

The New Johari Window #5: Interpersonal Needs

Along with the Johari Window, probably the most widely used tool for increasing interpersonal awareness during the 1960s-1990s was Will Schutz's FIRO Theory.ⁱ This theory of interpersonal behavior was developed by Will Schutz in 1960. He was attempting to explain interpersonal behavior consistent with psychodynamic theories. It was the culmination of his work at the Naval Research Laboratories in Washington, D.C., and subsequent work at Harvard University's Social Relations Department. Schutz's work resides very much in the American school. Like other members of the American School, Schutz tends to focus on what you can see – behavior – rather than on what one might infer from what is being done or said. For Schutz, "What you see is what you get" (very much in alignment with the American school).

Schutz believed that people behave differently in interpersonal situations than they behave when they are alone. He proposed a theory that describes behavior in these "interpersonal" situations and postulates that there are three fundamental interpersonal needs that strongly influences this interpersonal behavior: Inclusion, Control, and Affection (later called Openness). Schutz suggests that these three needs are sufficient to explain and predict interpersonal behavior. In addition, each type has two components: Expressed and Wanted. Expressed needs are those that the person expresses (behaves) towards others. Wanted needs are those that the person wants others to fulfill, or that direct the way in which the person wants others to behave towards him. "Expressed" and "wanted" are confusing terms. I will instead use the terms *proactive* and *reactive*. These terms are not only a little less confusing, they also correlate directly with the concepts of internal and external locus of control. Proactive relates to internal locus and reactive relates to external locus.

Inclusion

This is the In/Out dimension of interpersonal relationships. With regard to stages of interpersonal and group development (that were first introduced by Bruce Tuckman),ⁱⁱ this concern about inclusion is primary during the initial stage in building a relationship (called “Forming” by Tuckman). The primary focus for people with high needs for inclusion center on being very careful with and concerned about participation in a relationship or membership in a group. Their Quad One is very internally-oriented (Q1-I) with regard to this specific interpersonal need. They want to determine or at least have a major “say” in determining whether or not they are engaged in a particular relationship or with a particular group. This person (and a group at this stage of development) needs to be clear about membership issues. The primary strengths associated with this need are interpersonal sensitivity, selectivity, and thoughtfulness.

Ironically, people with high inclusion needs often have very high standards with regard to the relationships and group they enter. They are looking for something quite specific. On the negative side, those with a high need of inclusion are often highly selective because fundamentally they don’t believe that most people can be trusted (in terms of either competence or intentions). “I see the dark side; hence, I must be cautious about involvement.” This means that high inclusion people can overuse or misuse their strengths by being highly vulnerable, by being loners, or by being timid. They feel quite vulnerable because they have remained “outsiders” for many years; hence, they often don’t know all of the subtle signs of acceptance, nor the strategies to be employed in gaining acceptance.

Control

This need represents the Up/Down dimension of interpersonal relationships. With regard to stages of interpersonal and group development, control is aligned with the conflict-filled second stage of group life (Tuckman’s “Storming” stage). The primary focus associated with this need is very clear: be very careful with and be very concerned about the distribution of power in the relationship or group. A person with high needs for control wants to be clear

about authority issues. This person is also internally-oriented (QuadI-1) with reference to the interpersonal need for control. They wish to control when and where they express their need for control (their own control or someone else's control). Control for these people is a nested and recursive process: they want to control their need for and the expression of their need for control.

The primary strengths associated with this need include: forcefulness, clarity of task, and a sense of responsibility. People with a high need for control are often willing to stand out front and accept the consequences of whatever comes from actions that they take or the group takes (internal locus of control). When the need for control is overwhelming, these strengths can be overused or misused. The high control person can become domineering, rigid, and insensitive. She will override other people in order to engage in whatever she believes is absolutely the right thing to do.

Openness

This need is aligned with the Near/Far dimension of interpersonal relationships. It is most apparent in the third interpersonal or group developmental stage (Tuckman's "Norming" stage). The primary focus associated with this need is: be very careful about and concerned with the pattern of interpersonal or group relationships. Trust is critical here – all three forms of trust. Is this person or group really interested in establishing fair and interpersonally-sensitive norms (trust in intentions)? Is this person or group competent in establishing and enforcing appropriate norms? Do we mean the same thing when we talk about establishing norms (trust in perspective)? Once again, a person with a high need for openness wants to determine (or at least strongly influence) when and where he will be open (Quad 3-I to Quad 1-I) and who will be open with him regarding specific interpersonal issues (Quad 2-I to Quad One-E).

The primary strengths associated with people who tend to have a strong need for openness are: accommodating, interactive, and empathetic. They are able and willing to adjust their own

style and needs to accommodate the styles and needs of other people. When there is an inappropriate or overwhelming need for openness then these strengths get overused or misuse. The person with high openness needs becomes self-sacrificing, insipid, and intrusive. He gives away too much in order to feel wanted and influential. This leads, in turn, to resentment about this sacrifice.

Looking Ahead

I believe that the New Johari Window can be helpful to those of us who have the fortune and misfortune of living and interacting with other people during the first years of the 21st Century. We are all faced with the daunting prospect of making sense of the complexity, uncertainty and turbulence of postmodern interactions – the emerging condition to which I turn in the next set of essays – and can benefit from these additions to the Original Johari Window: (1) internal and external locus of control, (2) three dimensions (Inclusion, Control and Openness) of interpersonal needs and (3) three perspectives (American, British and Continental) regarding interpersonal relationships.

ⁱ Schutz, Will. *The Interpersonal Underworld*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, 1966; Will Schutz. *The Human Element*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.

ⁱⁱ Tuckman, Bruce, "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups," *Psychological Bulletin*, 1965, 63, pp. 384-399.