Design Purpose Impact

Design, Purpose

IMPACT CHECK

A practical worksheet for understanding your own design, what happens to it under pressure and what the people you lead actually experience.

BEFORE YOU START

Every person carries inherent dignity and the agency to choose and contribute. This worksheet is built on that belief and on three questions. Who am I, and how am I wired? What am I choosing to do with who I am? What is it like for others to experience me?

It isn't scored and there are no right answers. Give yourself an hour with no phone for Parts 1 to 3 and the first two columns of Part 4. The conversations with your people come after that, and the follow-up six to eight weeks later. Come back to the whole thing in a few months, because your answers will change as you do.

THREE WAYS TO USE IT

On your own. Work through Parts 1 to 5. Print a copy of Part 4 for each person you want to think about.

With your team. Do Parts 1 to 3 yourself first, then use the team conversation on page 6.

With leaders you work with. For coaches and HR, L&D and OD practitioners. The notes on page 7 show how to use it across two conversations.

Dignity and psychological safety. The two overlap but they aren't the same thing. Dignity is about a person's inherent worth and whether it is recognised. Psychological safety is about whether people believe they can speak up and take a risk without being punished or humiliated. This worksheet is mainly about dignity, although you will need some safety for the conversations in Part 4 to be honest.

One request. Please don't use this in performance reviews, selection or anything that decides someone's job. It is a development conversation, and using it to judge people would defeat the purpose of it.

MY DESIGN: WHO AM I, AND HOW AM I WIRED?

You are not a blank slate. This is about rediscovery rather than reinvention, so start with what is already there.

My roots. What are my top three values, and where did one of them shape a decision I made this month? (The Personal Values Tool at **valuesnavigator.co** is a good place to start.)

My wiring. Where do I get my energy, how do I like to take in information and make decisions, and what kind of day leaves me completely flat? (16personalities.com is a free way to start the conversation. Hold the four letters lightly.)

My fuel. What keeps me going when work gets tough or boring, when family becomes difficult or when life seems to be conspiring against me?

My tools. What am I naturally good at, and where am I using it least at the moment? (Gallup's CliftonStrengths or the free VIA Character Strengths survey at viacharacter.org will help you name them.)

Wiring or learnt? Which of my habits come from how I'm wired, and which did I learn along the way to protect myself?

My overplayed strength. Which strength do I lean on hardest, and what does it look like to other people when I take it too far?

MY PRESSURE PATTERN. MY PURPOSE: WHAT AM I CHOOSING TO DO WITH WHO I AM?

Purpose is the direction you choose to grow your design in. Without it, "that's just how I'm wired" becomes a very convenient excuse.

What am I choosing to grow in myself over the next 90 days?

What is growing in me by default while I'm busy?

What am I prepared to give up to grow in the direction I have chosen?

Who benefits from the purpose I am pursuing, and who might be paying a price for it?

MY PRESSURE PATTERN

Most of us believe in dignity...until the quarter goes bad. This part is about what happens to that belief when you are moving fastest.

When the pressure goes up, what do I take back that I had handed over?

What do I stop asking, and what do I start telling?

Who gets less of me?

Who gets less of me?

What would my team say is the first sign that I'm under pressure?

THEIR EXPERIENCE OF ME

Use one copy for each person. Fill in the first two columns on your own before you speak with them, and the third column only after you have asked them.

Person:

AREA	MY INTENTION: WHAT DO I WANT THIS PERSON TO EXPERIENCE?	MY PERCEPTION: WHAT DO I THINK THEY EXPERIENCE NOW?	THEIR REALITY: WHAT DO THEY SAY THEY EXPERIENCE?
Respectful communication. How I speak to them, especially when things are under pressure.			
Competence and recognition. Whether they are growing their skills, and whether their effort gets noticed.			
Equal worth. Whether their voice counts as much as anyone else's, whatever their role.			
Valued as a person. Whether they feel valued for who they are and not just for what they deliver.			
Overall dignity. Whether working with me leaves them feeling they are treated with dignity.			
Undignifying treatment. Anything I do, or allow to happen, that leaves them feeling less valuable than the work.			

HOW TO ASK AND MY COMMITMENT

Purpose is the direction you choose to grow your design in. Without it, "that's just how I'm wired" becomes a very convenient excuse.

HOW TO ASK

Asking someone who reports to you what it is like to experience you is itself a test of dignity, because the power sits with you and an honest answer carries a risk for them. A few things help.

Pick a time when you are not in the middle of a crisis, and tell them why you are asking.

Ask for one example rather than a rating. Something like: "Can you tell me about a recent time when working with me made it easier for you to do your best work, and a time when it made it harder?"

Listen, thank them and resist the urge to explain or defend yourself (you will want to).

Don't press anyone for an answer, and don't take silence as agreement. Sometimes "I'd rather not say" is the answer.

If they would rather not answer face to face, offer another way, such as a trusted colleague who can gather it for you or a note they write later.

Close the loop by telling them what you are going to do with what they said.

MY COMMITMENT

Insight without a change in behaviour is just interesting. This is where the thinking turns into something you will actually do.

What will I do differently, and with whom?

When will I start?

How will I know whether it has made a difference?

Who will I ask again, and when? (Six to eight weeks is about right. Ask whether they have noticed a difference, not just whether you think you have changed.)

USING IT WITH YOUR TEAM

THE TEAM CONVERSATION

Allow about two hours for a small team. For ten or more people, or if sensitive issues are likely to come up, run it over two sessions. Everyone needs a copy, and the leader needs to have done Parts 1 to 3 beforehand. As the leader you go first when it comes to sharing your own design and pressure pattern, and you speak last when the team is talking about how it feels to work here.

1. **Our designs.** Give everyone 20 minutes with Part 1. Then go around the group and have each person share one of their roots, something about their wiring, what fuels them, their top tool and the strength they are most likely to overplay.
2. **Whose design are we built for?** Ask the group: Whose design does our way of working actually suit? Think about our pace, our meetings, how we make decisions and how we communicate. What does it ask of each of us, and who has to work hardest to fit in?
3. **Our pressure pattern.** Ask the group: What happens to us as a team when the quarter goes bad? What do we take back, what do we stop asking and who gets left out?
4. **How it feels to work here.** Collect answers anonymously first, using cards or an online poll, and then talk about the themes. Ask for one example per question rather than a rating. Don't promise anonymity if the team is small or the examples would make it obvious who wrote them.
    - How do we speak to each other when things are under pressure?
    - Do people here get to grow, and does their effort get noticed?
    - Does everyone's voice count, whatever their role?
    - Do people feel valued as people and not just for what they deliver?
    - Would people say they are treated with dignity here?
    - What happens here, or gets allowed to happen, that leaves someone feeling less valuable than the work?
5. **Our commitment.** Agree on one change to how you work together, who owns it, and when you will come back to check whether it has made a difference.

USING IT WITH LEADERS YOU WORK WITH

NOTES FOR COACHES AND PRACTITIONERS

This works best across two conversations with a gap of a few weeks between them.

First conversation. Work through Parts 1 to 3 together, then have the leader fill in the first two columns of Part 4 for one or two of their people. Spend most of your time on wiring versus learnt behaviour and on the pressure pattern, because that is where leaders tend to be least accurate about themselves. Before you finish, help them plan how they will ask, using the guide on page 5.

Between conversations. The leader gathers "their reality". Where the power gap is large, or trust is low, offer to gather it on their behalf and give back themes rather than quotes, with enough people involved that no answer can be traced back to anyone.

Second conversation. Compare intention, perception and reality, then work through Part 5. Your job is to hold the leader in the gap long enough for it to matter, rather than rushing to reassure them or fix it for them.

Boundaries. This is a reflection worksheet and not a validated measure, so don't present it as a diagnostic. If something serious comes up, such as bullying or a safety concern, follow your organisation's processes rather than handling it inside a development conversation.

A note on this worksheet. The six areas in Part 4 and the team conversation draw on the dimensions of workplace dignity identified by Thomas and Lucas (2019). This is a reflection worksheet, not a validated measure, and it isn't scored.

Thomas, B., & Lucas, K. (2019). Development and validation of the Workplace Dignity Scale. Group & Organization Management, 44(1), 72–111. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601118807784