

Warm Memories Can Dampen Hatred of Outsiders

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Pacific Standard:

At a time when “deport the immigrants” is an increasingly popular position, it’s clear that animosity toward perceived outsiders remains a powerful driver of political attitudes. If you step back and identify the underlying emotional foundation of this problematic mindset, the answer is obvious: fear and insecurity. “Those people” are perceived as a threat to “my people.”

But not everyone is equally fearful and insecure. As psychologists John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth pointed out decades ago, healthy emotional functioning depends in large part on the presence of a loving, supportive figure one can depend upon. Such a figure gives a child the courage to explore, and helps establish a sense of security that can last a lifetime.

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In the journal *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, the University of Michigan’s Muniba Saleem leads a research team describing four studies that suggest this approach holds great promise. One study featured 278 people from the University of Michigan community who were given the opportunity to hurt counterparts from a rival school (Ohio State) at no cost to themselves.

Read the whole story: [Pacific Standard](#)