



RANK

Rank is conscious or unconscious, social or personal ability or power arising from culture, community support, personal psychology and/or spiritual power. Whether you earn or inherit your rank, it organizes much of your communication behaviour, especially in moments of positive/negative tension (ecstasy conflict)

4 types of rank

social rank -- race, gender, age, class economics, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, health and physical abilities, language, education. People with social rank are rarely aware of it. It is mostly unconscious, like the air we breath.

contextual rank -- every group/situation has its own rank structures; the power ascribed to an individual changes depending on the group or culture; contextual rank is fluid. We notice contextual rank when we move to another context and are seen and valued differently.

psychological rank -- acquired through life experiences, for example having your perceptions validated as a child; having a loving parent/home life; surviving suffering and coming our stronger and more compassionate; having self-awareness and knowing oneself; receiving love; positive/critical feedback; unconditional support; valued; respected; living in a community that honours who you are; wrestling with fears and surviving ... growing. People with psychological rank are able to use their awareness and have confidence or esteem that comes from their inner work. They are able to express themselves even in the face of great social powers. They are fluid in their ability to relate and respond to conflict, chaos, change, challenges.

Spiritual rank -- is independent of culture, family, and the world. It comes from, being connected with something divine or transcendent that keeps you centred even in the midst of a storm; a sense of great conviction; justice is on your side; having awesome and uncanny experiences; a sense of knowing your 'calling' in life. People with spiritual rank are community builders; they have an uncanny ability to bring groups together. They radiate a sense of well-being.

Mindell says keep in mind that --

- almost every conflict is a mixture of social, physical, psychological, and spiritual issues
- any power good or bad if *unrecognised* can be hurtful. Hidden 'mainstream power' lies behind the generally unexpressed assumption that oppressed people must dialogue politely to work out their problems, but an oppressed person usually doesn't want to contain their rage when given a chance to talk about it
- people with rank and power are rarely ready to be enlightened about their powers. That's why searching for clarity/understanding about what's going on is more important really than resolution ... at this point.
- awareness of rank issues + getting in touch how you really feel is a powerful combination. With these elements we are able to more authentically respond and not react to the social scripts or socialised patterns that have been imposed upon us by the dominant culture. Following a social script (e.g. keeping silent or tut-tut, laughing uncomfortably about a racist joke) may be the response we want to make, but let it at least be a conscious decision.



Actually Lou, I think it was more than my being in the right place at the right time. I think it was my being the right race, the right religion, the right sex, the right socio-economic group, having the right accent, the right clothes, going to the right schools....

In sum, rank ...

- refers to the relative power we have with one another in our interpersonal, group, community and global relationships
- some kinds of rank are earned (accomplishments, service performed)
- some kinds of rank are unearned (membership to a particular race, sex, class)
- there are four types: social, contextual, psychological & spiritual
- you can't hide rank; others identify you with your rank because of your signals and communication style
- we respond in accordance to our rank
- each of us has an inner sense of rank that is determined by a variety of factors
- most of us are more aware of the areas in which we feel we lack rank and less aware of areas where we are full of rank
- people have high and low rank in different areas
- rank is fluid/it changes