

Murray Bowen's Scale of Differentiation (adapted)

100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypothetical/ideal human? It is not clear whether this is achievable.
85-95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very well differentiated. • Principle-oriented and goal-directed. • Inner-directed, internal locus of control, self-sufficient, self-regulating, assertive. • Not likely to be emotionally reactive. • Not dogmatic or rigid in thinking and in action. • Capable of listening to the viewpoints of others with an open mind. • Can discard old beliefs in favour of new ones. • Can listen without reacting and can communicate without antagonising others — non-adversarial. • Secure with self and values time in solitude. • Functioning and self-image not affected by praise or criticism. Welcomes and values honest feedback. • Not overly responsible for others. • Free to enjoy relationships. • Does not have a 'need' for others and others do not feel used. • Respects and values differences. • Not prone to engage in polarised debates. • Realistic self-image. • Not pre-occupied with his/her place in the hierarchy. • Realistic expectations from self — understands self limitations and needs and takes them seriously. • Expectations from others are also realistic. • Tolerance of intense feelings, has well-developed emotional skill and literacy. • Low or no anxiety. • Can adapt under stressful situations without developing stress but will avoid such situations where there is a choice. • Peaceful. Well-developed spirituality (not necessarily religion). • Excellent personal boundaries.
75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly well differentiated. • Can be calm in troubled times. • Moves between emotional closeness and independent goals. • More real — does not seek approval. • Less emotionally reactive but if triggered recovers quickly. More choice between feelings and intellect. • Good boundaries.
60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts more on the basis of reason and intellect than simply reacting to feelings. • Able to consider and choose actions rather than simply react to a feeling. • Able to think for self rather than simply follow the opinions of others. • In relationships hesitates to say what he/she thinks. Can hide true thoughts/feelings/needs. • Boundaries improving.
50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If triggered or stressed recovers more easily.
40 (poor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong pursuit of ideal closeness. • Relationships tend to be based on mutual dependency or might be avoided altogether. • Low level of real self. Operates a lot out of a pseudo-self/adapted inner child. • Seeks the approval of others a lot. Preoccupied with creating a good impression. • Feels good if approved of, bad if criticised/disapproved of. Self-image depends on outside. • Influenced by feelings — low ability to choose actions rationally. • Poor emotional skill/literacy. • Poor or inconsistent boundaries. • Seeks distractions from self.
30 (poor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spends a lot of energy on 'loving' or 'being loved'. • Highly suggestible to views/opinions of others and adopts viewpoints of others. Poor boundaries. • Prone to joining sects or adopting extremist or rigid black/white ideologies, philosophies. • Alternatively, consistently rebellious or rigid in beliefs and views. • Successful at work only if praised by superiors.
0-25 (very poor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives in a feeling world — but could also be so sensitised to the point of being emotionally numb. • High levels of chronic anxiety — difficult to find situations in which they can be truly comfortable. • Difficulty maintaining long-term relationships — Gives up on relationships. • Emotionally needy and highly reactive to others. Co-dependent. No boundaries. • Most of life energy goes into 'loving' or 'being loved' — most of the person's energy is consumed by reactivity to having failed to get love • Little energy left for goal-directed pursuits — trying to achieve comfort is enough. • Functioning almost entirely governed by emotional reactions to the environment. • Inability to differentiate between thoughts and feelings — isn't aware of alternatives to what he/she feels. • Responses range from automatic compliance to extreme oppositional behaviour.

* Differentiation according to Bowen is 'the amount of self you have in you'.

* We attract, and are attracted to, people with a similar level of differentiation

Reference: Kerr M., Bowen M. (1988). *Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory*. NY: Norton.