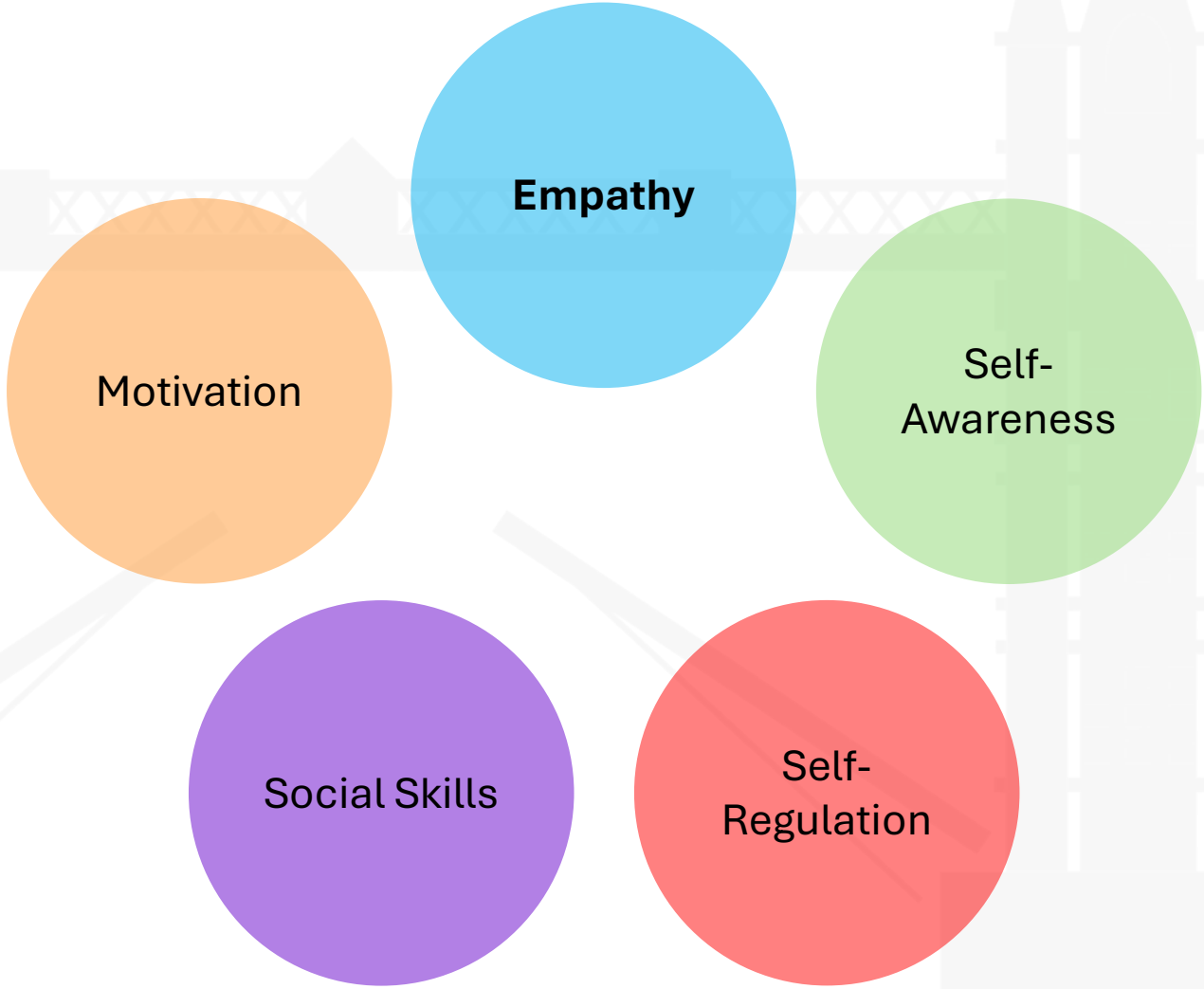
"Everyone knows this is wrong"

Accusatory or Confrontational Statements

Emotional Intelligence in Advocacy

Why Empathy Matters

- Worldview's are shaped by different experiences
- Seek to understand before seeking to persuade
- Separate understanding from agreement
- Relationships open doors that arguments often cannot



No one wants to be corrected.

No one wants to be embarrassed.

No one wants to be treated as a project.

People are more open to change when they feel respected.

Mutual of America Financial Group℠
Retirement Services • Investments

Floor is open for discussion



MATTHEW FLOWERS, CRPS®
Regional Sales Director
Direct: (414) 540-7014
matthew.flowers@mutualofamerica.com

Resources & Recommended Reading:



