



THE DIGNITY INDEX[®]



**Community College Association of Texas Trustees
2024 Annual Conference**

*THERE IS NO AMERICA WITHOUT DEMOCRACY
THERE IS NO DEMOCRACY WITHOUT HEALTHY DEBATE
THERE IS NO HEALTHY DEBATE WITHOUT DIGNITY*

The Problem



We're stuck.

Only 4% of Americans say America is working well. Just 16% say they trust our leaders will do the right thing most of the time. Unsolved problems is the #1 issue most cited by Americans as the worst result of division.



We're sick.

More than 1 in 3 (34%) Americans have permanently broken off a key relationship due to politics - and nearly half are close family members.



We're split.

The vast majority - 83% - of the country says we are more divided than any other point in their lifetime. A poll this year found 23% of Americans would support secession.

Sources: Pew (September 2023), Luntz (March 2024), YouGov (February 2024)

The Problem

We're winning fights—and losing America.

Worn down and losing hope, we're all blaming the same enemy: each other.

“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolution; and a house divided against itself shall not stand.”

MATTHEW 12:25

The impact of polarization: We're censoring ourselves.

47%

have NOT publicly shared an opinion because they were afraid of being punished in some way. **38% say this has happened multiple times.**

Younger Americans (69%) are more than **TWICE** as likely as older Americans (29%) to censor themselves in this way.



Frank Luntz, February 2024

Contempt

Contempt is an expression of disdain or disgust that we use when we want to send the message that the other side is beneath us.

“We have a cultural addiction to contempt –
an addiction abetted by the outrage industrial complex...
and it’s tearing us apart....
If we want to solve the polarization problem of today-
then we need to solve the contempt problem.”

--Arthur Brooks
Author of Love Your Enemies

Contempt

“Political speech, we know from the research, can incite violence.”

-Amanda Ripley
Author of High Conflict

Treating people with contempt

- Dismissing them as not worth talking to
- Looking down on them
- Calling them names
- Questioning their motives
- Attacking their character
- Mocking their background
- Lumping them together in large groups under negative labels

Dignity

Dignity is the inherent worth we all have from birth.

“Along with our survival instincts, our longing for human dignity is the most powerful force motivating our behavior. It transcends race, gender, ethnicity, and all other social distinctions.”

“If you violate someone’s dignity repeatedly, you will get a war or a divorce or a revolution, because a desire for revenge is an instant response to a dignity violation.”

--Donna Hicks
Author of *Dignity*

Treating people with dignity

- Offering others care and attention
- Making sure they feel free to speak
- Hearing what they've been through
- Giving the benefit of the doubt
- Making them feel they belong
- Acknowledging their gifts and accomplishments

Dignity

“If indignity tears us apart,
dignity can put us back together again.”

--Donna Hicks
Author of *Dignity*

**The difficulty of promoting dignity:
It's hard to maximize what we can't measure.**

“There are agencies and organizations that score us on everything we do...Except there is not a single organization that monitors and scores us for decency and civility and so it's easy to come to the conclusion that that's not important”

-Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO)

Congressional hearing, June 24, 2021

THE DIGNITY INDEX[®]

1

"They're not even human. It's our moral duty to destroy them before they destroy us."

2

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

3

"We're the good people and they're the bad people. It's us vs. them."

4

"We're better than those people. I don't trust them."

5

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

6

"We always talk to the other side, searching for the values and interests we share."

7

"We fully engage with the other side, discussing even the values and interests we don't share, so we know where they're coming from."

8

"Each one of us is born with inherent worth, so we treat everyone with dignity—no matter what."

Contempt / Dignity

Let's give it a try!

THE DIGNITY INDEX

Ease Divisions. Prevent Violence. Solve Problems.

8

"Each one of us is born with inherent worth, so we treat everyone with dignity—no matter what."

7

"We fully engage with the other side, discussing even values and interests we don't share, open to admitting mistakes or changing our minds."

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"We always talk to the other side, searching for the values and interests we share."

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"We're better than those people. They don't really belong. They're not one of us."

3

"We're the good people and they're the bad people. It's us vs. them."

2

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

1

"They're not even human. It's our moral duty to destroy them before they destroy us."

Learn more at dignityindex.us
Reach out at dignityindex@unite.us

slido



Join at slido.com
#CCATT24

[ⓘ] Click **Present with Slido** or install our [Chrome extension](#) to display joining instructions for participants while presenting.

Entertainment culture



Barbie

Sasha: You've been making women feel bad about themselves since you were invented.

Barbie: I think you have that the wrong way around.

Sasha: You represent everything wrong with our culture. Sexualized capitalism, unrealistic physical ideals.

Barbie: No, no, you're describing something stereotypical, Barbie is so much more than that.

Sasha: Look at yourself.

Barbie: I am technically stereotypical Barbie.

Sasha: You set the feminist movement back 50 years, you destroy girls' innate sense of worth, and you are killing the planet with your glorification of rampant consumerism.

Barbie

Sasha: You represent everything wrong with our culture.

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**Sasha: You represent everything wrong
with our culture**

① Click **Present with Slido** or install our [Chrome extension](#) to activate this poll while presenting.

3

“We’re the good people and they’re the bad people. It’s us vs. them.”

Score -

"If you look at the people that we're bringing into the fold, I don't ask them if they're Republican, or Independent, or Democrat, I just tell them where I stand, what I'm for."

Nikki Haley
2024 Republican Presidential Candidate

slido



**"If you look at the people that we're bringing into the fold, I don't ask them if they're Republican, or Independent, or Democrat, I just tell them where I stand, what I'm for."
-Nikki Haley**

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5

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

Score -

"I've shown that I am willing to work with anyone to tackle the tough challenges we're facing, and no matter who controls the legislature, I'm going to continue to operate that way."

Katie Hobbs,
Democratic Governor of Arizona

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- "I've shown that I am willing to work with anyone to tackle the tough challenges we're facing, and no matter who controls the legislature, I'm going to continue to operate that way."
- Katie Hobbs



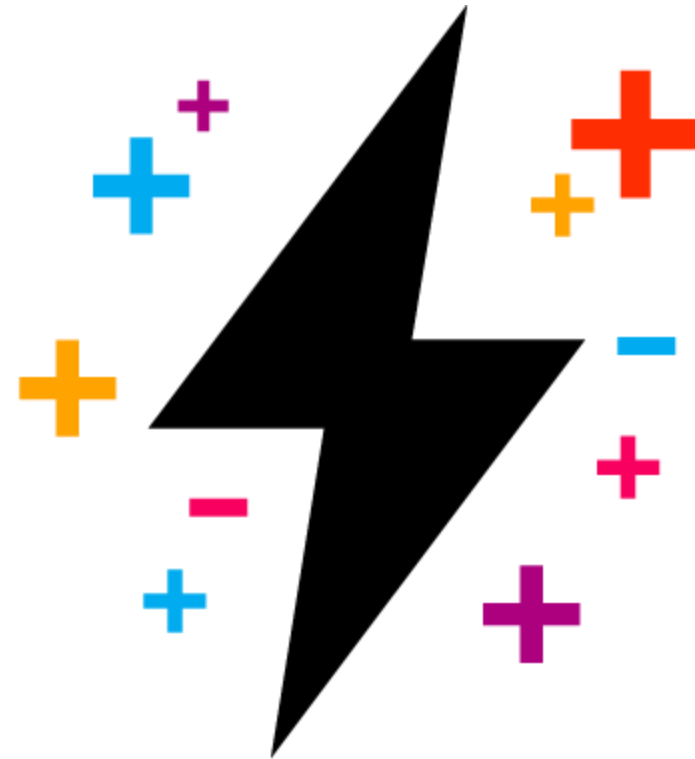
*“We always talk to the other side,
searching for the values and
interests we share.”*

Principle: The secret weakness of contempt

When we use contempt, it's hard to see it.

When we start to see it, it's hard to use it.

The Dignity Index helps us see it.



Differences

Scenario:

Your roommate keeps leaving their dirty dishes and socks in the room, it's starting to stink-

What do you do?



Responses on The Dignity Index

Scenario:

Your roommate keeps leaving their dirty dishes and socks in the room, it's starting to stink-

What do you do?

4

- Avoiding
- Expressing contempt

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Your roommate keeps leaving their dirty dishes and socks in the room, it's starting to stink. What do you do?

Level FOUR of the index

- **Avoiding**
- **Expressing contempt**

Responses on The Dignity Index

Scenario:

Your roommate keeps leaving their dirty dishes and socks in the room, it's starting to stink-

What do you do?



- Engaging
- Framing the message in common values and interests

Practice Skill Building

Scenario:

Your team of policymakers just finished a strategic planning session for an initiative which you will present to the legislature. The team leader asks for feedback on the session's outcomes. Your colleagues start giving comments and suggestions on the strategies discussed. One colleague, in particular, singles you out harshly for proposing a strategy they believe is impractical and unrealistic.

What do you do?

Responses on The Dignity Index

Scenario:

Your team of policymakers just finished a strategic planning session for an initiative which you will present to the legislature. The team leader asks for feedback on the session's outcomes. Your colleagues start giving comments and suggestions on the strategies discussed. One colleague, in particular, singles you out harshly for proposing a strategy they believe is impractical and unrealistic. What do you do?



- Avoiding
- Expressing Contempt

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One colleague, in particular, singles you out harshly for proposing a strategy they believe is impractical and unrealistic. What do you do?

At a Level FOUR on the Index
-Avoiding
-Expressing Contempt

① Click **Present with Slido** or install our [Chrome extension](#) to activate this poll while presenting.

Responses on The Dignity Index

Scenario:

Your team of policymakers just finished a strategic planning session for an initiative which you will present to the legislature. The team leader asks for feedback on the session's outcomes. Your colleagues start giving comments and suggestions on the strategies discussed. One colleague, in particular, singles you out harshly for proposing a strategy they believe is impractical and unrealistic. What do you do?



- Engaging
- Speaking openly
- Listening intently

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"One colleague, in particular, singles you out harshly for proposing a strategy they believe is impractical and unrealistic. What do you do?"

Level FIVE of the Index

- Engaging**
- Speaking Openly**

Responses on The Dignity Index

Scenario:

Your team of policymakers just finished a strategic planning session for an initiative which you will present to the legislature. The team leader asks for feedback on the session's outcomes. Your colleagues start giving comments and suggestions on the strategies discussed. One colleague, in particular, singles you out harshly for proposing a strategy they believe is impractical and unrealistic. What do you do?



- Engaging
- Framing the message with curiosity, openness, and humility

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One colleague, in particular, singles you out harshly for proposing a strategy they believe is impractical and unrealistic. What do you do?

Level SEVEN on the Index

-Engaging

-Framing with curiosity, openness, and humility

The Mirror Effect

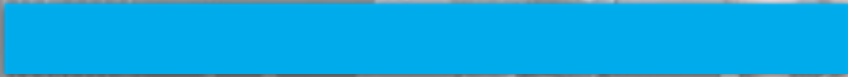
We think **The Dignity Index** is a tool for judging others.

Then we find it is a **mirror** for seeing ourselves.





STUDENTS FOR
DIGNITY



THE DIGNITY DAILY



SCAN ME!
TO PLAY OUR NEW GAME



THE **DIGNITY** INDEX

Research

The Dignity Index[®]

NATIONAL CITIZENS PANEL

Hosting a National Conversation About Our Divisions

The National Citizens Panel is using the Dignity Index[®] to score the language of political candidates during the 2024 fall campaign. The scores measure whether the candidates treat their opponents with dignity or contempt, and the scoring is premised on the belief that our divisions don't come from our disagreements, but from treating each other with contempt when we disagree. Scores will be first released on September 6 and then weekly through Election Day 2024.

dignity.us/ncp

Public Education

 **THE DIGNITY INDEX**

The Salt Lake City School District is committed to creating learning and work environments where everyone is treated with dignity.

- 8** **Dignity:** "I treat everyone with dignity. Everyone is born with inherent value. I listen, engage, and include others. We can disagree with dignity."
- 7** **Connectedness:** "I fully engage with others, I'm open to admitting mistakes I've made, and I can change my mind."
- 6** **Curious:** "I make an effort to talk to others, even if I don't agree with them on everything. I focus on our shared interests and values."
- 5** **Respect:** "I recognize that others have a right to be here; even though it's difficult, it's their school, too."

 & 

Scan for more information



From Highland High's Student Congress!



DIGNITY PHRASES

Use these tools next time you have a disagreement



How do you feel?
Can you tell me more about that?
Can you explain that to me?
How do we fix this problem together?



THE DIGNITY PROJECT

- 1: I use hurtful words and hurtful actions when I'm upset at my friends
- 2: I tell my friends they are bad people when we disagree
- 3: I see my friends as the bad guy and me as the good guy in every situation
- 4: I laugh at my friends when I think they are wrong and I'm right
- 5: I wait patiently until my friends are done talking to share my opinion
- 6: I can compromise with my friends even if we disagree
- 7: I listen to my friends ideas and I show empathy by putting myself in their shoes
- 8: I show dignity to everyone and I know that we're equal even if we're different

Locally Elected



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- 6 *"We always talk to the other side, searching for the values and interests we share."*
- 5 *"The other side has a right to be here and a right to be heard. It's their country too."*
- 4 *"We're better than those people. They don't really belong. They're not one of us."*
- 3 *"We're the good people and they're the bad people. It's us vs. them."*
- 2 *"Those people are evil. They're going to ruin our country if we let them. It's us or them."*
- 1 *"They're not even human. It's our moral duty to destroy them before they destroy us."*

Learn more at dignityindex.us

UTAH LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS

The Utah League of Cities and Towns focuses on three principles of respect, collaboration, and outcomes. We strive to respect each other's roles and work together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Our mayors, council members, and city leaders are on the front-line to ensure the quality of life of today's and tomorrow's residents. Treating each other with dignity and respect is critical so that we can collectively tackle the challenging issues facing our communities. As Utahns, our strength is based on our ability to work together even when we have differing perspectives. As local leaders, we strive to set an example of not just civility, but **dignity** in all our interactions.

Help lead the dignity movement:

-  Visit dignityindex.us and take the Dignity Pledge
-  Share dignity principles and practices in your community newsletter and invite your constituents to learn more
-  Design citizen engagement opportunities in ways that promote dignified discourse
-  Recognize contempt and learn how to disagree with dignity
-  Model dignity and respect in your interactions and constituent correspondence

This UNITE and ULCT partnership exists because we believe that when we create communities that reward dignity and challenge contempt, we can change the culture, making life better for the citizens we serve.

Visit dignityindex.us/resources for more tools and resources.

Higher Education



Corporate/Consulting



Governors



2023-2024 NGA CHAIR'S INITIATIVE
DISAGREE BETTER



A Dignity Culture

Say what you think – **in a way that encourages others to say what *they* think.**

Is another way of saying

Be who you are – **in a way that encourages others to be who *they* are.**

Which is another way of saying

Bring your whole self – **in a way that inspires others to
bring *their* whole selves.**



Take the Dignity Pledge:

*As an American who knows and loves my
country, I am convinced there is no
America without democracy, no
democracy without healthy debate, and
no healthy debate without dignity;
therefore, I pledge to do more to treat
others with dignity, not contempt.*

Enter your email to stay informed on the dignity movement.
UNITE does not share contact information with third parties.

CONTINUE



Learn more at dignityindex.us

@thedignityindex

