

The New Johari Window

#26: Quadrant Three: Alternative Johari Models

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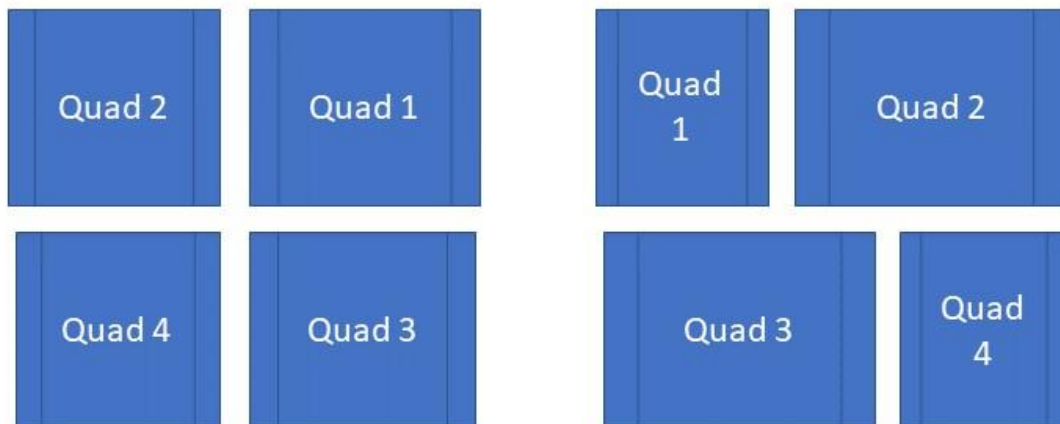
As I did in the previous chapters regarding quad one and quad two, I will briefly examine the interaction between Sheila and Kevin from two alternative perspectives.

Disjointed Interaction Model

Undoubtedly, if Kevin were to expand his own unshared-impressions of Sheila, there would be considerable pressure on Kevin's Quad One--particularly with regard to his relationship with Sheila. He would be withholding a substantial amount of information from Sheila about his perceptions of her (Quad Three). His Quad 2 is also likely to remain small, for Kevin is unlikely to have gained new insights about himself and how Sheila might be triggering some of his own fears and his own tacitly-held assumptions about women in authority (or women in general).

SHEILA

KEVIN



This large Quad Two and Quad Three will be commonly found in relationships where there is considerable differentiation of power – especially when in the one-down position (as is the case with Kevin). Perhaps, as the British school suggests, we are guided by the signal anxiety associated with material in our Quad Four that is associated with specific relationships we have established – such as one in which we are the subordinate and have only limited power.

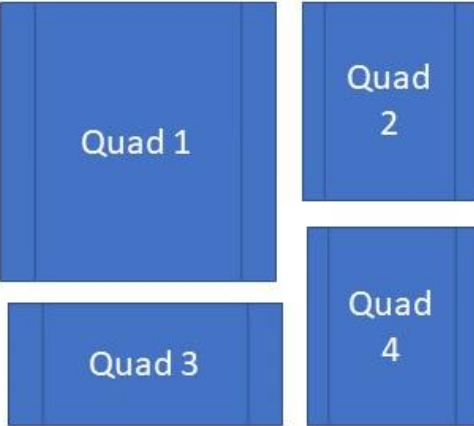
When we explore a specific relationship, we might find that only certain aspects of this relationship are “safe” for us to explore. Other aspects trigger considerable anxiety (the signal function). We learn quickly to set aside these aspects in order to focus on those that are less anxiety-ridden. Kevin, for instance, might find that he can explore his relationship with Sheila as an authority figure, but can’t explore his relationship with her as a woman. An even more threatening topic might be the combination of authority and gender. Sheila might remind him in certain ways of his own authoritarian (controlling) mother. This would be much too threatening an issue for Kevin to address. The wisdom of Kevin’s defenses would kick in and he would move rapidly to another topic.

Thus, using the stabilized image model, we would portray Kevin as a man who has some selective knowledge about his relationship with Sheila that previously was unconscious. While he can’t yet share this knowledge with Sheila (Quad Three to Quad One), he can monitor his own interactions with Sheila and make use of his new insights about authority to dampened his reactions to Sheila and even change the way in which he interacts with her.

We can anticipate at some point that Kevin will feel impelled to disclose something, even if he continues to withhold some Quad Three information about Sheila with her and if he still is oblivious to his own untested assumptions and attendant fears. Kevin’s assumptions (and perhaps even his fears) are likely to be altered only when he interacts with Sheila in a genuine and open manner (moving material from Quad 3 to Quad 1). As in the case of most (if not all) disjointed interpersonal relationships, tension exists and is only resolved with a shift (and alignment) among the widows. as well as about Sheila (Quad Two).

SHEILA

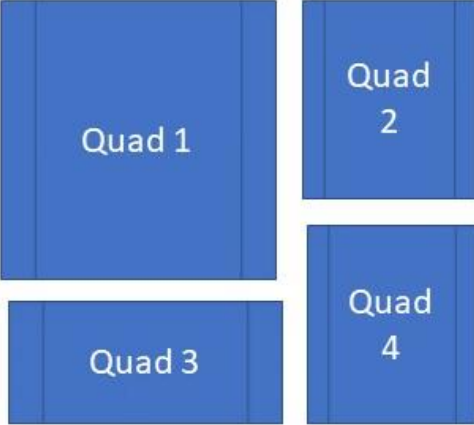
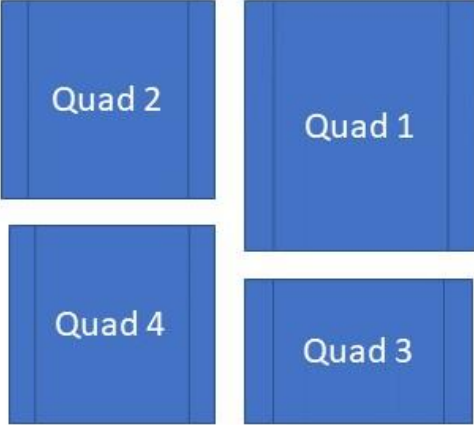
KEVIN



Kevin’s sharing might, in turn, lead to the sharing by Sheila of her own perceptions of and assumptions about Kevin (movement of Quad Three into Quad Two). It is then possible, as Kevin reacts to Sheila’s disclosure, that she will gain greater access to her own tacitly-held assumptions about how men relate to women in authority (or even to broader assumptions about men in general: their wants, needs and fears). At this point, Kevin witnesses how Sheila reacts to his disclosure and when she begins to disclose more about herself (expanding her own Quad 1). There just might be a moment of shared learning and insight as the windows of both Sheila and Kevin come more closely into alignment.

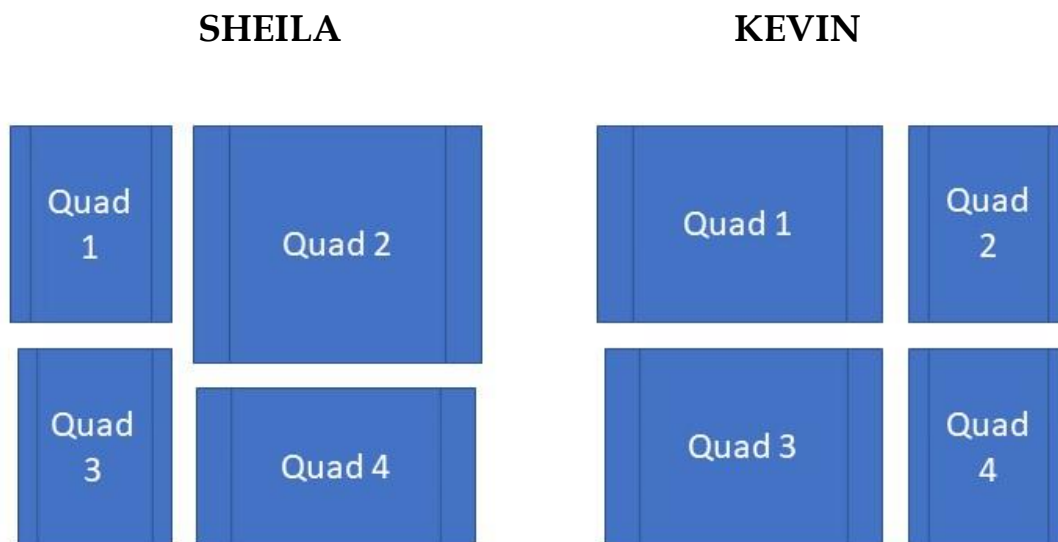
SHEILA

KEVIN



Let's turn to a different scenario regarding Sheila and Kevin. Another shift might have occurred. Kevin might have learned a few specific things about his unconscious life (Quad Four) with reference to Sheila from his therapy or coaching session, or human relations workshop. He might, for instance, have learned something about the unconscious factors that influence his relationship with people in authority or, instead, that influence his relationship with mature women.

This would impact both Quad Four (which shrinks) and Quad Two (which also shrinks) The stabilized model allows for these very selective insights that we are likely to gain about another person. Kevin's insights would require change in quadrant three. At the very least, we are likely to see a change in the content of quadrant three as Kevin alters his perceptions of Sheila.



We can't accurately predict, however, whether quad three will increase or decrease in size. Quad Three might grow larger—for Kevin is now able to gather in and acknowledge more accurate information about Sheila. On the other hand, Quad Three might shrink in size, as Kevin throws out most of what he "knows" about Sheila and awaits new information—(probably by interacting with Sheila in new ways and disclosing more information about her

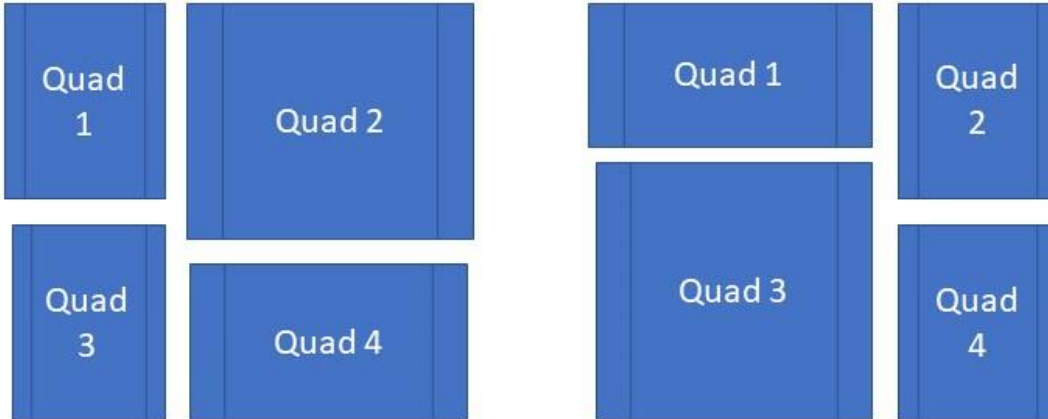
in order to test its validity – a move from quad 3 to quad 1).

KEVIN

Option One: Quad Three Grows Larger

BEFORE

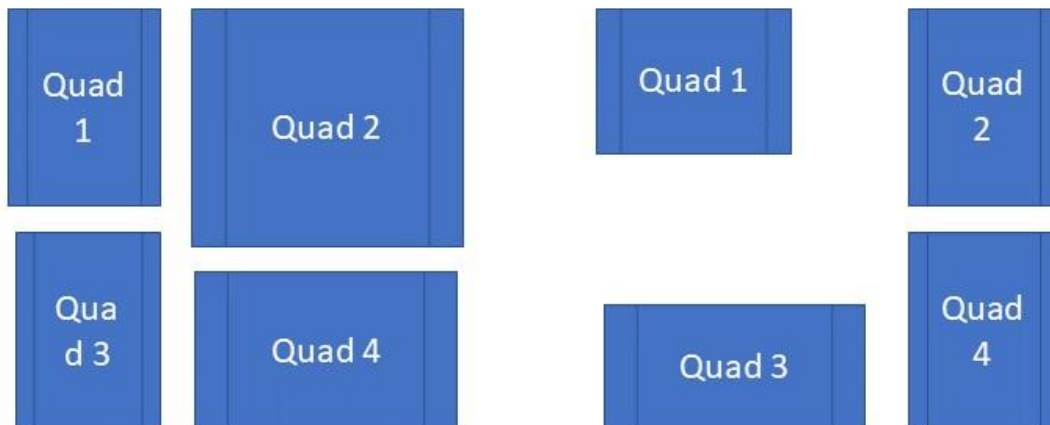
AFTER



Option Two: Quad Three Grows Smaller

BEFORE

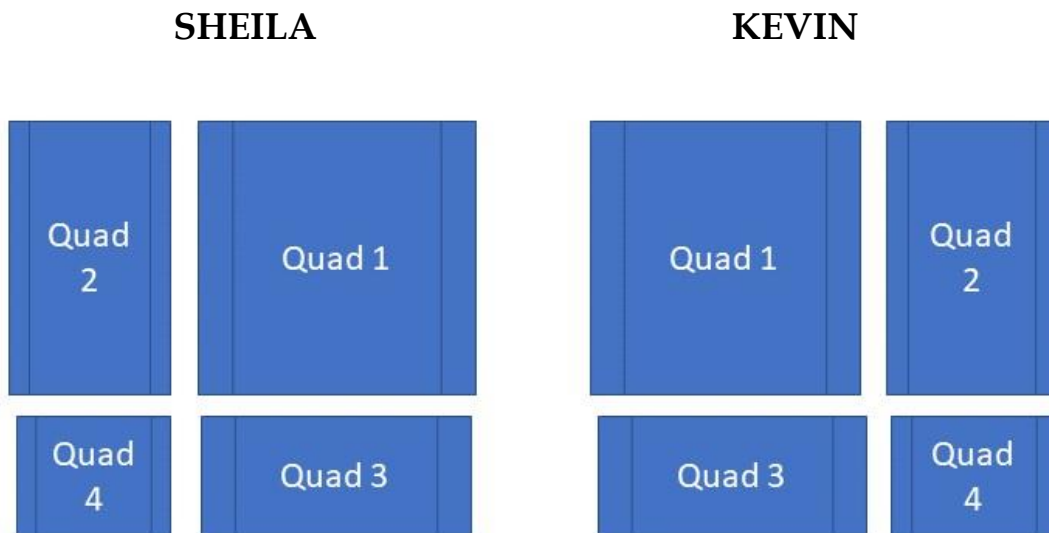
AFTER



As you can see from the second graphic, I am introducing a new concept: the “no man’s [person’s] land.” I have designated it by leaving this area blank on the graphic. This is an area

that must soon be filled-in – often leading to a sequence of moves between the quadrants. In this case, quad three first shrinks (as Kevin grows less certain about what he “knows” about Sheila) and then expand in size (as Kevin begins to gather new and more valid information and insights about Sheila).

This shift, in turn, will push Kevin to share his information and insights with Sheila (moving quad three to quad one) – which, in turn, is likely to lead Sheila to increase her own disclosure (expanding her quad one). With this new interpersonal dynamic in place, there is not only a relief in the tension inherent in disjointed windows, but also an opportunity for both Kevin and Sheila to learn more about themselves (reducing the quad two for both of them).

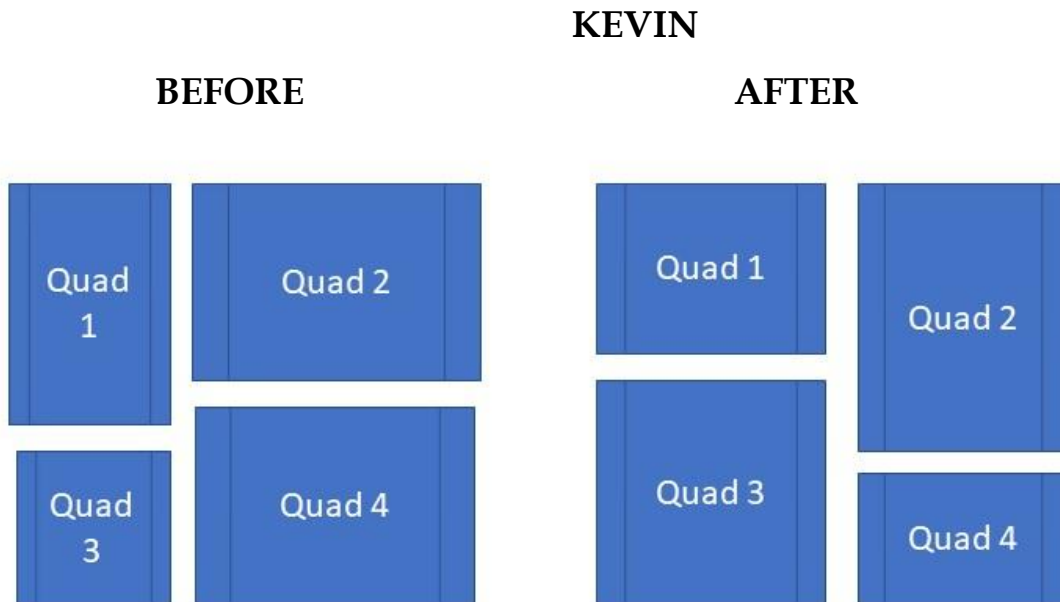


Stabilized Interaction Model

This alternative model allows for selective movement of Quad Four material into Quad Three or selective disclosure of information about oneself to another person (movement of material from Quad Three to Quad One). There are no automatic changes in either Sheila or Kevin as a result of an expansion of Quad Three (such as Kevin’s non-shared impressions of Sheila). Kevin could expand his third quadrant by coming to fuller realization of the previously unconscious processes (Quad Four) influencing his relationship with Sheila. Quad Three, in

other words, can expand and Quad Four shrink (when the disjointed model is applied) without impacting either the first or second quadrant.

Let's return to the earlier scenario: new insights for Kevin about Sheila (the movement of material from Quad Four to Quad Three) have come from a therapeutic session, coaching engagement or training workshop. Kevin has examined his troubling relationship with Sheila. His perspectives have changed and he is reframing his own relationship with Sheila: Quad Three is changing. This Quad Three revision need not influence the size of any other quadrant, if the stabilized model is applied.



It is important to note that Quads One and Two remain the same size, even though they take on different shapes. These two quads remain “resilient” – adjusting as Quad Three expands, but not changing fundamentally, with regard to the content they hold or the influence they have over the relationship between Sheila and Kevin.

The stabilized model can also be applied to the selective disclosure of information by Kevin. He can select the specific information about himself that he shares with Sheila – resulting in

reduction in the size of Quad Two and increase in the size of Quad One.

SHEILA



KEVIN



As in the case of selective movement of Quad Four material into Quad Three, the selective movement of Quad Three material into Quad One will inevitably create some potential tension. We devote considerable energy to selecting what we do and what we do not want to share. This often distracts attention from the other person, leaving us with a stilted relationship – and one in which Quad Three material is “leaking out” while we desperately try to selectively control what is disclosed.

The New Johari Window

We don't talk about ourselves – and withhold information about ourselves for several reasons – not only because we are defensive or private and introverted, but also because we don't think other people are interested. We hate people who are always talking about themselves. Why do they think other people are interested? We then go too far in the other direction. Only people who are really interested in us – our family and neighbors – learn much about us. As I mentioned earlier, our workplace is often now our neighborhood. However, in this new workplace neighborhood we don't know how much or what content to disclose. We don't want to *bore* people who don't really care about us. We don't want to offend people – risking a harassment suit. As members of a litigating society we are faced with an expanding

list of things about which we can't talk and, in particular, about which we can't joke. This can readily shut us down, leaving us with a very large third quadrant. Alternatively, we can take an appreciative approach by telling other people (Q1) when we are interested in what they say and share with us. This sets the stage for other people to feel comfortable in engaging in appropriate levels of disclosure (Q3).