

How Do I Form My Own Political Positions?

Read the article first. This worksheet accompanies [How to Create Your Own Political Positions](#) at ThoughtsFromATherapist.com, which explains why a political identity is not a political position, what the labels were trying to protect, and how seven domains and five questions replace one label. Search “own political positions” on the site to find it.

Most of us can name our political identity faster than we can describe a single political position. The label answers dozens of questions for us without showing us what the questions were. A country is responsible for seven domains, and inside each one there are five things worth having an opinion about. This sheet works two domains at a time. Pick the ones we care about most, or the ones where we suspect the label has been deciding for us. A position does not have to be complete to be real, and a few words per space is enough.

QUESTION ONE Capacity	What should we build, fund, staff, maintain, or make available? The minimum a society needs to survive, or a system that develops human and ecological potential?
QUESTION TWO Constraint	What should we permit, prohibit, require, or regulate? A constraint can be a ban, a requirement, a license, a standard, a disclosure, or a limit on scale.
QUESTION THREE Control	Who decides: individuals, families, communities, professions, expertise, markets, towns, states, or the federal government? When a shared resource gets used, who receives the benefit?
QUESTION FOUR Trajectory	What do we do with what already exists? Innovate, maintain, or let go. Doing nothing is a position with costs of its own.
QUESTION FIVE Dialectics	Which legitimate values are in tension? What does each direction protect, what does each cost, who benefits now, and who pays later?

A WORKED EXAMPLE: ONE PERSON ACROSS DOMAINS

DOMAIN	Stewardship.
CAPACITY	Off the charts: a country that is a master steward, with soil producing the best food and forests with a thriving ecology.
CONSTRAINT	Nowhere close to enough. Far more limits on how soil and forests are managed, and on how the privilege to extract gets awarded.
CONTROL	The benefit returns to everyone who pays the downstream consequence.
TRAJECTORY	Innovate rather than maintain.
DIALECTICS	An honest naming of what that costs in the short term.
ELSEWHERE	The same person wants fewer centralized constraints in education, far more public capacity in infrastructure, and more local control in health.

Attack advertising hands us an enemy before it hands us a menu. The sign tells us where we have been sorted. The menu asks what we believe, one domain at a time.

Where the label decided for me

Political identity compresses these choices. A political position opens them again.

THE LABEL

The political label I use, or the one others would give me, and what it gives me (a place to stand, people to stand with, a shorthand).

THE SEVEN DOMAINS

Check the two to work on here. The domains overlap; water belongs to five of them.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Stewardship: land, water, species, farming, fishing, forestry, energy | ☐ Education: foundational, vocational, higher, lifelong, research |
| ☐ Health and care: prevention, treatment, access, aging, caregiving | ☐ Infrastructure and access: transportation, housing, utilities, broadband |
| ☐ Livelihood: work, wages, markets, trade, taxation, public finance | ☐ Safety and security: emergency response, defense, borders, resilience |
| ☐ Governance and justice: rights, law, representation, accountability | |

QUESTIONS MY LABEL HAS BEEN ANSWERING FOR ME

Where did I hold a view because of the team rather than because I had looked at the question? Where do I disagree with my own label?

Context and scale

How much structure a question needs depends on the size of the system and the reach of its consequences.

READING THE CONTEXT

HOW LARGE IS THE SYSTEM, AND HOW FAR DO THE CONSEQUENCES REACH? DO THEY STAY WITH THE PERSON WHO CHOSE, OR SPREAD?

WHO SHARES THE RISK, AND WHO CARRIES THE COST?

AFTER PAGE THREE: WHERE DID MY ANSWERS CHANGE BETWEEN THE TWO DOMAINS, AND WHAT ABOUT THE CONTEXT CHANGED THEM?

Two domains, five questions

Answer each question for both domains. Our answers are allowed to differ, and where they differ is information.

THE DOMAINS

Which two

Name each domain and what in it matters most to me.

DOMAIN ONE

DOMAIN TWO

CAPACITY

How much to build

What should we build, fund, staff, or maintain here? A floor or a ceiling?

DOMAIN ONE

DOMAIN TWO

CONSTRAINT

What to limit

What should we permit, prohibit, require, or regulate? Where does one person's freedom become a cost everyone else carries?

DOMAIN ONE

DOMAIN TWO

CONTROL

Who decides

Which hands, and who receives the benefit?

DOMAIN ONE

DOMAIN TWO

TRAJECTORY

Innovate, maintain, or let go

What should happen to what already exists?

DOMAIN ONE

DOMAIN TWO

DIALECTICS

What it costs

This protects ___. It costs ___. Who pays later?

DOMAIN ONE

DOMAIN TWO

How I weigh my values

Facts cannot determine how much we should value the competing consequences those facts reveal.

VALUES I HOLD

Most of us agree all of these are good. Check the three that carry the most weight for me on one question above.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Efficiency | ☐ Fairness |
| ☐ Freedom | ☐ Security |
| ☐ Compassion | ☐ Responsibility |
| ☐ Equality | ☐ Stability |
| ☐ Progress | ☐ Individual rights |
| ☐ Collective wellbeing | ☐ The means, not only the outcome |

WHEN ONE VALUE STANDS ALONE

THE VALUE I CHAMPION MOST HERE:

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF IT BECAME ABSOLUTE?

WHAT COST SEEMS MOST UNACCEPTABLE TO ME, AND WHAT AM I WILLING TO GIVE UP TO PROTECT WHAT I VALUE MOST?

Talking with someone who weighs it differently

They may understand the facts perfectly well and weight the variables differently.

THE PERSON AND THE QUESTION

Who, and which domain or question we disagree on.

QUESTIONS TO ASK, AND WHAT I HEARD

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU HERE? WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PROTECT?

WHAT COST SEEMS MOST UNACCEPTABLE TO YOU?

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE VALUE YOU ARE CHAMPIONING BECAME ABSOLUTE?

A VALUE WE SHARE, WEIGHED DIFFERENTLY:

The five questions come from Dialectic and Deconstruction Solutions (DDS). The full method, and the problems it has already been run on, live at SolveSomething.com.