The New Johari Window
#17. Quadrant One: Interpersonal Needs and the American and British Schools of Thought

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Having dwelled quite a while on the dimensions of internal and external locus of control in the self that we present to the world (Quad One), I want to turn in this essay toward an even deeper analysis and specifically toward the dynamics of interpersonal relationships by examining the fundamental needs that underlie and drive these relationships. I will also explore three different perspectives (schools of thought) regarding interpersonal relationships.

Specifically, I will examine the three fundamental interpersonal needs (inclusion, control and openness) that were identified by Will Schutz—as these needs are manifest in and help to determine the nature of Quadrant One content and action.

Internal and External Panes

The central issue in Quad One concerns the extent to which I disclose (Q1: Internal) or manifest (Q1: External) my interpersonal needs. To what extent do I let other people know about or recognize my needs and take steps to meet these needs? Schutz writes about this as a tension between expressed and wanted needs. I prefer to identify these as proactive and reactive stances. To the extent that we are proactive (Quad 1-I), we regulate the expression of our need for inclusion, control and openness. To the extent that we are reactive (Q1: External), we hope that others will identify and respond to these needs. We look for other people who are highly likely to meet these needs for us (e.g. a dominating, forceful person who is likely to meet our needs for high levels of control in an interpersonal setting).

What are the settings in which we find ourselves and to what extent do we readily get our interpersonal needs met in these settings? This is the fundamental question with regard to Q1: External Pane (Reactive Stance). The fundamental question for Q1: Internal (Proactive Stance) concerns the settings in which I am comfortable in expressing my needs. For example, I might look for a personal growth workshop in which openness is reinforced or a setting where the role of committee chair is systematically rotated and I know I will be given a chance (at least occasionally) to meet my control needs.

From a reactive (Q1: E) perspective, I might look instead for settings in which I can be assured that many other people will be looking after my interpersonal needs. For instance, on an Ocean Cruise there are likely to be many introductory activities that maximize the opportunity for everyone to feel included. Similarly, in a very romantic setting (complete with flowers, violins and a nice bottle of wine) I'm likely to find that my companion will be open and asking for me to be open and expressive.

Given this interplay between interpersonal needs and the two Quad One panes, lets now look briefly at each of Schutz's three needs as they play out in Quad One. I will relate each of the three needs back to the stages of development I described in one of my first essays.

Inclusion

During this first stage of interpersonal or group development, primary concern is directed toward issues of inclusion. We are assessing the Quad One of the other person or other group members to determine whether or not we want to participate in this relationship or be included in this group. During this first stage of development, we are likely to be particularly interested in the management (internal control) of our Quadrant One. We want to be sure that the image we wish to impart when meeting another person or other group members is clearly conveyed. We don't want anything slipping out from our third or fourth quadrants. This concern about image management increases in magnitude in proportion to one's desire to be included in the relationship or group. Thus, to the extent that we positively assess the Quad

One of the other person or other group members, we are likely to devote increasing time to the management of our own Quad One.

Control

As we move to the second stage of interpersonal and group development, the primary concern shifts from the management of Quad One to the movement of Quad Two and Quad Three material to Quad One. We can gain control in a relationship (or group) or increase the control exerted by the other person in the relationship (or other group members) by receiving or offering certain kinds of feedback (Quad 2) and by offering or withholding certain kinds of disclosure about ourselves (Quad 3). Typically, the need for control (either proactive or reactive) by either person in the relationship (or by some group members) is one dimension of Quad Three that is not explicitly disclosed, though it may leak out in dramatic ways in the behavior of each participant during this "storming" period of interpersonal and group life.

While the dynamics of inclusion at stage one are often assumed to be in our own hands, the issues of feedback and disclosure are more likely to be seen as externally dictated. We are trying to find out what the rules are regarding interpersonal conduct, but discover during the second stage that these rules are interwoven in the struggle over control and influence in the relationship or group. During this storming stage we are often fighting about how we are going to fight with one another.

As a result, there is often frustration regarding the offering of appropriate and helpful feedback and disclosure during this storming stage. Ultimately, decisions regarding what and how much to disclose and what and where to provide feedback become internal during stage two. These decisions often require considerable courage, given the absence of any clear group norms and the conflict-filled nature of the relationship(s).

Openness

During this third stage of development, the norms are established for appropriate feedback

(Quad 2) and disclosure (Quad 3). Ironically, while the third stage requires externally-based (that is to say, interpersonally-based or group-based) norms and standards for conduct, these norms and standards allow for greater internal control of Quad One and the movement of Quad Two and Quad Three material into the public quadrant (One). The third stage also provides an opportunity for the sharing of interpersonal need for openness (proactive or reactive) and some Quad 4 exploration if a safe and consistent setting (container for anxiety) has been established for this exploration.

The American School

Up to this point, in my analysis of Quad One, I have tried to establish a foundation of common reference. I have interwoven several different perspectives on interpersonal relationships and broader societal forces that operate on and influence the manifestation of Quadrant One behavior. I now turn (as I will in each of the following essays) to an analysis of differences rather than similarities in perspective with regard to interpersonal relationships. The three perspectives (or schools of thought) speak to the richness and complexity of human relationships and to the value inherent in keeping one's own model of interpersonal dynamics open to alternative and reflective dialogue.

I turn first to the American School – which in some ways "owns" the first quadrant of Luft's Johari Window. There is a "big Quad One" in the American school. It is as big as "all outdoors." From an American perspective, our psyches are nothing but Quad One. We are wide-open ranch houses. When you enter the psychic homes of America you immediately see everything. There are no hidden rooms, cellars or attics. Everything is out front and available for inspection: "You come right on in and make yourself comfortable. Nothing will surprise you here and you are as welcome as can be. What do you want? I'll get it for you. Just speak up!"

Pragmatism and Optimism
American Q1 is both practical and playful. A colleague of mine, Bill Barber, offered a very

playful exercise many years ago that he called the "relationship contraption." This exercise exemplifies this feature of the American spirit. When conducting this exercise, the facilitator asks participants to pair up and begin a conversation about any topic that they find mutually interesting. The facilitator then indicates that she would like each pair to make their conversation more intimate and disclosing. She indicates this move toward a deeper conversation by moving her arm downward.

The facilitator then moves her arm upward to indicate that the conversation should become more superficial. The conversation shifts between shallower and deeper modes as the facilitator periodically moves her arm upward and then downward. This exercise is intended to illustrate the fact that we can choose how open and disclosing we will be. It rests on the assumption that disclosure is something we can control and that human interaction is an intentional act. Both the British and Continental Schools would be quite critical of this exercise. Bill Barber himself has moved to a more British-orientation in his work.

As an individual-based model of human relationship, the American school places the obligation for improvement of a relationship squarely on the shoulders of each participant in the relationship. The same responsibility is assumed by each participant in a group. It is through individuals that improvement occurs in either a one-on-one relationship or a group.

This, in turn, leads, potentially, to a sense of disengagement among all parties to the relationship. No one is responsible for the third entity (the relationship or the group)—only for their own individual role that is played out in this relationship or group. Members of the relationship or group must, therefore, be deliberate (intentional) about establishing the "rules of the game" and in finding shared meaning in the relationship or group—otherwise nothing will exist.

By contrast, the third entity is considered very much alive in the British School. There is no need to set the rules or find meaning in the relationship or group. The rules and meaning have

already been established via the unconscious dynamics that operate in the relationship or group. One might try to change these rules and be explicit about the meaning—but this is not always easy, given the power and complexity of the unconscious dynamics. Thus, in the American school one must work hard to establish the third entity, whereas in the British school one must work hard to influence and change this third entity.

These differing perspectives lead to quite different notions about the focus of any intervention at an interpersonal or group level. The American school focuses on establishing or changing the relationship—and, in particular, the processes inherent in the relationship. The British school focuses on the structures of the relationship and on the unconscious processes that establish stability in the relationship.

Put simply, the American school begins with the assumption of internal locus within the individual participant in a relationship, whereas the British school assumes an external locus (dynamics existing in the third entity). The Continental school also assumes an external locus of control, with the dynamics in a relationship being strongly influenced by the economic and political context within which the relationship exists. This puts Quad One at the heart of the American school, while it plays a more peripheral role in the British and Continental schools.

Organizational Learning
In recent years, the focus on Quad One in the American school has been aligned with the theme of organizational learning. We are smart learners in an organizational setting when we acknowledge (Q1) and learn from our errors. We are stupid when we fail to acknowledge (Q3) and when other people are afraid to let us know (Q2) about our errors. As a result of being stupid, we repeatedly make the same mistake. There is no learning. We can't avoid making mistakes in a postmodern world of complexity, unpredictability and turbulence. However, we can choose to learn from these mistakes and thereby reduce their reoccurrence.

The capacity and willingness of an individual or organization to learn is not only a matter of

personal competencies and motivation (internal locus of control), it is also a matter of creating an environment of learning—what is often called an "intentional learning community." This environment (learning community) provides a bounded system or sanctuary (a container for anxiety), clear intentions with regard to new learning, norms about feedback and disclosure, acceptance of and support for diversity and conflict, and shared meaning that is reinforced with ritual, ceremonies, and repeated commitments.

Appreciative Perspective

In many ways this learning community—and the underlying perspectives of the American School—is best represented in the early years of the 21st Century in the enactment of what I have already identified as an appreciative perspective regarding human interactions. When there is an appreciative approach to organizational learning, we learn not only from our mistakes, but also from our successes. There is a tendency in many organizations to neglect appreciative learning about successes. We simply feel relieved that something has "worked" and move on to the next project.

We should instead pause for a moment (or hour or day) to reflect both individually and collectively on what was successful and why it was successful. What went right? What made it right? How do we replicate this success in other settings? This type of appreciative learning requires disclosure (Q3) and feedback (Q2). It expands Quad One. The Quad One (public strengths) cell of the Window of Strength also expands (see my earlier essay). To make this form of appreciation a common occurrence, we need not only a pervasive attitude of appreciation in the organization, but also organizational structures and processes that support and expand this attitude.[i]

The British School

What about the second perspective on Quadrant One? As we enter the Victorian mansion that has been constructed by the British School. we find an interpersonal world that is filled with surprises. When we view this world from the perspective of the British school, we can never be

sure that what we see in ourselves or in other people is the "whole truth and nothing but the truth." Quadrant One is much smaller in the British school than in the American school. Fundamentally, the British school offers us two major challenges with regard to Quad One. First, we are challenged to identify what truly is "openness." Second, we are challenged to identify what is "true" about us.

What is Openness?

What is open is smaller in the British than in the American school. What you see is only "outward appearance"—not reality. This is the world of manners and pretensions. We see it repeatedly portrayed in the early 20th Century novels of Henry James, Edith Warton and John Galsworthy. Many of us in the 1960s (from both the United States and England) were wrapped up in this world of manners and pretension in the dramatic television enactment of the *Forsythe Saga* –a television series that swept the British community and helped to establish PBSs Masterpiece Theater in the United States.

We witnessed the power of restraint to be found in the interactions between Sommes and Irene Forsythe. We were swept away by the passion that erupted in virtually all of the main characters, as Quad Two, Three and Four invaded Quad One and demanded to be expressed. Earlier, I described the multi-tiered psyche that is embodied metaphorically in the Victorian house. Victorians with small Quad Ones lived in small drawing rooms and parlors. Their conversations were often quite extensive; yet, their conversations were also highly constrained and often convoluted.

In offering the New Johari Window, I suggest that Quad Two and Three are leaking all over the place. This is particularly the case with regard to the British school. As Agatha Christie's British murder mysteries repeatedly suggest: "people aren't what they seem to be!" We must pay attention to what is not being said and what is slipping out in the nonverbal behavior of people with whom we affiliate. As occupants of this world of mystery and betrayal, our task (if we are to survive) is to figure out what is going on behind the scenes (like a crafty Hercule

Perrot or Mrs. Marple). This is the essence of a British school version of Quad One.

Openness and Courage

We don't have to move back to the Victorian or post-Victorian world of England and the United States. The British School suggests that considerable pretension and subtle withholding of information about self and others still exists in the 21st Century. Even today—in our world of fragmented boundaries—we may not be "open" in ways some interpreters of the Johari Window suggest. We may be "faking" openness to accomplish something else.

Even members of the American School would agree that T-groups are often places where we learn how to open up and adjust to a different setting. We don't become *generally more open*. Instead we discover that we can be *more open in specific settings*. In an earlier essay, I identified this adaptive strategy as the formation of a *selective self*. The British School would offer a somewhat different analysis of openness in T-Group setting. They would point to group collusion. Someone in the group is designated as the "open person." This person isn't really being authentic, but is instead playing the role of an "open person." The designated "open" person will survive this group experience only if the openness can be controlled (Quad One: I) rather than prescribed by other members of the group (Quad One-E).

An excellent, real life example regarding the subtlety and power of openness in the 21st Century occurred recently among a group of corporate executives in a major American financial institution. I was consulting with a senior vice president in this institution, who had a reputation among his vice presidential subordinates for being very demanding and intimidating. The Senior Vice President knew that he was discouraging risk-taking behavior through his abrupt manner and wanted to change this style of leadership in order to encourage more creative problem-solving on the part of his staff during a particularly turbulent transition in the life of his institution.

A consulting team that I headed collected extensive information from his vice presidents regarding the Senior Vice President's leadership behavior. Much of this information was quite critical of him. After reporting the information back to him (which he received quite openly), the team met with all of his subordinates and himself at a retreat site and presented an oral summation of the interview data. The immediate and highly emotional reaction of his vice presidential reports to this presentation was an absolute and unqualified rejection of everything that the consulting team had said: "[Senior Vice President], you are a wonderful leader! How could the consultants have so grossly distorted the facts!"

Other members of the consulting team and I began to wonder if we were at the right meeting or if we had been set up. After about twenty minutes of kill-the-messenger, one of the vice presidents who had been quiet spoke up. He took a deep breath and then stated that "the information being presented by these people is accurate. I've talked with many of you in my office or in the hall about these very issues. I'm tired of beating around the bush. Let's bring this stuff out in the open!"

There was a short pause. Everyone looked at the senior vice president for his reaction. He appeared to be somewhere between neutral and appreciative of the vice president's candor. The other vice presidents then began cautiously to state their own concerns and verify that the information contained in the oral report was accurate. The meeting was productive and tangible steps were taken to alleviate some of the personal and structural problems that this group of financial leaders faced.

The vice president who first spoke up exhibited organizational courage, as did the Senior Vice President who contracted with the consulting team in the first place to present their critical report (without editing) to all of his vice presidential reports. Perhaps both men were simply tired of the old way of operating and were willing to take risks in order to change things. The American school, with its enduring optimism, might suggest that both men felt sufficient job security to take a chance (Quad I: Internal).

Maybe we were witness to a very special kind of organizational courage. At the very least, we were witness to a remarkable movement of information about the Senior Vice President into Quad One and the sharing of this information at a critical time in the life of this senior executive group. The British school would offer a different perspective—suggesting that the courageous vice president was assigned the role of "courageous discloser" by the group. All members of the group (including the Senior Vice President) colluded (in a powerful but unconscious manner) to make the designated vice president disclosure (Quad One: External). The British school would thus propose that it was a matter of group dynamics, not individual courage.

Openness across Cultures

Johari Window has permeable boundaries—that is why I shifted terms in the New Johari Window from "blind" to "opaque" and from "hidden" to "protected." The boundaries between Quad One and the other three quadrants may be stronger in many parts of the world than in the USA. Q1 in USA may be a "sham." ("Y'all come out to the ranch.") I personally experienced these cultural differences in personal boundaries and definitions of "openness" in my initial work with colleagues from Taiwan. I was teaching a group of Taiwanese executives at a San Francisco Bay Area graduate school.

As I often do when working with other students in an intensive, residential format, I invited my Taiwanese students over to dinner at my home in the Bay Area. I was first surprised at the emotional reactions to this invitation. My Taiwanese colleagues were very appreciative of my offer and began making elaborate plans for the visit to my home. It was a lovely evening. I was taught how to cook several exquisite meals and my wife and I shared a lovely and loving evening with these men and women. However, I soon found out that this invitation held much greater symbolic meaning than I had intended. It is rare that people in Taiwan invite others to dinner at their home. They are much more likely to invite others to dinner at a restaurant.

To be invited to someone home is considered a great honor and a sign of deep abiding trust and friendship. My students were suddenly expecting much more of me in terms of my correspondence with them and my generosity. They expected me to correspond frequently with them by email and to offer them free consultation, personal advice and even books that I had written. In return, they were willing to offer me access to the Taiwanese business market, free products from their own companies, and all of the friendship that I could handle. I soon received many wonderful gifts (including a beautiful painting and wooden sculpture that I still cherish).

What does all of this mean? First, "openness" is much more likely to be defined in Taiwan by the decision we make and actions we take than by the words we speak. My invitation was defined as an act of exceptional "openness" rather than as a kind gesture to men and women who are "a long way from home." Second, the boundaries between work and home life are much greater in Taiwan than in the United States. We are much more likely in the USA to blend business and family life than in Taiwan. This, in turn, may suggest that we are likely in the United States to face a much greater interpersonal challenge than in Taiwan (or many other countries) with regard to differentiating between the Quad One for business and the Quad One for home and family.

The Psychic Echo: What is "True" about Me?
We ask ourselves: "Who am I?" As I have already suggested, this is a particularly important and difficult question to answer in our postmodern world. The British school suggests that this is an even more difficult question to answer than one might initially suppose. Advocates of the British School would suggest that Quad One is vulnerable to *joint* collusion - both parties join in on the illusion. This projection, in turn, helps to reinforce the idealized self (an invasion of Quad Four into Quad One) and leads (as I will discuss more fully in a later essay) to increased narcissism and a failure to accurately see either our own "real" self or the "real" self of other people with whom we interact.

Specifically, I would suggest that there is a prevalent process associated with the New Johari Window that might best be described as a *psychic echo*. This process builds directly on the fundamental dynamics of projection and introjection that is found in the British School. The psychic echo involves the interplay between ourselves and the people with whom we interact. The psychic echo involves four steps.

> *Step One:* I believe I am something or someone ("I am beautiful." "I am smart." "I am brave.") This is often connected to my own Q4.

> *Step Two:* I believe that other people see me and admire me because of this image of who I am ("He is attracted to me because I am beautiful." "She listens to me and is influenced by me because I am smart." "They [my troops] follow me into battle because I am brave.")

> *Step Three:* I project this belief onto other people and act in a manner that conveys an expectation that they will see me this way. This projection is increasingly likely to be successful if the other person or group is looking for someone to play this role (role suction) and if the other person or other members of the group are willing (even eager) to isolate their own comparable traits (beauty, wisdom, courage) and assign them to another person (in this case, me).

> *Step Four:* The original self-image is confirmed and reinforced through the actions and even feedback (Q2) from the people around me. This "psychic echo" further intensifies and verifies my self-image, often making it even more extreme and even more invulnerable to dis-confirmation. I become even more beautiful, smart or brave in my own eyes and the eyes of other people. This is a self-fulfilling and self-reinforcing cycle—the psychic echo!

I am most likely to get back my own projections if I am powerful, famous, or charismatic. In this case, the projected and re-internalized self moves from Q1 to Q2 and

back to Q1.

Americans in the British School

The description of complex, intra-psychic processes in Quad One is not solely confined to the British school. The American interpersonal theorist, Chris Argyris, offers another important element with regard to the depth and complexity of Quad One. He suggests that both parties in an interpersonal interaction know something about (or at least suspect something about) the other person's Quad Two and Three), but cannot discuss these matters. It isn't what we know that creates our problems - it is what we don't know and what we can't discuss.

What is not obvious and what is hidden is more important than what is obvious and what is shared. Thus, the distinctions between Quad One and Quad Two and between Quad One and Quad Three are not always clear. It is the knowing that something is unknown and the not knowing what the other person knows that is pushed to Q2 and Q3. We must be willing to talk about our relationship and about why we are disclosing who we are and why we are giving feedback to one another. This is what distinguishes "real" from superficial openness. It leads to interpersonal learning and increased trust (all three kinds: competence, intentions, shared perspective). I will have much more to say about this process in a later essay.

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[i] cf. Bergquist, *Creating the Appreciative Organization.* Sacramento, CA: Pacific Soundings Press, 2003.