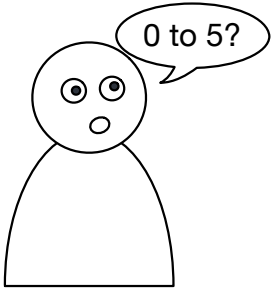
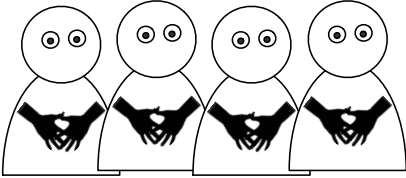
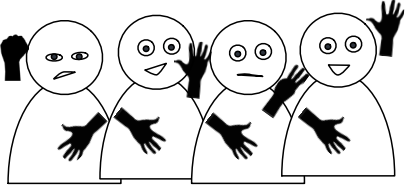
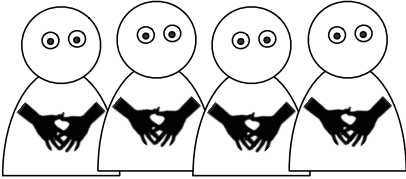


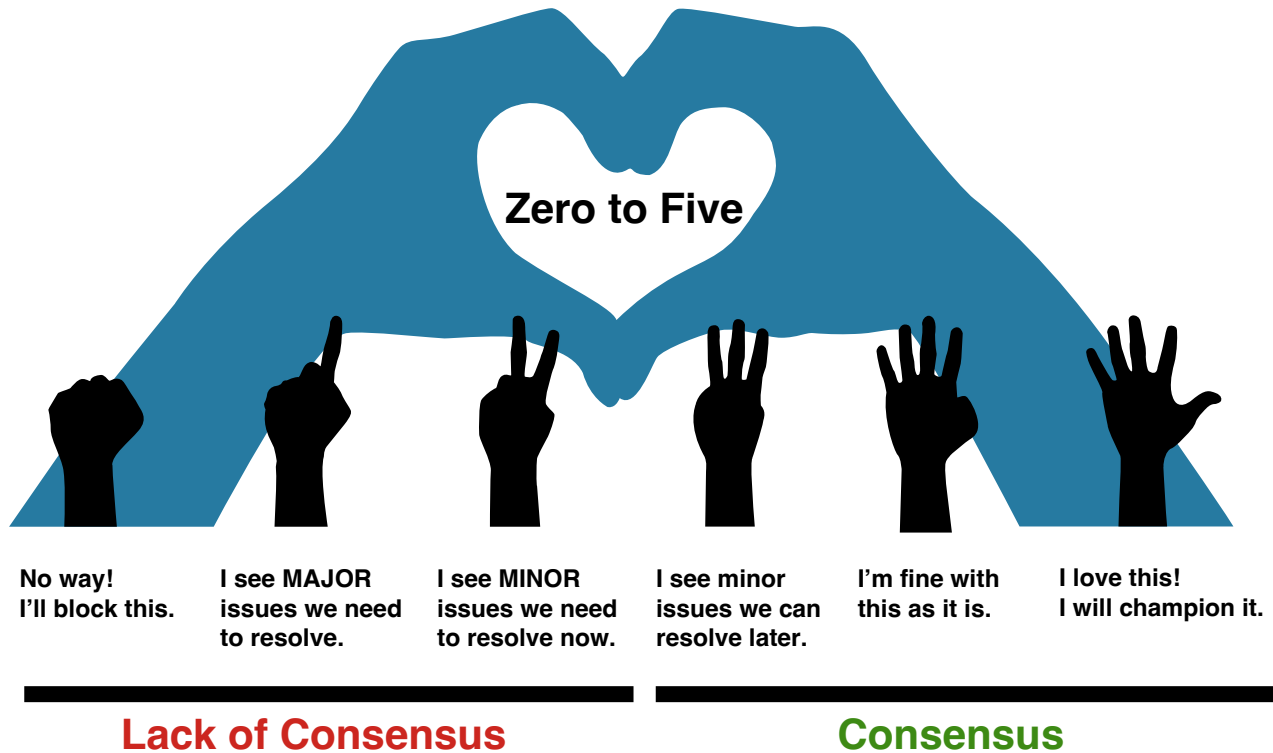
Technique: How to Run a Zero to Five Check

Quickly see how a group feels about a topic.

You can think of this as a real-time human rating scale. The Zero to Five technique is a fast, easy way to determine the range of approval or agreement within a group on a topic.

Step-by-Step Instructions	
	<p>Provide Instructions</p> <p>Tell everyone you want to get quick feedback about how the group feels on a topic. Explain that you want everyone to raise a hand on the count of three showing the number of fingers that matches their answer. Everyone will raise their hand at the exact same time.</p> <p>Explain the scale, so everyone knows that a fist shows extreme disapproval (for example) and five fingers means enthusiastic approval. <i>(see next page for examples)</i></p>
<p>On three. 1.. 2.. 3!</p> 	<p>Ask the question, then count to three.</p> <p>For example: “Do you agree that we’ve discussed this topic enough and should move on to the next topic? On the count of three, please give me a fist to five fingers showing your thoughts. One.. Two.. Three!”</p>
	<p>Optional: Discuss differences.</p> <p>Sometimes you just want to get a feel for the group. In those cases, no discussion is required. Other times, you may check to determine when you’ve reached consensus or need to ask further questions. In those situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If everyone raises 3 to 5 fingers, consider this consensus and move on.• If the group is split dramatically, you have more to do on this topic. Work with the group to determine how you want to do that.• If most people show a 3 or above, ask these people to lower their hands. Then, ask those showing a two or lower what would need to change to help them reach a 3 or better.
<p>On three. 1.. 2.. 3!</p> 	<p>Repeat as necessary.</p>

The Zero to Five Consensus Check



5 fingers	I love this! I will work to champion this.
4 fingers	I am fine with this; no worries.
3 fingers	I have a minor issue that can be worked out later. I can live with and support it.
2 fingers	I have some minor issues that feel resolvable and then I can live with and will support it.
1 finger	I have major issues. They may be resolvable but will probably need some additional work outside of this meeting.
Closed fist	No way! I cannot let this decision go forward no matter what. The issues are so extreme I cannot see any possible resolution.

If everyone in the group shows a rating of three or above, you probably have enough alignment to move ahead. That said, some individuals and some cultures find it difficult to disagree, which means they'll show a 3 when they're really thinking a 1 or 2. The decision under discussion might also need more enthusiastic support.

Rely on your judgment and familiarity with the group to determine when to inquire further.

Recommended Follow-Up Question: **What would it take to improve your rating?**

Don't ask "What's wrong?" This invites a list of problems your group will never have time to address. Asking how to improve ideas emphasizes the group's desire to move forward and reinforces shared responsibility for finding solutions.

Example Questions and Scales

Zero to Five checks can be used to elicit a range of reactions for any single-issue question. You'll see several common examples below.

Check Energy: How's your energy?

- 5 – Fully energized, buzzing, let's go!
- 4 – Feeling good, ready to engage.
- 3 – Fine, here, keeping up.
- 2 – Running low, struggling a bit.
- 1 – Very low energy, barely hanging on.
- 0 – Completely drained, need to stop.

Check Understanding: Do you feel like you understand (this concept, the instructions, our plan)?

- 0 – I'm really confused. Can we start over?
- 1 – I have so many questions.
- 2 – I have a big question we need to answer now.
- 3 – I have one super quick question.
- 4 – Close enough. Let's go.
- 5 – Absolutely! Move on!

Check Confidence: How confident are you in this (plan, strategy, deadline, approach)?

- 0 – No confidence. This will fail.
- 1 – I see MAJOR risks. I don't think this will work.
- 2 – I see MINOR risks. We need to adjust something now.
- 3 – I have small concerns, but I think we can manage them.
- 4 – I'm confident this will work as planned.
- 5 – Absolutely! This will succeed. No doubt.

Return on Time Invested (ROTI): What is your return on the time you've invested?

- 0 – Terrible. This ruined my day.
- 1 – I had MAJOR issues. This was a waste of my time.
- 2 – I had MINOR issues. This wasn't very valuable.
- 3 – It was fine. Not great, not bad.
- 4 – This was valuable. I'm glad I came.
- 5 – Wow! This was great! I want more meetings like this.

Why Zero to Five Checks Are Brilliant

Visible Signals, Shared Awareness

- **Instant group read.**
In one glance, you see alignment, hesitation, or divergence. No need to guess how people feel or rely on whoever talks first.
- **Shows gradients of support.**
Not just “yes” or “no”; the numbers surface nuance. A 3 says, “I’ll go along, but I have concerns.” That matters.
- **Save time by revealing where to focus.**
When responses cluster at 4–5, you move on. When spread wide, you know exactly who to turn to and where discussion is needed.
- **Signals readiness and commitment.**
Early in a process, it acts as a diagnostic. Later, it works as a gut-check on alignment before moving forward.

Embodied and Inclusive

- **Uses our most human tools.**
No tech, no login, no writing or speaking, no delay. Just hands. That makes it accessible for nearly every group, everywhere.
- **Taps into positive primal bonding behavior.**
Synchronous movement and visible gestures build connection and a sense of belonging fast.
- **Everyone contributes, visibly.**
Regardless of role, status, or language comfort, everyone shows where they stand. There’s no hiding behind titles or silence.
- **Helps people feel seen.**
Being asked to express your take, briefly and visibly signals that your voice matters.

Meaningful Engagement With Minimal Effort

- **Starts participation early.**
When people engage in the first five minutes, they stay present. Used as an energy check, this is a low-lift, high-impact way to spark early interaction.
- **Gets cameras on in online meetings.**
Asking for visual gestures encourages people to show up literally and mentally.
- **Adds levity and energy.**
It’s a little playful and a bit unexpected, which cuts tension and brings the room to life.
- **Builds a healthy feedback habit.**
Regular use of fist-to-five makes giving and receiving feedback a normal part of group interaction. Boom! You’ve just built psychological safety, five fingers at a time!

Teachable, Repeatable, Culture-Shaping

- **Simple enough to steal.**
People see it once and use it elsewhere. It spreads naturally across teams and even into personal life.
- **Flexible across contexts.**
Works for sensing, deciding, reflecting, or closing. Fits into nearly any type of meeting.
- **Scales with structure.**
Teams can create shared interpretations of each rating, making the check even more powerful over time.