

Why Do Good People Become Silent – Or Worse – About 911? By Frances Shure

Part 1 – Preface and Introduction (Links for further parts at end)

Editor's Note: Frances Shure, M.A., L.P.C., has performed an in-depth analysis addressing a key issue of our time: "Why Do Good People Become Silent—or Worse—About 9/11?" The resulting essay, to be presented here as a series, is comprised of a synthesis of reports on academic research as well as clinical observations.

Ms. Shure's analysis begins with recognition of the observation made by the psychology professionals interviewed in the documentary "9/11: Explosive Evidence – Experts Speak Out" by Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth, who cite our human tendencies toward denial in order to avoid the discomfort of cognitive dissonance. Indeed, resistance to information that substantially challenges our worldview is the rule rather than the exception, Ms. Shure explains. This is so because fear is the emotion that underlies most of the negative reactions toward 9/11 skeptics' information. Ms. Shure addresses the many types of fear that are involved, and how they tie into the "sacred myth" of American exceptionalism.

Through the lenses of anthropology and social psychology, Ms. Shure focuses on diffusion of innovations; obeying and believing authority; doublethink; cognitive dissonance; conformity; groupthink; terror management theory; systems justification theory; signal detection theory; and prior knowledge of state crimes against democracy and deep politics. Through the lens of clinical psychology, Ms. Shure explores viewpoints described in the sections on learned helplessness; the abuse syndrome; dissociation; and excessive identification with the United States government. Two sections on brain research provide astonishing insights into our human nature.

Finally, the sections entitled "American Exceptionalism," "Governmental Manipulation and the 'Big Lie,'" and "Those Who Lack Conscience and Empathy" contain valuable information from an amalgam of the disciplines of history, social psychology, clinical psychology, and brain research. The final sections address how we can communicate about 9/11 evidence more effectively, and our human need for awareness and healing. Ms. Shure concludes by quoting poet Langston Hughes in an inspiring epilogue, which asks: "Is America Possible?"

This month's installment begins with Ms. Shure's Preface and Introduction. Succeeding segments will continue the journey that explores contributions of Western psychology in answering the pressing question, "Why Do Good People Become Silent—or Worse—about 9/11?"

Preface

The following essay is not meant to persuade anyone of the theory that elements within our government were responsible for the devastating attacks of September 11, 2001. Rather, this paper is addressed primarily to the 45% of Americans¹—and those people in other parts of the world—who already believe a new investigation is needed, as well as those who simply have had their doubts about the official account of 9/11 but have not explored the issue further. This paper is also addressed to psychology professionals and social scientists who may wish to consider the question in the title in greater depth.

Furthermore, this essay should be helpful to anyone who encounters resistance to any paradigm-shifting idea about which he or she may be communicating, since the same dynamics and research would apply in all such cases.

This work was not crafted entirely alone. I am grateful to the Writing Team of Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth who suggested I write an article in the first place—thus the seed was planted. Once the seed began germinating, it was nurtured by substantial suggestions from Marti Hopper, Ph.D., Sheila Fabricant Linn, M.Div., Dennis Linn, M.Div., Daniel K. Sage, Ph.D., Dorothy Lorig, M.A., Earl Staelin, J.D., Joseph Lam, Gregg Roberts, John Freedom, C.E.H.P., Danielle Duperret, Ph.D., Paul Rea, Ph.D., Tim Gale, Sonia Skakich-Scrima, M.A., and by the care taken by proofreaders Nancy Hall and Dennis McMahan. I am profoundly indebted and grateful for their enthusiastic help.

In addition, this work could not have been written without contributions from the people named and quoted in the document. I have drawn from wherever I found research, credible observations, or inspiration that seemed to apply. I hope others will become inspired to add to this synthesis of research and observation to further help answer the question, “Why Do Good People Become Silent—or Worse—About 9/11?”

Introduction

“If what you are saying is true, I don’t want to know!” exclaimed a young male visitor at our 9/11 Truth booth at the Denver People’s Fair. He was referring to the evidence of controlled demolition of the three World Trade Center (WTC) skyscrapers on September 11, 2001.

“Why?” I asked.

“Because if what you are saying is true, I would become very negative. Psychologically, I would go downhill.”

With gratitude, I responded “Thank you!”

Surprised, he asked, “Why are you thanking me?”

“Because it’s rare to hear such raw truth. Thank you for being so honest.”

Softened by our exchange, the young man chatted with me a while longer before taking his leave. I have never forgotten him; he has likely never forgotten me. We both felt it. Paradoxically, deep truth had been shared.

We who work to educate the public about 9/11, and about false flag operations,² are puzzled by the often forceful resistance from our listeners. Yet, many of us in the 9/11 Truth Movement also once vigorously resisted this challenging evidence. We have our own stories to document this. What drives those negative reactions?

Before continuing, I would like to clarify that people who continue to resist the evidence that indicates 9/11 was a false flag operation are no more mentally healthy or unhealthy than those of us who question the official account. Both groups consist of folks who span the mental health spectrum.

So, there is no need to pathologize those who currently do not see what is now so clear to us, just as those of us in the 9/11 Truth Movement should not be dismissed and maligned as “conspiracy theorists”—the latter being an obvious defense and a not so obvious offense.³

The psychology professionals interviewed in the documentary *9/11: Explosive Evidence - Experts Speak Out* by Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth clearly speak about our human tendencies toward denial in order to avoid the discomfort of cognitive dissonance. They speak compassionately about all of us. There is no sophisticated name-calling (diagnosing) as can sometimes be popular among the members of this profession. This is indeed refreshing.

In this spirit, and in the spirit of beginning a conversation—for we humans are complicated creatures—I will share my thinking as to why some of us defend ourselves from information that is troubling.

History tells us that to determine reality, even scientists, whom we stereotypically view as objectively and open-mindedly looking at data, rather than at belief, often vigorously resist paradigm shifts. Gregor Mendel’s experiments and resulting theory of genetic inheritance, for example, was resisted by scientists from the time of its announcement in 1865, and was only rediscovered in 1900 by three other European scientists. Resistance to information that

substantially challenges our worldview, we find, is the rule rather than the exception.⁴ Fortunately, change does occur, consensus reality does shift, sometimes rapidly, sometimes excruciatingly slowly.

To reiterate what I said in the film *9/11: Experts Speak Out*, fear is the emotion that underlies most of the negative reactions toward 9/11 skeptics' information: fear of receiving information that will turn our world upside down, fear of being overwhelmed by our own emotions, fear of psychological deterioration, fear our life will have to change, fear we'll discover that the world is not a safe place, fear that our reputation will be tarnished or that we'll lose our jobs, fear of being shunned or banished by friends and family, and fear of looking like a fool because we bought the official account so thoroughly.

This last reason may be true especially for intellectuals who often identify strongly with their intellect. None of us, however, like to feel bamboozled, as this often threatens our very identity and brings us very close to feeling betrayed. Carl Sagan knew this when he said,

One of the saddest lessons of history is this: If we've been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We're no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozle has captured us. It's simply too painful to acknowledge, even to ourselves, that we've been taken. Once you give a charlatan power over you, you almost never get it back.⁵

psychologist and scholar Laurie Manwell tells us that one of her professors said that he could sum up human behavior with this statement: "People liked to be liked, they like to be right, and they like to be free—in that order." Thus, most people will give up their need to be right or free if their need to be liked is threatened.⁶ Why is this?

The fear of banishment is surely among the greatest fears we humans harbor, albeit often unconsciously.⁷ We are social creatures. We need others in order to survive, and we need to have a sense of belonging. To have some sense of wholeness and well-being, we need to feel connected to others, to love and to be loved. This is the reason that ridicule and shaming are such potent strategies used—consciously or unconsciously—to censor those with views that diverge from a culture's sacred mythology.

A "sacred myth" is a special story, found in every culture, whether true, untrue, or partially true, that tells us who we are and why we are doing what we are doing.⁸

What is our American sacred myth? It goes something like this:

We are a truly exceptional nation with exceptional forefathers. We rebelled against tyranny and established a democratic republic, a model that the world has largely accepted and imitated. Our country is the purveyor of democracy and freedom around the world and our interventions in other countries are benevolent actions. On September 11, 2001, we were caught off-guard when al Qaeda terrorists in a sneak attack, similar to that at Pearl Harbor, succeeded in flying commercial airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the most significant wound to our homeland to date. However, true to the American spirit, we immediately rose to the challenge to militarily smite the world of terrorists who hate us because of our freedoms. This is why we have an unending Global War on Terror.

If we can set aside this belief in our sacred myth, look at the evidence, and recognize that 9/11 was a false flag operation, then we may also fear severe repercussions from corrupt authorities if we should speak out. As one person told me, “I appreciate everything you all are doing with this 9/11 issue, but I hope you understand, I have children; I can’t get involved with this.

Fear is an integral part of the human condition; and yet, if we are committed to psycho-spiritual growth, we do not let fear dictate what we do—or do not do. We can be aware of the fear while not letting it rule our lives.

Most of us were traumatized⁹ by watching the horrifying destruction of the Twin Towers, knowing there were thousands of our fellow humans beings killed in that moment. Some of us were again deeply shaken when we discovered evidence indicating that 9/11 might be a false flag operation.

Why do some of us embrace the evidence and its implications and get active, while others feel powerless in the face of this evidence or react with apathy? And why do others get defensive and stay defensive—sometimes vehemently? Why, indeed, upon hearing the evidence that contradicts the official account of 9/11, do good people become silent, or worse?

What is the difference? How, for example, can some people watch World Trade Center Building 7 (WTC7)¹⁰ implode and collapse into its own footprint and not see what is right in front of them—even when they know about its free fall acceleration and the other characteristics of controlled demolition? These people may feel compelled to intensify their resistance with intellectually contorted measures to convince themselves and others that this was not controlled demolition. Others will content themselves with shaming anyone who wants to investigate the 9/11 evidence that contradicts the official sacred myth.

There is a worldview that is being seriously challenged. What is it? In essence, it was described well by words from a journalist whom I met at a street action: “I am aware that our government does bad things, but not this! Not those towers! They would not be that evil.”

So we assume our government—which is supposed to protect us but sometimes does bad things—would never commit acts this heinous. A man said to me during a public presentation, “I find your statement that our government orchestrated 9/11 very disturbing and offensive.”

“I believe I said the evidence trail leads to elements within our government, not the government,” I replied.

He retorted, with great seriousness, “It makes no difference. There is no way you can state this that is going to make me feel any better!”

Many of us unconsciously relate to our governmental leaders as parental figures on whom we project our (often unmet) needs for a protective parent. We even agree culturally to the term “our founding fathers.”

The disciplines of Western psychology and anthropology have much to offer toward understanding human behavior, but we must remember that these disciplines, as impressive as they are, are ultimately disciplines that belong to our Western culture only. In the East and in some tribal societies, for example, people may use the philosophy of the transmigration of souls to explain human behavior; and the Sufis, the mystical branch of Islam, use the nine personality types of the Enneagram to explain our disparate human propensities.

Remember the proverbial five blind men, each touching one part of an elephant? Each man draws a conclusion as to what the object is, depending on which part he is touching. The result? Five partial and laughably inaccurate descriptions of reality.

The more lenses we look through, therefore, the greater is our capacity to see a clearer—a more dimensional—picture of our human tendencies. Nonetheless, within the overlapping viewpoints of the rich disciplines of Western psychology, anthropology, brain research, and history, we can find several lenses that shed much light on the conundrum of why information that contradicts our worldview is so difficult for us to receive.

Through the lenses of anthropology and social psychology we will find helpful information in the sections below entitled Diffusion of Innovations; Obeying and Believing Authority; Doublethink; Cognitive Dissonance; Conformity; Groupthink; Terror Management Theory; Systems Justification Theory; Signal Detection Theory; and Prior Knowledge of State Crimes Against Democracy and Deep Politics.

Through the lens of clinical psychology we will explore viewpoints described in the sections on Learned Helplessness; The Abuse Syndrome; Dissociation; and Excessive Identification with the U.S.A.

The two sections on Brain Research provide us with astonishing insights into our human nature.

Finally, the sections entitled American Exceptionalism; Governmental Manipulation and the Big Lie; and Those Who Lack Conscience and Empathy, contain valuable information from an amalgam of the disciplines of history, social psychology, clinical psychology, and brain research.

Let me emphasize that this paper will be a synthesis of reports on academic research as well as clinical observations. None of the sections will fall neatly into one category or another, but they will overlap each other, as any rich and complicated subject will tend to do.

Let's begin our journey with an anthropological study...

Note: To be continued in our next newsletter with **Part 2: [Diffusion of Innovations](#)**