

Denial of Reality: The Role of Minimization and Lack of Accountability in Empires

By Dr. Michael Absatz – February 2023

I remember being blamed for doing something wrong as a child and responding, "I didn't do it. It wasn't me." It might have been teasing my little sister or sneaking some extra cookies for dessert. Sometimes, I got away with it. Other times, I gave in and admitted my mistake or negative behavior. Sometimes, I was punished for wrongdoing. Other times I had to promise the behavior would not happen again.

Many of us don't like to be called on for the negative acts we commit. We protest, deny, and blame someone else. Denial is one way to NOT take responsibility for our actions.

Empires are systems that are hierarchical and suppress and oppress others. Since oppression is a "bad" thing to do, denial becomes one way the oppressors choose to live. Along with denial can come minimization -- "Oh, it wasn't that bad."

Horrible events have been part of American history. America learned from Great Britain how to be an Empire. It was not okay to be oppressed, but it was okay to oppress others -- such as Native Americans. It isn't really oppression anyway. It is just what we do. The land was really ours to begin with -- Manifest Destiny or Eminent Domain. Slavery wasn't so bad. Six million Jews were not really killed during Hitler's reign.

Black History isn't really important and erodes the belief America was intended for only a certain privileged group. In reality, some of our founding fathers kept slaves. But they wrote, "All men are created equal." This also ignored women and children.

Those in power create their truth and want others to believe it. Any difference of opinion is a threat to some people's notion of Reality.

The problem with Denial, Minimization, and False Reality is that they justify the Empire's domination/control/oppression belief system.

When a six-year-old boy shoots his teacher, we act surprised. When vast amounts of people are oppressed, harassed, bullied, tortured, and violated, it is ignored. Why are we surprised when police kill innocent young Black men? Why do we act indignant when gay/lesbian/transgender/non-binary people are marginalized and beaten?

Denial is pretending that all is well when it clearly is not. Something is rotten in the American Empire. Something is rotten in any Empire. Destruction, pain, suffering are the results of hierarchy and domination. That's just the way it is.

We won't fix the problem by pretending "we are the greatest nation in the world." America became "great" on the backs of immigrants, slaves, the lower class, people of color, and other marginalized groups.

Hurt people hurt others. Oppressed people sometimes revolt. America was founded by oppressed people who revolted. They then oppressed others. Denial of reality is about pretending in the integrity of the American Dream, for many, it has been, always was, and currently is a nightmare.

Violence, abuse, terrorism won't go away until we acknowledge the truth that "While all people may be created equal, they don't get to live that out in Empires." Change involves taking responsibility, changing consciousness, and behaviors. Let's stop acting surprised when more and more innocent people, including children, die before our eyes.

To deny is to lie. To lie is to deceive. All deception leads to suffering. Time to wake up to Reality