# DeepView: Averages Tell Lies

We are looking at two distinct graphs here which use exactly the same data. The **story** they tell couldn't be more different.

The graph on the left, with just two data points joined by a line, shows the average scores for a team of 21 people, on the Birkman Component called Self-Consciousness. The Diamond shape represents Usual (how I expect myself to behave) and the Circle represents Needs (how I expect everyone else to behave).
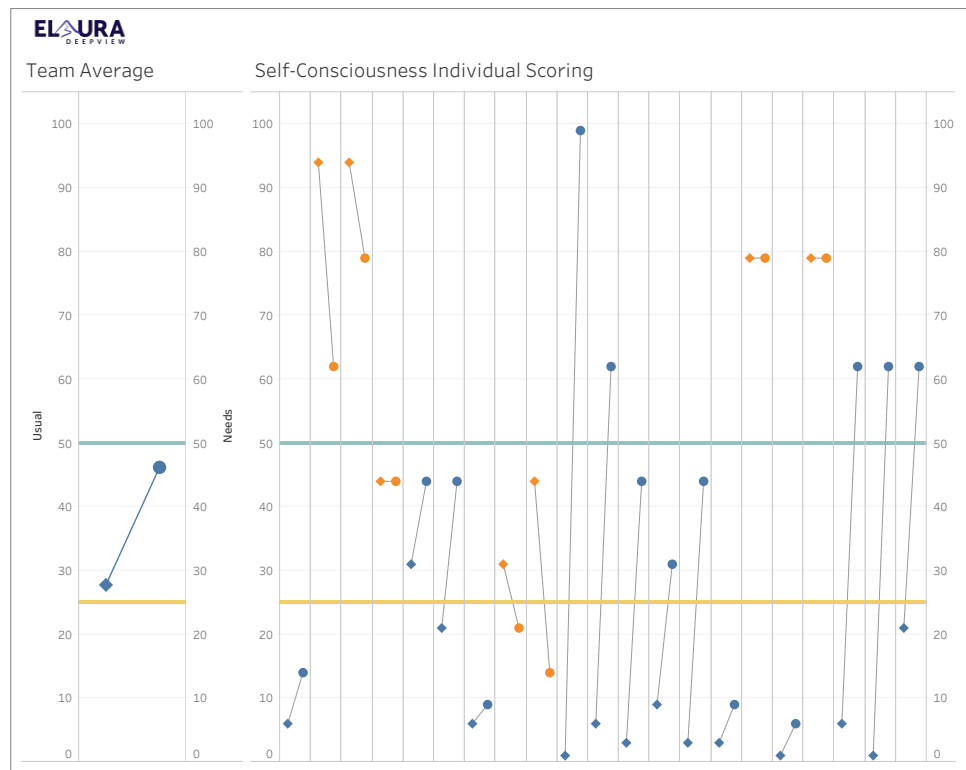
The two markers are just inside the coloured bars representing general population norms for Usual (25, yellow) and Needs (50, blue-green), suggesting that the 21 members of this team, **like most people**, expect themselves to be reasonably direct and candid, but prefer a balance between clarity and respect from others.

If that is the only graph we look at, we say "nothing to see here, let's move on…"

So the graph to the right comes as something of a shock. Now we see the breakdown of how those very "normal" average scores were arrived at, for this team of 21. (*It should be added that we selected this team at random; we haven't carefully engineered this as an example to make a point.*)

And what we see is every kind of pattern of scoring - individuals who are very direct and expect that from others, people who are very diplomatic and expect the same back, others who are very direct but need high levels of directness and clarity from others, and yes, even a few people who are close to the norms. Those with markers coloured blue at least follow the "dominant pattern" of being more direct while appreciating more sensitivity - meaning that they will take offence if people are too direct with them; 7 of the 21 people are coloured orange, to signify that they 'break' this dominant pattern and are likely to take serious offence when people are **not direct enough** with them.

For reasons of anonymity we have removed the individual names. The point is that if you were trying to work with this team, and were happy to just look at the averages and move on, you would likely walk into the middle of a minefield. The truth is that there are people here who will respond well to frankness, and others who need respect and sensitivity. If you are trying to get them to work more effectively, then understanding this more detailed graph is going to be extremely valuable.

So the message is: never be satisfied by what appear to be average scores close to the norms. There's probably a lot more going on behind those tidy averages than you yet know…