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SIX DEGREES TO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

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The game “six degrees to Kevin Bacon,” also known as the “Human Web” theory, posits that everyone is, at the most, only six steps away from any other person on our shrinking Earth

Thus, using the Human Web model, I offer you a pathway to the six essential initiatives that create an “optimal” framework for modern psychology.

First, psychology must make a global commitment. APA should promote the benefits of psychological research, education, training, and services for everyone, everywhere, regardless of geographical, political, or cultural identities.

For example, through technology, we can provide invaluable psychological information, such as about research and interventions, to ALL people.

Second, as I teach in social psychology, every person represents multiple cultures. Throughout the life span, research and education should bolster cultural identities by exposing bias, prejudice, and discrimination, and elevating appreciation of the uniqueness of individuals and groups.

Psychological theory and research about cultural factors should be integrated into all academic subjects at every level of education, from preschool to all adult education programs.

Psychology should seek to persuade government, education, and mass media sources to espouse socially responsible messages about multiculturalism.

Third, psychological research should be the basis for all human services, especially for education, health care, and social policy.

For example, psychology should be the cornerstone for health care services, and disseminate the results of its research for use in the training programs of every health care profession.

Fourth, there must never be a schism between science and practice. Being a professor and practitioner, I know that efficacious learning, assessment, and treatment require allegiance to the scientist-practitioner model.

We must continue the efforts to better integrate the results of research and scholarly thought with the wisdom that comes from practice.

Fifth, a civil society requires strong democratic principles. Although sometimes unwieldy, government is for and by the people.

Psychology should champion benefits for ALL people through advocacy in governmental channels.

Mass media must be cultivated to convey constructive messages with high fidelity.

Given my background in public health, I support ongoing and unrestricted effort to accomplish and implement health care reform.

Sixth and finally, paraphrasing an old adage, psychologists should “do as I say and as I do.”

Every psychologist should accept our profession’s values and ethical principles that require conduct and behavior that respect the dignity and rights of ALL people and help ALL people experience healthy and productive lives.

When professional ethics prevail in everyday practice of psychology, there is less need for actions by regulatory agencies.

Please join with me in vigorously pursuing these six thrusts that will provide an optimal framework for modern psychology.