



Sample Chapter

*Excerpted from
Rick Maurer's book*

Why Don't You Want What I Want?

***How to Win Support for Your Ideas without
Hard Sell, Manipulation or Power Plays***

**For more information,
contact Maurer & Associates via:**

Phone: 703-525-7074

Fax: 703-525-0183

E-mail: info@beyondresistance.com

www.beyondresistance.com



CHAPTER 6

Avoid Knee-Jerk Reactions

Where there's a will, there's a way.

— Ambrose Bierce

Former U.S. Senator George Mitchell was chosen by the British and Irish governments to be chairman of the plenary sessions of the Northern Ireland peace accords. Of the nine parties involved in the talks, only seven agreed with his appointment. Opponents felt it was “the foisting upon them of an unelected chairman by ‘despotic’ governments.” For two days, Mitchell and his staff had to sit across the hall and listen while his role was discussed. He called it a strange experience. Later he said, “The peace process is more important than my feelings . . . privately, my two colleagues and I were apprehensive. . . . It was humiliating, especially for me, but there was no realistic alternative, so we stayed and listened, joking among ourselves about our plight to keep our spirits up.”

Finally, Senator Mitchell was allowed to enter the conference room. As he walked into the room, Dr. Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, said, “No.” And he continued loudly, “No! No! No!”

“Before I could say or do anything, Paisley launched a blistering attack on the governments for ‘imposing’ me as chairman,” Mitchell recalls. Paisley and his delegates left the room, and others immediately joined the walkout.

The remaining delegates watched Mitchell to see whether he was intimidated by the controversy. Mitchell says, “Realizing what was a stake, I tried to remain calm, to avoid

betraying the swirling doubts I felt.” He proceeded to make an opening statement, reminding delegates of the importance of the peace talks. He pledged to act in a fair and impartial manner. “I couldn’t tell what effect my remarks had on those listening, but they helped me to calm down and gave me a few minutes to establish myself.”¹

Mitchell did something that is extremely difficult to do. He avoided knee-jerk reactions even in the face of continuous “humiliating” pressure. In Mitchell’s case, had he responded defensively, his assignment might have ended before it began.

WHAT CAUSES KNEE-JERK REACTIONS

Knee-jerk reactions are our quick defenses against anything that we believe might harm us. Our brains detect danger before awareness kicks in.² Just recall Darwin’s reaction when the puff

adder struck at him. Sometimes our emotional brain picks up signals that are simply unavailable to the conscious mind.³ Knee-jerk reactions can save our lives — and they can get us into trouble when the amygdala’s hair trigger fires at times when we wish it wouldn’t. We can say or do things that we may regret just moments later.

Emotions bump more mundane thoughts from our minds. For instance, when a rat sees a cat, it does not notice heat applied to its tail.⁴ Just as our idea may bump another person into a Level 2 I-Don’t-Like-It reaction, that person’s response to us may drop us into a knee-jerk response. And when that occurs, our ability to pay attention to other parts of the conversation may diminish or vanish completely.

Knee-jerk reactions occur as we engage another person, but they also can occur in anticipation of something happening. We seem to be the only species that has the capacity to anticipate the future. With that comes hope, but also fear of what the future might hold. We can work ourselves into a lather as we create scenarios in our minds about what *might* happen. While these stories may protect us from danger, they also can



Our own Level 2 or Level 3 resistance to the other person is the primary reason why our knees start to jerk.

provide such a strong shield that we miss seeing the other person. We react to slights that have little (or no) basis in reality.

The preparation that comes from considering the context can help us to do a reality check as we examine what we know about ourselves, the other person, and the situation. A clear intent that includes the other person in our thinking can help us stay focused, even in the midst of a huge display of amygdala fireworks. But something happens in that moment of engagement that can throw us off our game. The other person says something so surprising that we react before we know what hit us — or them. That's why it is important to understand our own triggers.

WHATHOOKS US

Because people are different, what triggers you may hold no charge for me. A car cuts you off on a major highway and you think, “Wow, I’m so glad I could allow him to move ahead of me. He must be in an awfully big hurry.” Not me. I have been known to roll down the window and shout blistering phrases that can’t be printed here.

Knowing what is likely to trigger these reactions can help us anticipate them, and we can begin to view the triggers in a different light when they do occur. There actually have been times when drivers have cut me off and I just smiled and slowed down enough to allow the car to enter my lane safely. During those fleeting moments, I realized that it is possible to change my own behavior in tense situations.

Here are some ways we can get hooked:

- Someone attacks our intelligence. Any statement that feels like an attack aimed directly at us can make our knees start jerking. For some, “You’re an idiot” elicits a Vesuvian reaction, whereas “Where’d you learn business? From a matchbook-cover correspondence course?” may be all it takes to launch someone else into a knee-jerk reaction.
- Someone attacks our idea. Something like “That’s got to be the dumbest idea I’ve ever heard” may set us off. Sometimes we love our idea so much and are so fearful that others won’t see its brilliance that even simple questions of clarification can seem like attacks.

- Someone attacks our integrity . . . “You’re supporting that policy and you call yourself a decent person? I’d be ashamed if I were you.”
- Someone attacks our values and beliefs. “How could anyone believe something like that?”
- Someone attacks our group. This is a Level 3 blanket statement about some group you are part of. “You people always say . . .” For starters, this could refer to your race, gender, ethnicity, role in the organization, sexual orientation — but this is a long list.
- Someone uses their status against us. The other person uses his or her relative higher status to make us feel smaller. “When you get to be my age, you’ll understand.” This may play out as condescension. The person talks down at us as if we couldn’t possibly be taken seriously.
- Someone ignores us or our idea. The other person simply will not pay attention to us. He or she doesn’t return calls or honor appointments.
- Someone questions our competence. The person attempts to lower our status by implying, “What makes you think you’re qualified to do that?”
- Someone makes us fear a loss of honor or reputation. More homicides are committed over the loss of honor than any other reason. This reaction isn’t limited to young men hanging out in clubs. In 1804, the vice-president of the United States, Aaron Burr, killed Alexander Hamilton, a founding father and author of *The Federalist Papers*, in a duel.
- We want to win at all costs. For some, the trigger may be perceived competition. When this kicks in, we forget about our original intent and focus on winning. In 1973, Barry Diller, the vice-president of primetime programming for ABC, bid \$3.3 million for rights to a single showing of *The Poseidon Adventure*. This was \$1 million over what they could expect to earn from the sale of ads. Robert Wood, who was president of CBS television, said, “We were very rational at the start. . . . But then the bidding started . . . and the fever of the thing caught us. Like a guy who had lost his mind, I kept bidding. . . . There came a moment when I said to myself, ‘Good grief, if I get it, what the heck am I going to do with it?’ When ABC finally topped me, my main feeling was relief.”⁵

THE TYPES OF KNEE-JERK REACTIONS

Early twentieth century psychoanalyst Karen Horney identified three major ways in which we handle anxiety: We can move against, move toward, or move away from the other person. Her model serves well to look at how we handle perceived attacks to our ideas.

Move Against: I/you

To move against is to attack. It is the fight part of fight-flight. In our quick reaction, we act as if fighting is the only way to get out of this perilous situation. The goal is to win or to beat the other person. We place protection of ourselves and our idea over the relationship. I/You is destroyed. Our stance becomes capital I over a small you: I/you.

Here are some of the ways it plays out:

- You threaten. “You’ll go along with this idea — or else.” Leaders talking about change in the workplace often use war metaphors to describe the situation. They will “shoot the stragglers” and “take no prisoners.”
- You use force of reason. This is a gentler form of moving against, but it is an attack just the same. You assume you can convince the person to go along if you only explain your idea repeatedly. You will prevail through the sheer force of your arguments based on crystalline logic.
- You kill the messenger. In order to move ahead, you destroy the person or group that has the audacity to question your plans. Your methods may be a bit more humane than the ancient Romans, who literally killed messengers who brought bad news — but destroy them you do. One way to figuratively kill a messenger is to seek revenge later.
- You ignore the opposition. You so believe you are right that you simply don’t have time for it. You see the resistance, but disregard it. You may ignore opposition because you think you can afford to. You move ahead like a bulldozer, pushing aside anything or anybody that gets in the way.

Moving against often appears in how we speak and carry ourselves. Our voices may become more forceful. Our bodies

tense. People see our veins throbbing. We point, using our index finger as a saber. Our eyes narrow and focus intently on the other person as if we could burrow through them with a laser ray.

Moving against creates a contest with a winner and a loser.

Move Toward: i/YOU

When we move toward, we are so concerned about losing the relationship that we give up our own idea and focus exclusively on saving the relationship. The You in I/You takes precedence over the I. Moving too far in the direction of You can throw us off balance. We pay too much attention to our need to maintain the relationship and forget our goal. In this case our I is minimized: little i, capital YOU.

Here's what it can look like:

- You capitulate. You give in to others, even when you don't agree. Because you are moving toward the other person, you capitulate in order to maintain contact. You give in so you don't risk losing the relationship. You may not recognize that you have given in until after the fact. A day later you may think to yourself, "How could I have agreed to do that?"
- You make deals. This is similar to capitulation, but in this variation you look for ways to turn this into a tit-for-tat exchange: "I'll give you this if you'll give me that." Reciprocity is an important social skill. Doing favors and having them done for us are an important part of life. And these give-and-take exchanges work fine when the stakes are small. But as a knee-jerk reaction, you can find yourself making deals you later regret.
- You lessen the impact. You may attempt to lessen the impact of the idea as you pull away: "You didn't think I was serious about that bone-headed idea, did you? You know me better than that. Come on, I was kidding."

Move Away: i/you

When we move away, we pull back from the relationship itself. We give up our idea and, at least temporarily, our connection to the other person. We pull away for safety. We give up the I, the You, and the It. Everything is small case: i/you.

This appears in the following ways:

- You give in too soon. You quit before you know how strong the opposition is — is it mild resistance or major? You'll never know because you backed out before you could find out. This occurs because the foe seems too formidable, and you believe you are too weak.
- You go into a protective shell. Your rational thoughts are clouded by the emotions of the moment, and you create a cocoon for yourself. Even though you may stay in the room, only a small part of you is still trying to talk with the other person.
- You deflect. You may change the subject in an attempt to get the attention off you and your idea. Some of us use humor to deflect attention away from whatever is triggering it. Like the person who shouts, "Look over there!" we try to have everyone focus on something else.

The Frozen State

There is one other way people respond to a threat from someone else: They freeze. They might like to move against, move away, or move toward, but they can't; they are frozen. Once they move out of the frozen state, they can move toward, against, or away from the other person, but they still are reacting defensively to the situation.

KNOWING THE CONSEQUENCES

Awareness marks the difference between a knee-jerk reaction and a strategic response to a situation. If I choose to move away with awareness, then I am mindful of the consequences of my action. So I may make a choice to move away, knowing that the strategy could work against my intention. Awareness of my action and of how the other person responds allows me to refine or change my tactic based on feedback. When I move away in a knee-jerk reaction, I miss all of those signals. It is only later that I realize the potential consequences, and then it may be harder to reestablish contact. Of course, this same split between mindfulness and knee-jerk *mindlessness* occurs when we move against or move toward as well.



LIVING IN THE WORLD OF LEVEL 3 RESISTANCE

There are times when we may find ourselves living in a Level 3 environment of resistance. It is important to recognize what this world looks like or you run the risk of going crazy with your knee jerking day and night.

Everything seems skewed in a Level 3 world. As you walk around this carnival funhouse, your reflection looks odd in the mirror, everyone's voices are distorted, and you can't seem to get your footing. Nothing is quite right. In this world, a small slight becomes a betrayal. A forgotten promise becomes the symbol that nothing is right or ever will be right between you. It is as if everyone were dissecting each phrase to look for the real meaning behind every word you utter. You become wary of what you say and how you say it. Strategy wins out over intimacy. Conflicts that come up between you and another person get exaggerated way out of proportion. Everything feels bigger and weightier. You find yourself expending a significant amount of energy just getting through the day. It's like you can't go home from this twisted carnival.

When I am living in a world like this, I can easily feel like a victim and believe that "they" are the ones who made everything bad. If only they would change. If only they had the insight into themselves and the situation that I have, this would be a great place to be. If they'd only listen to me, get over whatever's bothering them, we could get back to work, and get things done.

Here's the bad news. Although we may feel like a victim in this tragedy, the truth is that most everyone feels like a victim. But more important, we are not anthropologists sitting on the fringes of this village noting the odd behavior of these strange people. We are part of the village, both perpetrator and victim.

The good news, of course, is that if we are part of it all — and are willing to admit it — we may be able to begin to change things. Level 3 resistance doesn't change in a day, and in the most severe situations, it won't even change in a lifetime, but perhaps we can make headway. I have seen people make a difference in the culture of their organizations. But it ain't easy, nor is it always successful.

And the *somewhat* good news: Even if we are powerless to change the overall Level 3 conditions, we may be able to make a difference in our little part of the world. I have worked with union stewards and managers who have found ways to work well together — and even enjoy each other’s company — in spite of the strong animosity between the two sides. The danger is that, even when two people can create a peace and work together developing projects and new ideas, Level 3 is always in the air. A shift in senior management’s position on benefits could cause your friend on the organized labor side of the business to pull back. In the world of Level 3, trust is difficult to build and easy to destroy.

Sometimes we can change some of the fundamental conditions that create Level 3, sometimes we can change those conditions in our personal relationships, and sometimes we may feel powerless to do anything. In the last instance, it may be time to leave. Aikido is a martial art that uses conflict as a way to work toward harmony. A black belt was showing me all the moves you could make on someone who was attacking you in a particular way. I asked, “But what if none of those techniques work?” He replied, “Then sometimes you’ve just got to get out of Dodge.” (More about when to leave and when to stay in chapter 12.)

The Positive Side

All three reactions — move toward, move against, and move away — have their positive sides to be sure.

- We can move toward another in ways that call for joining, cooperation, and affection. The problem comes when moving toward turns into compliance.
- We can move against at times when others need to hear someone take a strong stand. The problem occurs when assertiveness turns to aggression.
- We can move away when the odds are too formidable and waiting for another day may be prudent. The problem occurs when people become detached and, as Horney suggests, “the universe votes for them.”⁶

Unfortunately, little of the positive attributes of these styles is available to us when we are in full knee-jerk mode. It is difficult — sometimes impossible — to gain any of the potential from these if we are off balance.

Making Matters Worse

The more typical consequences of knee-jerk reactions are to make matters worse. This can occur in many ways.

Escalation

When knee jerk meets knee jerk, problems can escalate way out of control. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the Soviets decided to place their missiles in Cuba, senior U.S. officials were discussing implications if the United States were to invade Cuba in response and take out the missiles. According to Tom Blanton, director of the National Security Archive, leaders from past administrations were invited in to advise ExCom, the executive committee of the National Security Council.

During one of the meetings, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson wanted to make a point about the risk they were facing. He is supposed to have said, “Of course, we’ve got to take them out” (to “take out” means to destroy by force). Then someone asked him, “How would the Soviets respond to that?”

He responded, “I suppose they’d have to take out our missiles in Turkey.” “Well, what would we do in response to that?”

Acheson replied, “Oh well, to support our NATO alliance and back up our ally, Turkey, we’d probably have to attack some of the Soviet missiles maybe in the Soviet Union.”

“Well, what happens then?”

“Well, hopefully by then cooler heads would prevail.”

Blanton says that Acheson led them through these exaggerated steps in order to show that cooler heads need to prevail at the beginning. Once a knee-jerk pattern begins, it is hard to stop it.⁷

Interrupting I/You Contact

A knee jerk is a signal that we are more concerned about our survival than we are about the relationship. Fear responses are a good thing. They can protect us from real danger. However, when these reactions are triggered by situations that are less than life-threatening, our amygdalas may be calibrated to respond a little too quickly. Moving against (*I/you*), moving toward (*i/YOU*), and moving away (*i/you*), all lack the grit necessary for a full I and You exchange.

Building Level 3 Animosity

People who rely on knee-jerk reactions as their common way of working with others invite opposition. This works against them as mistrust builds in others. Over time, relationships are severely damaged.

AVOIDING KNEE-JERK REACTIONS

There are ways to control our impulsive actions. Here are a few.

Focus on Your Intent

When knee jerks hit, it is easy to forget why we started talking in the first place. Suddenly, and without warning, we may forget our original intent — to engage the other person, paying attention to I and You — and we revert to an instinctive moving against, toward, or away reaction. A strong intention that we believe in deeply can help us stop reacting when we perceive a threat.

In 1959, James Lawson, an African-American divinity student at Vanderbilt University, was committed to pacifist teaching as a way to end racial injustice. He was as “absolutely clear in his mission” as he was of his own “vision of what America should be.” During a four-month sit-in to try to integrate lunch counters in Nashville, student protesters endured ketchup being poured on them and lighted cigarettes placed against their necks. As minister C. T. Vivian knelt in prayer, a white boy punched him. One of the students raised his fists to retaliate. Vivian called to mind Lawson’s non-violent teaching and said, “Put your hands in your pockets.” The protester obeyed.⁸

Vivian’s intent was clear — to protest non-violently — and he was so committed to this course of action that even physical abuse did not deter him. I suspect that in his work with Lawson, he learned a considerable amount about the context as well, so that the abuse was not a surprise. Intent combined with a deep knowledge of the context can help us avoid reflex actions that take us away from our goals.

Know Your Triggers

Recall the list earlier in this chapter of things that could trigger a knee-jerk reaction. It’s important to know what might set

you off in specific situations. What are the things that a particular person could say or do that would cause *your* knees to jerk? Perhaps it is a phrase or the way someone speaks to you. Two different people can have dramatically different reactions to the same words.

Practice

Practice may not make perfect, but it sure can help. Research shows that exposure to something can help us build acceptance of it.⁹ Exposure to triggers that set us off can help dispel some of the power they may hold over us.

Use a “Mouth Brace”

Some who suffer from migraine headaches use a simple mouth brace. When you put it in your mouth, it relaxes the jaw muscles, relieving stress and reducing the intensity of the migraine headache (and sometimes eliminating it altogether). Using this as an analogy, you might consider something similar — something that would remind you to relax or take a breath. Sometimes I draw a simple picture in the top corner of my notepad: a small circle with three dots in it. This represents a connect-the-dots picture with too few dots to make much sense yet. It is a reminder that I am there to learn something from the other person. It helps me keep my mouth shut when I really should be listening and learning.

Wait for a Better Time

Sometimes the timing is wrong for us to engage another person. We can already feel the tension building in anticipation of talking with this person. In this instance, moving away might be a great choice. Once we are a bit calmer, we may be freer to engage him or her more openly.

One way to tell when the timing is wrong is to listen to the dialogue we are carrying on in our heads. If we are plotting strategy and coming up with ways we are going to slam the person, put him in his place, make him feel rotten, we may already be in full knee jerk. As good as saying these things may feel in the short term, we must ask ourselves, “Will these actions on my part move me closer to my goal?”

WAYS TO STOP MID-JERK

While it is best to avoid knee-jerk reactions before they occur, sometimes we can't. The surprise or intensity is so great that the situation gets the better of us and we kick into full jerk before we know what hit us or them. These days, my worst knee-jerk reactions often come in moments when I don't expect anything to go wrong. For instance, I may call my bank with a question about my account. Then I am shuttled from person to person, with no one seeming to care or be able to address the problem. What seemed like a simple call has turned into an epic encounter. And each time I am put on hold, my patience drains just a bit more. In those moments, I may react to the next person in the chain without thinking.

All is not lost. We can often turn things around if we catch ourselves and shift attention back to our original goal, which, in my case, was to get an answer to my question.

Catch Yourself

Pay attention to your own unique blend of signals that let you know you have moved into knee-jerk range, such as:

- **Your words.** Note the words you use when you are in a knee-jerk response. They often differ from day-to-day speech. They may be stronger or weaker. They may be sarcastic or kind. They may attack, be overly rational and legalistic, or be overly mild. There is no one-size-fits-all pattern. You must identify your own unique patterns.
- **Muscle tension.** Muscles react instantly, sometimes well before the conscious mind has had a chance to figure out what is going on. If we are attentive to those shifts and note where tension is growing in our bodies, we may be able to stop a knee jerk. These physical signals — a furrowed brow, muscles in the shoulder or neck beginning to tighten, our hands held differently than usual, or our jaw beginning to clench — can be early warning signs that trouble is on the way.
- **Pulse.** It usually goes up. If you are someone who can pick up on this signal, use this data.

- The words the other person uses. Know the words that trigger knee-jerk responses in you.

Shift Attention

When you notice that you have moved into a knee-jerk reaction, you now have options:

- Shift to I/You. This shift in intention from I/It to I/You is by far the most important and reliable tool. When we are in a knee-jerk mode, we lose the I/You relationship. Our attention may turn to all I: “I’ve got to get out of here” (move away). It may turn to all It: “I’ve got to get the idea sold no matter what” (move against). And it may result in giving up our I and It and going too far into the You portion of the equation: “I’ve got to maintain this relationship at all costs” (move toward).

Theater director Keith Johnstone believes that stage fright occurs when we lose contact with our scene partner and focus too much on ourselves (“Will I remember my lines?” “How am I doing?” “She’s getting more laughs than I am tonight.”).¹⁰ When we are nervous, we risk paying attention to our own nervousness, instead of to the work we are doing.

Johnstone suggests shifting the attention back to the relationship, since that’s the reason you are there in the first place. That simple advice has helped me countless times in meetings with clients. Just when I start to get nervous and feel my favorite knee jerk — using logic and details — kick in, I remember his advice and shift the focus to the relationship.

This shift is in keeping with the spirit of I/You. Refocusing on I/You — on the importance of the relationship — is the best antidote to automatic knee-jerk reactions.

- Take a break. Sometimes it is as if we are listening to a play in which we already know the outcome. We listen to a tape reciting our lines, knowing that the outcome will be tragic. But we feel trapped. We are in the middle of this terrible play, and there are still three acts to go.



STOPPING MID-JERK

1. Identify what triggers knee-jerk reactions in you from a particular person who is important to you.
2. How do you react?
3. What do you notice just as this reaction kicks in (e.g., muscles tensing, pulse rate increasing, voice rising in volume or pitch)?
4. What have you done in other situations to stop yourself from continuing with a knee-jerk reaction?
5. How can you support yourself when you meet with this person again?

In order to make a shift to I/You, you may need to take a break. Sometimes a momentary break in the action can allow you to regain your balance and remember your intention. If possible, leave the room. Or get up and walk across the room and get something to drink. Do anything to shift your own attention away from the situation for a moment. This shift may occur while someone else is talking during a meeting, giving you a brief respite. It may come from simply taking a few deep breaths.

Groucho Marx was famous for his quick ad-libs to guests on the game show “You Bet Your Life.” People knew the character he had created so well that just a wiggle of the cigar could get a laugh. But it served another purpose as well. A puff on the cigar bought him just an extra moment to think up his response.¹¹ I’m not suggesting that you take up smoking, but you might find some small thing that serves the same function as Groucho’s cigar.

- Admit what’s happening to you. It’s amazing what the truth can do: “I just realized that I’ve been doing all the talking. And the reason I came here was to find out what you thought of the idea.” “Excuse me, I’m getting a bit carried away. I apologize. I didn’t mean to attack

your ideas. Obviously, I believe in the idea I'm presenting, so why don't I shut up for a few minutes and listen to what you think?"

Chapter 10, "Stay Calm to Stay Engaged," covers other ways to help you avoid knee-jerk reactions.

HOW TO START

Begin small, in seemingly insignificant situations, and just notice what's going on. With forgiveness toward yourself in your heart, begin to notice when you feel yourself reacting in a knee-jerk manner. Ask yourself, "Am I moving toward, against, or away? What impact is that having? Is it getting me closer to my goals or moving me further from them? Is this reaction building a bridge with the other person or destroying its underpinnings?"

Before we can change our behavior, we must first fully grasp what we are doing today. If we notice what we are doing with harsh judgment, we'll have difficulty seeing ourselves clearly enough to change. In a way, we need to extend the humanity of I/You to ourselves. Instead of creating an idealized "It" that we must achieve by giving up bad habits, we could try to be more accepting of what we are doing now.

It may help to remember that knee jerks are our own attempts to protect ourselves from harm — and that's a good thing. We developed these automatic responses over time for good reasons. It's not that they are bad, but simply that in some cases they may be over-used or their utility has run its course.

The principles of engagement are not steps. In fact, four of them — Avoid Knee-Jerk Reactions, Pay Attention, Explore Deeply, and Find Ways to Connect — are tightly linked. They move back and forth like a fine dance. Paying attention can show us tension in the other person or reveal that our own knee is starting to jerk. Paying attention tells us that it is time to explore differences. As we explore differences, we must be mindful of knee jerks just waiting to kick. We can't pay attention once and then think we've completed that step and move on. We need to pay attention throughout the process. We need to avoid knee-jerk reactions throughout as well. And we need to explore differences whenever they occur.