

## Dignity Conversations: The Dignity Movement

### CONVERSATIONS THAT LEAD TO INSIGHT AND ACTION

*The Dignity Index Team is building a Dignity Movement that's grounded in three hypotheses. Let's discuss each in turn.*

1. Treating people with contempt causes division; treating people with dignity *eases* division.
  - Many people believe that division is caused by global trends that are out of our control, trends like the loss of trust, the decline of institutions, the rise of social media. What do you think? Is contempt the primary cause of division or is it more complicated than that? If it's more complicated, is contempt still a factor? How big a factor?
  - Does the argument that contempt causes division and dignity eases division change the way you look at your own habits? If so, what do you see?
  - If you were going to change one thing in your life to use more dignity and less contempt, what change would that be? Would you do it alone, privately – or would you do it together, perhaps with a group?
2. When we put a spotlight on dignity and contempt, we use more dignity and less contempt.
  - Does this seem true to you? Can you think of a moment when the Dignity Index gave you a perspective on your behavior that made you want to change?
  - If the “spotlight effect” is true, what *makes* it true? Does it have to do with conscience? Does it have to do with social convention? Are there other factors?
  - People often believe, at first, that the Dignity Index is a tool for judging others, but then they find that it's a mirror for seeing themselves and assessing their own behavior. We call this “the mirror effect.” Has this been your experience? Why do you think this might be true?
3. When we use more dignity and less contempt, we begin to expect the same from the people who entertain us, inform us and represent us.
  - Does this seem true to you? Have you changed your behavior because of the Dignity Index? If so, does it incline you to expect the same from people you deal with?
  - If we can form groups of people who expect dignity from themselves and others, we could build a constituency that rewards dignity and challenges contempt – and that's how the culture can start to change. Does this seem realistic to you – or does it seem naïve?
  - Would you join a group formed to reward dignity and challenge contempt in public speech? Why or why not?