

Attack on the Individual Pattern

The pattern begins when an individual within an organization, political movement, or social circle becomes the **primary target of criticism**. Rather than addressing the substance of that person's message, attention is redirected toward the individual.

The message is replaced by attacks on the messenger.

Those attacks may escalate from disagreement and criticism into **ad hominem attacks, character assassination, personal vilification, scapegoating, delegitimization, social isolation, and dehumanization**. The individual is increasingly portrayed as the problem, while the underlying concerns they raised receive less attention.

It is presented as being about “**emotions**.” Yet the effect is to **degrade the person and diminish their message**. It may appear friendly, humorous, casual, or socially acceptable on the surface, but its function is to lower the targeted individual beneath those doing the attacking.

The easy solution offered to the target is often to **walk away, ignore it, or choose another topic**. Yet the people engaging in the behavior continue to spend their time targeting, attacking, ridiculing, suppressing, or manipulating the message of the other person.

When this becomes sustained, the objective is no longer resolution.

It becomes **exploitation of the target**.

As the targeting intensifies, the individual may be reduced to a label, stereotype, caricature, or negative identity rather than recognized as a human being with legitimate thoughts, experiences, concerns, and rights.

This is where **dehumanization** can occur.

This behavior is not exclusive to one political party, ideology, organization, or social group. **Democrats and Republicans can do this to one another. It can occur within any circle, institution, movement, community, workplace, family, or organization.**

Conversation can become **gossip, smear campaigning, ridicule, social bonding, or emotional release for the people participating in the attack**. The stated concern may appear to be accountability or disagreement, while the actual result is the exploitation and degradation of the person being targeted.

The result is a reversal of the original discussion:

The issue is no longer examined.

The evidence is no longer debated.

The message is no longer heard.

The messenger becomes the target.

The attackers may even **bond through the shared victimization of their target**. What appears outwardly as joking, camaraderie, or casual conversation can become a social interaction built around the degradation of another human being.

A jocular interaction.

A conversation of dehumanization.

A message unheard.

A person reduced to a target.

This creates a cycle in which increasingly hostile treatment of the individual becomes justified by the negative image that the group has collectively created around that person.

The Union of Saints — Where We Draw the Line

For the **Union of Saints**, this is where we draw the **line**.

This boundary represents **OSIRAM**.

Criticism is not the problem.

Disagreement is not the problem.

Accountability is not the problem.

The line is crossed when **pushing, manipulating, twisting, entitlement, deliberate degradation, personal destruction, and dehumanization** replace honest examination of the message, evidence, conduct, or underlying issue.

At that point, the conversation has fallen **below the bar**.

We can challenge a person without dehumanizing them.

We can reject a message without destroying the messenger.

We can demand accountability without turning another human being into an object of ridicule.

And when the individual becomes more important as a **target** than their message is as an **issue**, the conversation has ceased to be about resolution.

It has become an attack.