

THE DIGNITY INDEX

Scoring Guide

THE DIGNITY INDEX is an eight-point scale that measures what we do when we disagree. Each scale point represents a particular mindset toward the other side, ranging from **ONE** – which sees no dignity at all in the other side – to **EIGHT**, which sees the dignity in everyone. This Scoring Guide includes a set of quotes and traits that are characteristic of each mindset. Scoring involves matching language in the passage with the quotes or traits of a particular scale point.

1

They're not even human. They don't deserve to live.

They are ruining us.

We have a moral duty to destroy them before they destroy us.

ONE...

- has an absolute belief in their own righteousness and in the life-threatening subhuman evil of the other side.
- cannot bear the pain of any blame or criticism; they will kill a critic.
- feels virtuous and heroic about calling for violence and acting on it.

DIFFERENTIATING ONE AND TWO:

ONE says that the other side is less than human, is “destroying us,” and should be attacked, killed, or eliminated. **TWO** believes that the other side is evil and is going to “ruin us if we let them,” but is not calling for or committing violence. **TWO** is “us or them.” **ONE** is “all us and no-them.”

2

Those people are evil. They're going to ruin our country if we let them. It's us or them.

They're not just bad people; they're promoting evil.

Those people are a danger to everything we value.

TWO...

- believes the other side is an existential threat.
- wants to secede or move to another country to get away from “those people.”
- tells stories that “prove” the evil of the other side.
- longs to see the other side suffer, to “see them finally get what they deserve.”

DIFFERENTIATING TWO AND THREE:

TWO says “those are evil people trying to ruin us. They're an existential threat.” **THREE** says “those are bad people trying to hurt us.” **TWO** is “us or them.” **THREE** is “us versus them.”

3

We're the good people; they're the bad people. It's us versus them.

Those people hate us and want to hurt us.

They look down on us and mock our values.

THREE...

- attacks the moral character of the other side.
- wants to make the other side fail.
- is disdainful of the other side.
- ascribes all the good qualities to “us” and all the bad qualities to “them”.
- takes credit for good outcomes and blames the other side for bad outcomes.

DIFFERENTIATING THREE AND FOUR:

THREE attacks the moral character of the other side, not just their capabilities or their competence. “They're just bad people.” **FOUR** believes “we're different and better,” but does not make a moral character attack. **THREE** disdains the other side; **FOUR** dismisses them. **THREE** is “us versus them.” **FOUR** is “us and them” – but never “we.”

4

We're better than those people. They don't really belong. They don't really share our values.

They're working for those people, not for us.

They're reckless and irresponsible. They're losers and failures. You just can't count on them.

FOUR...

- dismisses the other side as not worth talking to.
- criticizes the other side's commitment, competence or, performance not with facts, but with labels and insults.
- will distort or rename an opponent's position to make it sound unappealing or unintelligent (this could be lower than **FOUR**, depending on what the distortion implies).

DIFFERENTIATING FOUR AND FIVE:

FOUR does not engage in discussion. If they listen to the other side, they will roll their eyes as they do. **FIVE** speaks openly, states its goals, explains its views and never uses name-calling or sarcasm. At **FIVE** (and above) criticisms of the other side are grounded in the record, based on facts, decisions, actions, and outcomes.

5

The other side has a right to be here and to be heard. It's their country too.

I'll listen to what they have to say.

I'm going to tell you what I believe and why I believe it.

FIVE...

- speaks openly, explaining their views and arguments.
- does more than state vague, lofty goals; they state views they know others oppose.
- listens intently and sincerely to the other side without any expressions of contempt.
- challenges the other side on facts, actions, decisions and outcomes, never with insults or negative labels.

DIFFERENTIATING FIVE AND SIX:

FIVE speaks openly and listens respectfully, but doesn't engage the other side to find common ground. **SIX** believes they have a duty to talk to the other side, find common interests and values, and use them as a basis for cooperation.

6

We talk to the other side, searching for the values and interests we share, and using them as a basis for cooperation.

We don't let our disagreements keep us from cooperating on the things we agree on.

We have more in common than we think.

SIX...

- can see the good in the other side and will acknowledge their gifts and accomplishments.
- finds it deeply satisfying to cooperate with the other side.
- feels affection for their partners on the other side; they are proud of the relationship and feel it is special.

DIFFERENTIATING SIX AND SEVEN:

SIX engages with the other side, but tends to retreat when finding areas of strong disagreement. **SIX** doesn't explore the possibility that they might be wrong and might be contributing to the problem. It doesn't bother a **SEVEN** to hear their views challenged and criticized, so when they run into conflict, they keep listening.

7

I want to discuss our disagreements because I'm open to changing my mind. I might be wrong.

I'm curious about what people have been through and how they came to believe what they believe.

I am willing to take criticism from my own side for working with the other side.

SEVEN...

- can absorb pain without passing it on.
- has a great deal of humility, especially in their ability to be self-critical, admit mistakes, and even consider how they might be contributing to the problem.
- sees through the polarization game. When others try to incite and exploit their anger, they call it out and caution others against it.
- will challenge contempt to defend the dignity of someone being demonized.

DIFFERENTIATING SEVEN AND EIGHT:

SEVEN can take the pain of being criticized and will challenge contempt from their own side even when it costs them belonging. **EIGHT** is able to absorb the pain of being hated, and will stand up for the dignity of the most demonized, even when it puts them in danger. **EIGHT** is a fuller expression of the love and humility and capacity for self-criticism that emerge in **SEVEN**.

8

Everyone is born with inherent worth, so I treat everyone with dignity no matter what.

I don't condemn anyone. If I'd suffered what they did, I might have done what they did.

EIGHT...

- can absorb the pain of being hated without passing it on. That's how they can love their enemies.
- has no sense of moral superiority. They don't look down on anyone.
- will defend the dignity of the most demonized, even when it puts them in danger.
- believes that we human beings are inseparable – one body with many parts – and when we try to get away from each other, we only make things worse.
- wants to solve problems without demanding a particular approach. They want solutions that protect the dignity of every human being, and they don't care who gets credit.