

*Hate cannot drive out  
hate. Only love can  
do that.*

*Darkness cannot  
drive out darkness.  
Only light can do that.*

*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



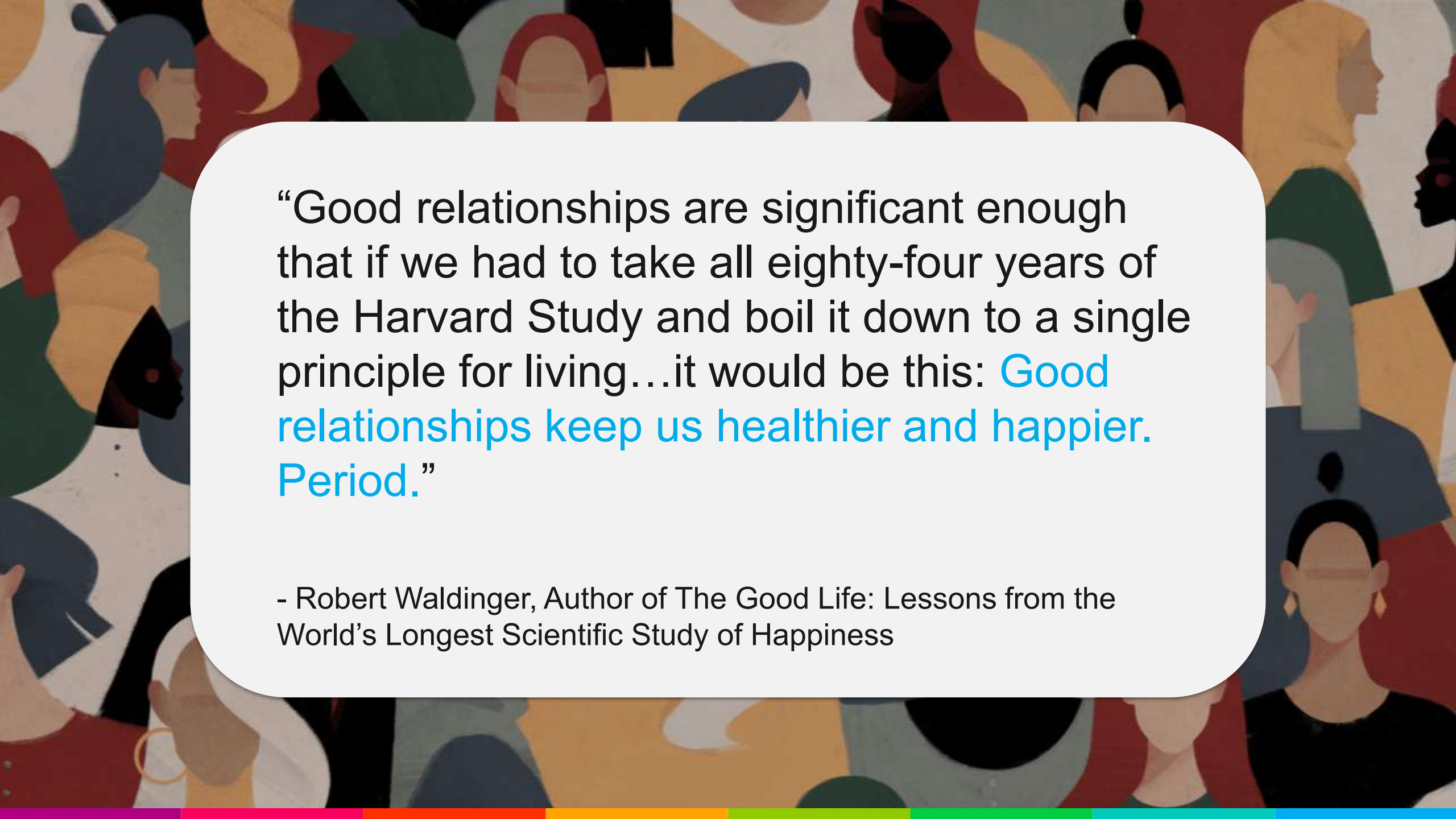
A middle-aged man with grey hair, Tim Shriver, is smiling broadly while sitting at a wooden table. He is wearing a bright blue button-down shirt and holding a red mug with both hands. On his left wrist, he wears a beaded bracelet and a ring. The background is a blurred view of a street through a window.

# **NEED A LIFT?**

**WITH TIM SHRIVER**

The (old) New Issue:

*How we treat each other*



“Good relationships are significant enough that if we had to take all eighty-four years of the Harvard Study and boil it down to a single principle for living...it would be this: **Good relationships keep us healthier and happier. Period.**”

- Robert Waldinger, Author of The Good Life: Lessons from the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness

# **The Challenge: The Contempt Industrial Complex**

“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,  
**we have to solve the contempt problem.”**

- Arthur Brooks  
*Author of *Love Your Enemies**



Edelman painted a picture of a world where [distrust in institutions is at an all-time high](#), highlighting that 40% of people now fall into the category of “hostile activism,” with 20% even endorsing violence. “It’s a game change. This is not business as usual. This is a highly aggrieved world and it’s global.”

# Media & Politics: “The Contempt Industrial Complex”



*“We sold anger and we did it mainly by feeding audiences what they wanted to hear. Mostly this involved cranking out stories about people our viewers love to hate... The goal is to systematically pry families apart (and) set group against group. We started to turn the ongoing narrative of the news into something like a religious contract, in which the idea was **not just to make you mad, but to keep you mad, whipped up in a state of devotional anger.**”*

Matt Taibbi

“Even if it was never the intention,” Kara Swisher writes, “tech companies became key players in killing our comity and stymieing our politics, our government, our social fabric, and most of all, our minds, by seeding isolation, outrage, and addictive behavior.” 2023

**YOUR FRIEND VOTED **TRUMP!****  
**NOW WHAT??**



# The cost of contempt

Contempt is eroding our political discourse and public trust – but it's also **damaging family, work, and personal relationships.**

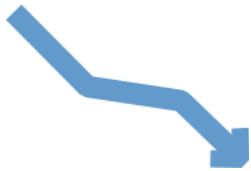
“When contempt begins to overwhelm your relationship, you tend to forget entirely your partner’s positive qualities.”

“Contempt is poisonous to a relationship ... It [makes it] virtually impossible to solve a problem.”

-- John Gottman  
Psychologist

# We're winning fights—and losing America.

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



## We're stuck.

Only 4% of Americans say America is working well. Just 16% 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 in 2024 found 23% of Americans would support secession.

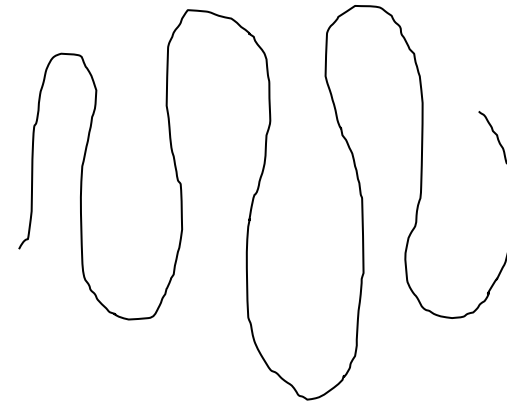


# TEACHING AND LEARNING: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHAPE 1 AND SHAPE 2?

Shape 1

A

Shape 2





Teaching and Learning is...

# A Relationship!

The constructive act of two or more people bonded by shared experience, meaning, and value.

“Social belonging is a powerful and universal human need (Hawkey & Cacioppo, 2010). Indeed, human’s sociality—trust, cooperation, and interdependence— is a key aspect of our survival as a species (Lieberman, 2013), **making the desire for belonging as relevant to our survival as sex, hunger, and thirst** (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).”

# The Foundation of Relationships: Dignity

**“Along with our survival instincts, the **yearning to be treated with dignity** is the single most powerful force motivating our behavior. It transcends race, gender, ethnicity and all other social distinctions.”**

**Dr. Donna Hicks**

International Conflict Resolution Specialist  
and author of *Dignity*

***“For the planet and for all living beings to move forward, we can rely on nothing less than an inherent original goodness and a universally shared dignity.”***

**Richard Rohr**

Founder  
Center for Action and Contemplation

# **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. Emmanuel Cleaver (D-MO),**  
Congressional hearing, June 24, 2021

*“Archbishop: Isn’t it clear that evil  
is more powerful than good?”*

**“No! Evil is not more  
powerful than good...  
But it is better organized!”**

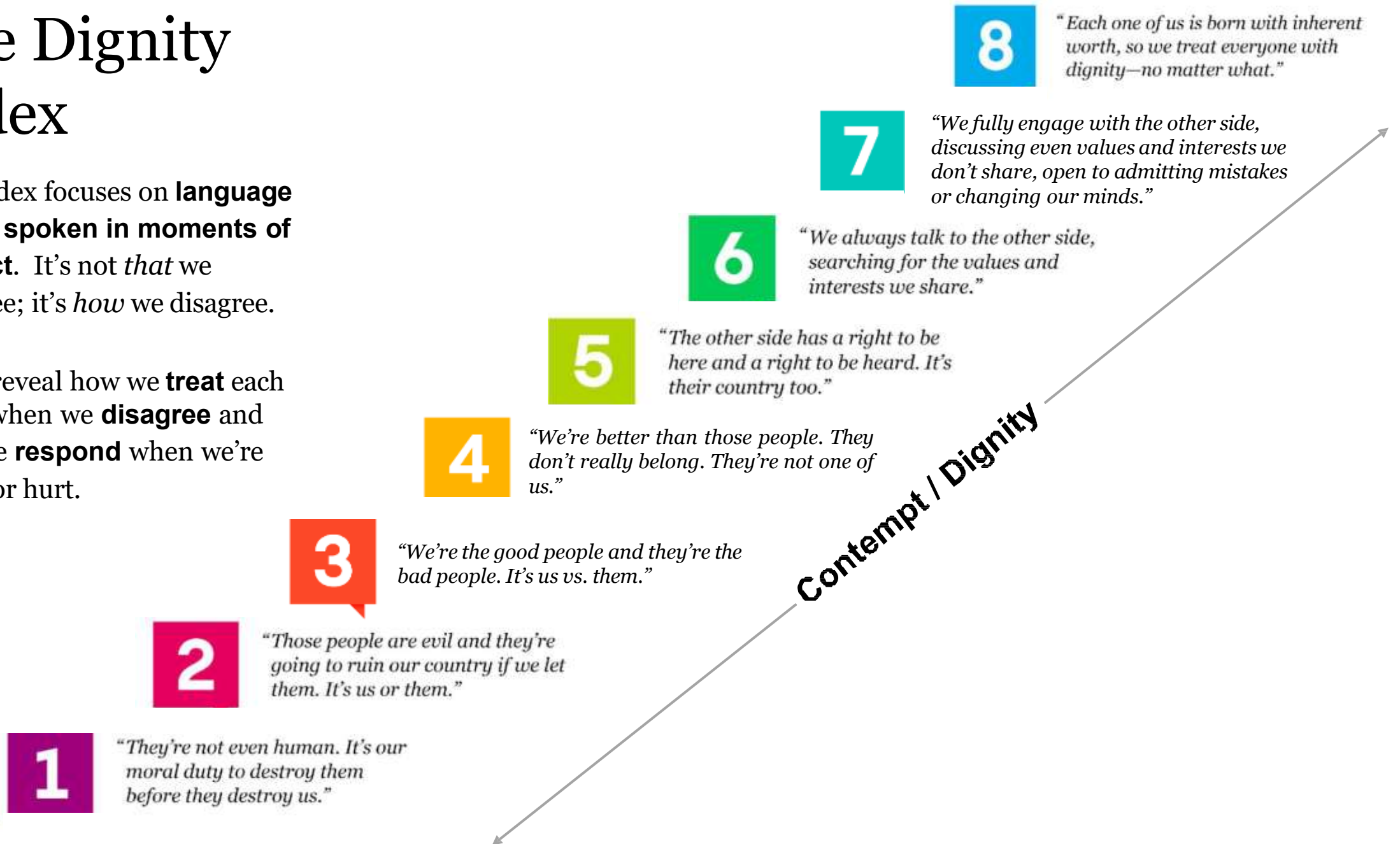
**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**



# The Dignity Index

The Index focuses on **language that is spoken in moments of conflict**. It's not *that* we disagree; it's *how* we disagree.

It can reveal how we **treat** each other when we **disagree** and how we **respond** when we're angry or hurt.



"We the people are obliged to take responsibility ourselves and wipe out this scum"

"Do not be afraid, know that anyone whose neck you do not cut is the one who will cut your neck."

*Léon Mugesera in a speech on 22 November 1992, now serving a life sentence for genocide in Rwanda*

**\*\***

"Whether nations live in prosperity or starve to death interests me only in so far as we need them as slaves for our Kultur."

*Heinrich Himmler, Nazi SS chief, architect of the Holocaust*



Level one escalates from violent words to violent actions. It's a combination of feeling the other side is less than human and calling for or approving violence.

#### **THE SUBTEXT**

It's our moral duty to destroy them. They're not even human. They're the source of all evil. They're destroying everything we value. They don't deserve to live. We have to kill them now before they kill us.

# Scoring practice

3

“[Taylor Swift] is a psycho, she’s the cancer of the music industry, seriously, never seen such a fame-hungry and stats-obsessed ‘artist’ in my life.” **Anonymous user on X, referring to a pop star Taylor Swift**

7

“I claim to be a simple individual liable to err like any other fellow mortal. I own, however, that I have humility enough to confess my errors and to retrace my steps.”  
“It is unwise to be too sure of one’s own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err.” **Mahatma Gandhi**



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



## Pharrell Williams

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"I'm telling you, the world is a beautiful place but it does not work without empathy and inclusion. God is love. This universe is love and that's the only way it will function. And I get it, sometimes the divisive stuff works in life. We learned that lesson last year, that sometimes divisiveness works. But you have to choose what side you're on. **I'm choosing empathy. I'm choosing inclusion. I'm choosing love for everybody, just trying to lift everyone. Even when I disagree with someone, I'm wishing them the best and hoping for the best because we can't win the other way.**"

## The Mirror Effect

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

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



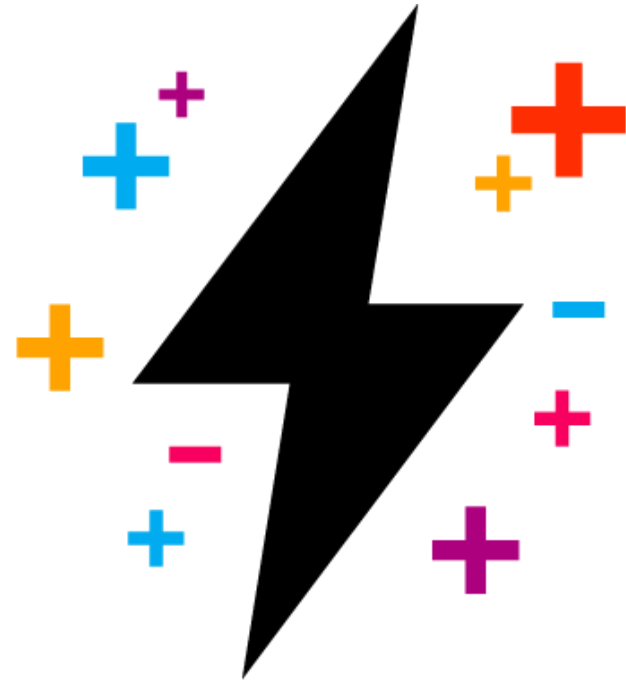


# Principle: The secret weakness of contempt

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.**



“I used to brag that I hate  
hateful people.”

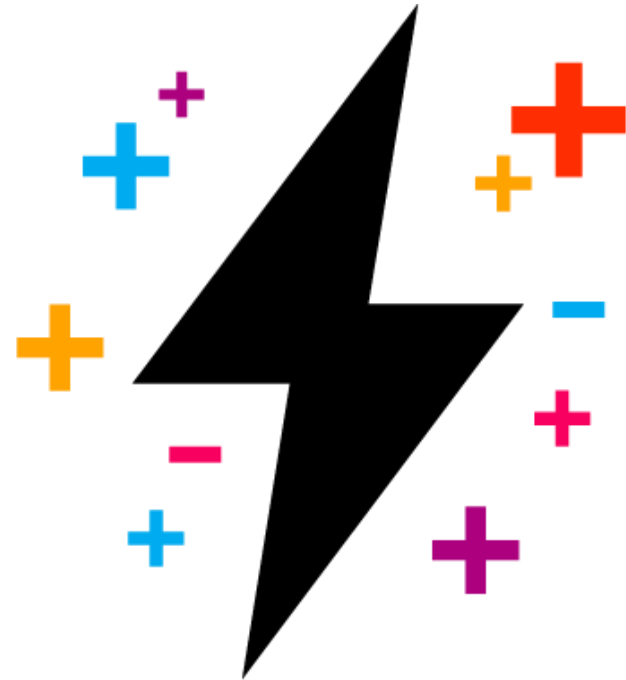
# DIGNITY

## Principle: Find Your Own Center First

When we feel treated with contempt, we lash out

When we feel our own center and dignity, we invite others in.

**The Dignity Index helps us see from our own center of dignity.**



**Ted Lasso follows an optimistic, kind-hearted American football coach with no soccer experience who is hired to manage AFC Richmond — a struggling English soccer team. His unwavering positivity, empathy, and unorthodox coaching style inspires his team and others around him.**

In Season 3 of Ted Lasso, Ted's assistant **Nate** feels undervalued and betrayed because he believes his contributions at AFC Richmond were overlooked, leading to frustration and a desire for recognition. He leaves AFC to join West Ham United, where he seeks validation and success independently. Nate begins to criticize Ted publicly and embrace a more arrogant, antagonistic demeanor.







"They probably have to train  
in the sewer because their  
coach is so sh\*\*\*\*."





# Ted Lasso

"I thought it was hilarious... but that's Nate the Great for you. He's the same way on the pitch...I mean he's a junkyard dog man, and smart. They are lucky to have him over there at *West Ham*. I wish him the best of luck"



# Building Skills for Dignified Disagreement



## **Be curious, not furious**

When there is a disagreement, approach it with curiosity, using language that invites dialogue.



## **Regulate then debate**

When you start to get upset, pause and take a breath before speaking.



## **Listen to hear, not to respond**

Really listen to the other person and consider summarizing briefly what you heard.



## **Challenge ideas, don't attack people**

Speak your truth but do it with dignity.



## **Acknowledge knowledge**

When someone else makes a logical or interesting point, acknowledge their point.



## **Build up rather than tear down**

Advocate, explain, and build up your idea rather than just attacking others' ideas and/or dehumanizing people.



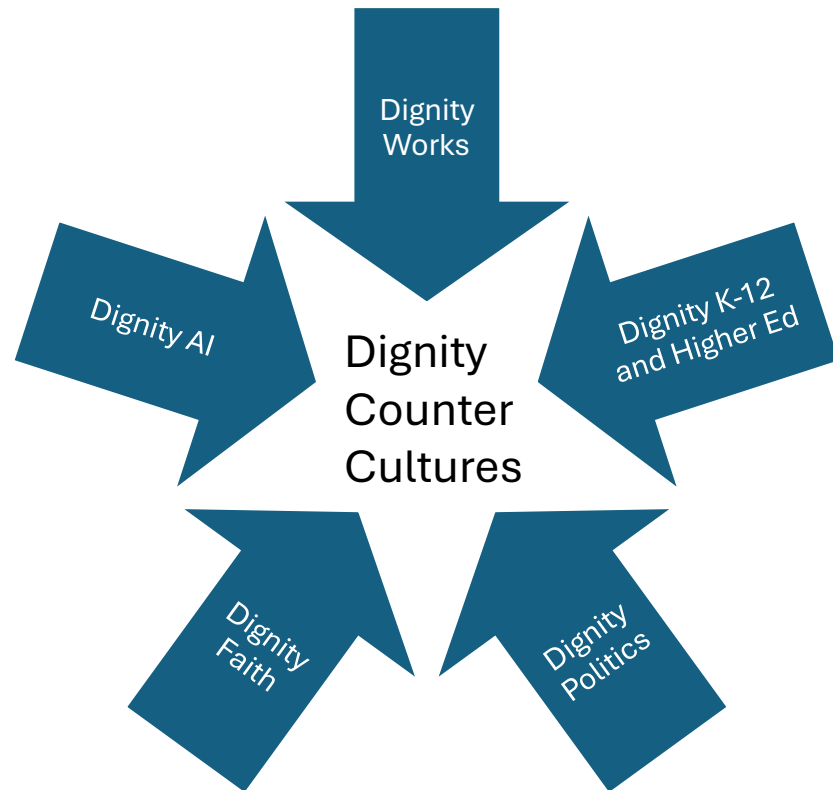
The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, February 7, 2024

When You Can't "Beat" The Dominant Culture

*Start A Counter Culture!*

# The Dignity Movement

## Dignity Skills, Practices, and Mindsets



## Dignity Stories of Us

- Dignity Social Channels
- Dignity Daily
- Dignity Newsletter
- Dignity Thought Leadership
- Dignity Barometer

# DU!

## Creating A “U” For Dignity

Levers of change for creating a culture of dignity at a college or university

1. Presidential Leadership. The president takes the pledge and commits to taking multiple steps (below) to lead. Secures commitment from the university cabinet, board of directors, or other senior leaders as necessary
2. Student Government. Student government leaders commit to conducting business and advocating for issues in accordance with the dignity code of conduct
3. Code of Conduct. University leaders develop a dignity element of the university code of conduct that affirms the importance of free speech and intellectual freedom while proscribing Level 1 and Level 2 speech in classrooms and in student gatherings (the “no hate” toward individuals or groups and no violence rule).
4. New Student Orientation. New student orientation includes training in the dignity index and its application to student life.
5. Discipline. Discipline, peer mediation, and problem-solving organizations on campus are trained in the dignity index and encouraged to support students in learning how to use it to manage conflict and improve problem solving
6. Faculty. Faculty are trained to manage classroom discussion, debate, and intellectual inquiry using the dignity index to optimize free speech, diverse opinions, and productive disagreement.
7. Students For Dignity. A students for dignity group is encouraged with students taking the lead on promoting the index and skills of dignity on campus through social media, student gatherings, teach ins, guest speakers, and topical debates.
8. Research and Teaching. The university funds or supports scholarly research and academic teaching that explores the role and importance of dignity in fields such as philosophy, technology, psychology, sociology, education, anthropology, law, literature, medicine, business, and the sciences.
9. Evaluation. The university commits to self monitoring the quality and extent of the dignity culture on campus.
10. What else???



# Students For Dignity: Inaugural Chapter

# Sample Lessons and Classroom Applications

**K-2 Classroom Management:** Learn how to use “I” messages when you feel upset so that you can protect the dignity of others.

**3-5 Language Arts:** Analyze characters in a short story: score the dialogue of characters and offer examples of how and why the character expressed contempt or dignity

**6-8: Civics:** Find examples of organizations that promote problem solving and treating others with dignity. Or examine how the “separation of powers” in American government enhances dignity or contempt. Give examples.

**9-11 Social Studies:** Evaluate key speeches in American history and the use of dignity and contempt by leaders such as George Washington, Sojourner Truth, Abraham Lincoln, Jane Addams, John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, and others. Give examples of how they used dignity. Find examples of where leaders could have used more dignity.

**Discipline and Restorative Practices:** Invite students involved in a dispute to use the dignity index to try to express remorse, offer to make amends, and rebuild a relationship using dignity.

# School Boards & Superintendents leading out in applying the Dignity Index

 **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



**Opening Institute**  
August 7, 2023

  
**IRON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
BUILT IRON STRONG

**Unalienable Human Dignity**



- 8** "Each one of us is born with inherent worth, as we treat everyone with dignity—we create a school."
- 7** "We fully engage with the other side, discussing our values and interests; we don't shove, open to admitting mistakes or changing our minds."
- 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 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."

**Relationships Thrive with 5:1**





## UTAH SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

The **Utah School Boards Association** builds highly qualified leaders by empowering locally elected school boards with the knowledge, skills, and quality services to advocate for children and govern with excellence. School board members are elected to represent the community and advocate for all public education students. The Utah School Boards Association has adopted The Dignity Index as a guideline to more effectively discuss and debate the challenging issues facing our schools. As leaders we strive to model not just civility, but respect and dignity in all our interactions.

### What can you do?

- Visit [dignityindex.us](https://dignityindex.us) and take the Dignity Pledge.
- Apply the Dignity Index to your personal and professional interactions.
- Model genuine listening and respectful debate in your meetings and public communications.
- Recognize and address contempt.
- Commit to disagree with dignity.

# School administrators, teachers, and students also leading the way

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?

DIGNITYINDEX.US



## 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

Most Americans (66%) believe they can **learn a lot** from interacting with people who are different from them.

In fact, **7 in 10** (70%) Americans feel they have a *responsibility* to connect with people whose backgrounds and viewpoints are different from their own.

# In Search of a Tipping Point

*“Look at the world around you. It may seem like an immovable, implacable place.*

*It is not.*

*With the slightest push—in just the right place—it can be tipped.”*

Malcolm Gladwell



FOR  
THERE IS  
**ALWAYS**  
**LIGHT**

IF ONLY WE'RE  
BRAVE ENOUGH  
TO **SEE** IT

IF ONLY  
WE'RE  
BRAVE  
ENOUGH  
TO **BE** IT

AMANDA GORMAN

Let me Win  
But if I cannot win  
Let me be brave in the attempt

