

Closing Words:

We have been talking about transsexual patients; but anything we can learn, and any insights we might gain about trans patients, can only help us in taking care of ALL patients.

You see, the larger truth is we share a common humanity:

“Our Common Humanity”

(showing Blue Marble icon slide again)

It is our common humanity to suffer, to be terrified, to feel dark despair and existential loneliness

Whether you are the elderly Bangladeshi gentleman patient I took care of a couple of weeks ago,

Or you are an 80 y/o Japanese woman in Nagoya

Or you were an 18 y/o soldier in the American Civil War

Or you are a transgendered person in India—a Hijra

Or you were a Jewish immigrant arriving at Ellis Island, for whom these words were written, and are engraved on the Statue of Liberty: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...”

Or you were Richard Lovings, a white man who was imprisoned in Virginia, for daring to love and marry his beautiful African American lady, and who took their love to the Supreme Court in 1964, a landmark case which struck down the prevailing miscegenation laws; (used to be a felony to intermarry)—Lovings vs. the State of VA, what a wonderful name to have in this Case!)

For these, and for all people, in all cultures, in all times

It is our common humanity to be afraid, lonely and apprehensive

It is our common humanity to feel threatened, out-of-control, weak—sometimes strong

It is our common humanity to feel defeated, disappointed, sad—and sometimes joyous

It is our common humanity to live with ambiguity, to need reassurance;

It is our common humanity to want to be understood, respected and needed;

It is our common humanity to be hungry, thirsty, to enjoy sex

It is our common humanity to desire intimacy, to mate, to build a family

It is our common humanity to long for home, and to want to feel secure

It is our common humanity to want to feel part of a community, to feel a member of “the tribe,” to share a meal, to participate in cultural rituals

It is our common humanity to want to breathe, free of the toxic effect of greenhouse gas emissions; and for our grandchildren to breathe—free

It is our common humanity to hope

It is our common humanity to have a dream

And it is our common humanity for each and every one of us to know that one day we are all going to die.

And when are we going to get it?

Because when we recognize and acknowledge our common humanity; then we understand diversity

Paradoxically it's true: that when we recognize and acknowledge our common humanity with every human in every culture and in every time, who has ever lived on this planet Earth, then we understand diversity