who would agree about who started the conflict, who is to blame, who should make the next concession, etc. In such matters, our investment in our beliefs is much stronger than any affiliation to sport teams, and so we hold on to these beliefs tenaciously. Thus the likelihood of agreement about "the facts" becomes smaller and smaller as personal investment in the problem grows. This is clearly disturbing. We like to think that sitting at the same table together will help us hammer out our differences and that concessions will soon follow. But history has shown us that this is an unlikely outcome; and now we know the reason for this catastrophic failure.

But there's reason for hope. In our experiments, tasting beer without knowing about the vinegar, or learning about the vinegar after the beer was tasted, allowed the true flavor to come out. The same approach should be used to settle arguments: The perspective of each side is presented without the affiliation—the facts are revealed, but not which party took which actions. This type of "blind" condition might help us better recognize the truth.

When stripping away our preconceptions and our previous knowledge is not possible, perhaps we can at least acknowledge that we are all biased. If we acknowledge that we are trapped within our perspective, which partially blinds us to the truth, we may be able to accept the idea that conflicts generally require a neutral third party—who has not been tainted with our expectations—to set down the rules and regulations. Of course, accepting the word of a third party is not easy and not always possible; but when it is possible, it can yield substantial benefits. And for that reason alone, we must continue to try.