The New Johari Window
#15. Quadrant One and Internal Locus of Control

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In Quad One, the fundamental issue regarding locus of control resides in the dynamics of individualism versus conformity. In American and Northern European societies, strong emphasis is often placed on individualism and the right—even obligation— of individuals to stake out their own distinctive identity. This individualistic imperative, in turn, requires the assumption of internal locus of control. We can't stake out a distinctive public self, without believing that we can ignore or overcome our personal history, our present environment, and the expectations that other people place on us because of our social-economic class, gender, race, ethnic background and so forth. This individualism and internal locus of control is reinforced by the media ("self-made man") and reward systems ("find *the* responsible party").

The push toward conformity is much more common in most other societies in our world. However, this conformity is not the same as the American-style conformity of the "organization man" and *Man in the Grey Flannel Suit*. It is a conformity that is based on respect for traditions, for one's elders, and for one's community. It is the conformity with which Tevia struggles in *Fiddler on the Roof*. It is the conformity that provides "glue" in a close-knit community and that enables members of this community to find individual and collective support—especially during times of trouble (such as Tevia and his family and neighbors experienced during the pogroms in *Anatevka*).

This type of conformity requires an external locus of control. One must acknowledge and whole-heartedly accept (appreciate) the profound and legitimate influence exerted by other people, traditions in one's community, and the realities of one's social, political, economic and natural environment. In this setting, one's public self is pre-determined (Quad 1-I). One doesn't want to be unique. One doesn't want to be "outstanding" ("standing outside of"). Such a stance on behalf of individual identity would be self-destructive as well as detrimental to the coherence and integrity of the community.

Where does the American emphasis on individuality, individual identity and internal locus of control come from?

How does it relate specifically to Joe Luft's Quad One? First, with regard to its origins, an adequate analysis of the etiology of Western individualism requires a book or two—and has been offered in diverse form by many authors. I am impressed with three analyses. One of these is relatively proximal (close) with regard to time and space. This analysis focuses on the 18th Century decline of "public man" in Europe. A second analysis is more distal (distant) with regard to time (though not space). It concerns the emergence of an individualistic Protestant faith and ethic in the 15th Century. A third analysis is quite distal. It focuses on the basic character of Western Civilization that is founded in the individualizing agrarian environment of pre-Christian societies. I will briefly touch on each of these three analyses and relate them directly to internal locus of control and Luft's Quad One.

Decline of Public Man

First, we turn to 18th Century Europe and Richard Sennett's analysis of shifts in perspective regarding private and public self. Sennett suggests that a major change occurred in the social structure of European society during the 18th Century, which continues to influence our interpersonal relationships and perceptions of other people. Prior to the 18th Century most Europeans of the middle class or upper class tended to "dressed up" at home and to "dress down" (informal dress) in public. The informality of dress in public was quite understandable given the deplorable conditions of village, town and city life during these pre-18th Century times. When "decent" people went outside they would encounter muddy streets in which garbage and sewage was thrown, few if any sidewalks, unregulated commerce and abundant crime. Why dress up in such a setting? Rather, one dressed formally at home, where these deplorable conditions did not exist and where the hosting of other people was common and expected in "polite" society.

Sennett proposed that the informality of public life spread far beyond the choice of clothing. He noted that the pre-18th Century theaters in Europe were also venues for informality and (in Johari terms) display of a large Quad One. There was very little separation between the actors and audience. The entire theater was lit, not just the stage. As we all know from movies about (or own participation in) melodramatic theater, members of the audience would hurl insults (even tomatoes or other objects) at the actors—especially the villains. Actors would actually talk back to members of the audience—anticipating the new forms of theater of the late 20th Century!

During the 18th Century all of this changed—for a variety of reasons that we need not dwell on in this essay. The formal and guarded life of people shifted from their home to the streets. They now began to dress up in public and dress down at home. Formal attire was accompanied by perfumes (for both men and women) and rigid public manners and rituals. Theaters changed at the same time. The lighting was now directed specifically to the

actors on stage, with the audience sitting quietly (except for applause and occasional laughter) in the dark.

With this shift, according to Sennett, comes another important social development. Not everyone withdraws their private and informal life from the public sector. Sennett points out that it is at this point in European history that we begin to find the creation of "celebrity" status. Men and women (often of the theater) become well-known by all members of a community and are assigned considerable status. However, to attain and retain this celebrity status one must be willing to leave their private life out in public for common inspection and review. The rest of us move our first quadrant (and our third quadrant) back into our sheltering homes. The celebrity now possesses a "personality" and a large Quad One that must be left in the public sector.

This shift in public and private life produces a Faustian trade off: obtain fame but lose privacy. We see this trade-off playing widely today. A person becomes famous, only to have their personal life (past and present) brought forth in newspaper and magazine articles and, of course, on many television programs. Unfortunately, some people aren't even given the choice between privacy and fame.

These "accidental" celebrities become famous (and public property) without wanting to be (the children of presidents, the victims of famous crimes and so forth). Their Quad One-External is greatly expanded without these accidental celebrities wanting this to happen. For the "accidental" celebrities, the choice between privacy and fame is out of their control (external locus). Ironically, and tragically, this often means that accidental celebrities become very restrictive in presenting those aspects of themselves that they do have control over. Their Quad One-Internal remains very small (except when they interact with a few close acquaintances whom they fully trust). Their Quad Three remains very large. As a result, their Quad Four often remains unexplored and even explosive.

For the "intentional" celebrities – those who choose to become celebrities (perhaps without fully realizing the cost of privacy in choosing to become famous)—the choice between private life and public fame lies initially in their own control (internal locus). They disclose quite a bit about themselves (Quad One-Internal) and at least initially embrace (and even derive narcissistic pleasure from) the widespread dissemination of information about themselves that comes from multiple sources over which they do not have direct control, but of which they are fully aware (Quad One-External). The carefully orchestrated disclosures (and re-inventions of public self) by Madonna several years ago come immediately to mind. Several of our contemporary performers seem to have taken lessons from Madonna in leveraging public disclosure as a major promotional device.

Many movies, TV shows and novels focus on both kinds of celebrities. These productions highlight the often-melodramatic tragedy associated with accidental fame, as well as the trade-offs and dilemmas associated with intentional fame. As a society, we seem to be enthralled with both these forms of fame. We feel great compassion for the accidental celebrities—yet we gobble up stories about their lives. We show distain for the movie star or rock star who abandons family and all sense of personal virtual to pursue fame—yet we can't get enough of these Faustian tales of betrayal and remorse.

The issue of fame as a trade off with lost privacy is of concern not just people who become public celebrities. It also concerns leaders in organizations. There is often a comparable dilemma and trade-off among those who choose to assume positions of formal (or informal) power. While these men and women often live with the fiction that they will achieve more freedom and more control over their life when they become leaders, the opposite is often the case. Like the accidental and intentional celebrities, they sacrifice a major portion of their private life and their control over events in their life as they gain more power.

On Shooting an Elephant

This point is made in a poignant manner by George Orwell (of "1984" fame) in his short story, *On Shooting an Elephant*.[i] Orwell's story concerns a British gentleman who served as a government official in an Indian village during the time when England ruled India (the British Empire). This man is faced with the task of shooting a rogue elephant who was terrorizing villagers. He didn't want to shoot the elephant—but realized that he must kill the beast if he is to preserve his authority in the village.

At this moment, our British protagonist realized that he had very little freedom and that he had to respond to external expectations (Quad One-External) if he was to retain his power in the community. Orwell offers this cautionary tale as a way of illustrating not only the corrupting nature of foreign occupation, but also the potentially restricting (and corrupting) nature of any form of leadership. This is not just a story about Indian culture. In many societies, power and role are assigned by the community (external locus of control)—even in the Western world.

We might extend Orwell's (and Sennett's) analysis even further and apply it specifically to the Johari Window. The emergence of "personality" during the 18th Century in Europe (and in most other societies in our world with the Westernization of these societies) leads to an increasingly rigidified Quad One. "Persona" truly becomes a

mask. We search for authenticity in other people and become obsessed with "reality" TV, *People* magazine and the tabloids.

We hope to break through the façade when, in fact, it has been reinforced. Each of us, in some manner, must face the dilemma of sacrificing our own privacy for public (or at least interpersonal) acclaim and of sacrificing our own freedom for a moment of leadership. At the heart of the matter is the fundamental paradox associated with an individualistic frame of reference: we are profoundly alone and independent (internal locus of control) while also being dependent on other people for a sense of who we are and what we mean in and for the world in which we live (external locus of control).

The Protestant Ethic

We can trace individualism back even further in Western European history, relying on the exceptional analysis offered by Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.[ii] Weber proposed that the Protestant Reformation in Europe provided the individualism that is dominant today. One of these reformers, Martin Luther, fought against the dominant theological perspective of the Catholic Church that God is only known and mediated through the institution of the church. Luther preached, instead, that an individual worshipper can know God directly and did not need a priest or other representatives of the church to determine what God wants or what the scriptures teaches.

This led to the formulation of a radical theology based on the assumption that people of faith can establish a personal relationship with God. As I will note later in this series of essays (in describing Quad Four dynamics), this personal relationship not only creates a context for profound individualism, it also sets the stage for humankind's direct grappling with the mysterious forces (the numinous) that are usually mediated in institutional religions (such as the Catholic Church) through priests, rituals, and other collective activities of the church. Martin Luther provided Christians with the opportunity (and awesome challenge) to engage their God individually and face-to-face. This individual relationship between worshipper and God soon translated into individualism in many other domains of European society.

Weber identified yet another force operating in the Protestant Reformation that drives European society toward profound individualism. This force derives from the theology of a second reformer, John Calvin. As a Swiss lawyer who strongly believed in order and predictability, Calvin could not imagine that an omniscient and omnipotent God would allow his creation to operate in a disorderly manner, subject to the admonitions and

prayers of priests or the specific "good" works performed by individual believers. Rather, Calvin's God would create a university that operates like a finely crafted Swiss Watch. Everything would be determined ("pre-destination") at the point when the world was created. Each human being is born into a specific pre-determined role – there is no free will—and will move on to a pre-assigned post-death existence in heaven or hell.

We can't do anything to change God's order and can only hope for his grace-ful assignment of us to an eternity of bliss rather than an everlasting agony. Calvin (and in particular his successors) suggested that God probably provides some sign of personal salvation for those of us, during our life, who are pre-destined to a heavenly hereafter.

Specifically, early Calvinists proposed that the chosen ones are likely to experience individual economic prosperity during their life on earth. This is an important shift in perspective, for European societies under the tight grip of the Catholic Church banned all forms of "usuary" (making money through the use of money—for example, interest on a loan). Usuary was identified as a cardinal sin and, as a result, only those who were already condemned after death (the Jews) were allowed to establish banks and other monetary institutions.

The Calvinist made the successful individual pursuit of wealth suddenly not only permissible but actually honored (as a sign of God's grace). Poor people were obviously not among those pre-destined for graceful salvation. They were to be comforted (for it is not their fault that they are poor—it is predestined); however, one should not feel guilty about acquiring wealth (especially if this wealth is collected and displayed in a quiet and dignified manner). This set the stage for a new "Protestant Ethic" that reinforced and honored individual pursuit of success in business. It is an ethic that emphasized individual rights—especially the right to hold property, retain earned income, and build wealth. At the same time, the Protestant Ethic tended to dampen any community building or human service initiatives. This ethic discouraged any sense of collective responsibility.

There is a lingering paradox regarding Calvinist pre-destination and locus of control. On the one hand, pre-destination is the ultimate form of external locus of control. We are no more than cogs in God's precisely designed and implemented Swiss-Watch universe. John Calvin defines as tight a control over destiny by God as do the Buddhist in their identification of karma. Yet, the Protestant Ethic, at the same time, calls for individual responsibility. We choose to do good or bad—and (this is the paradox) that choice is itself a sign of God's assignment of us to a life (and afterlife) of good (sheep) or bad (goat).

Our Quad One becomes important in a society (such as the United States) that is founded on the basis of and dominated by Calvinists and the Protestant Ethic. Quad One is important because we are known (and judged) through our actions. In a Puritanical world (our heritage), we are to act in an ethical manner—for God is always watching (variation on the Christmas theme: "You better not pout, you better not cry . . . he knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake!").

Yet, in this Protestant society there is also the lingering power of Quad Three (Private Self). After all, God is all-knowing as well as being all-powerful. He knows what we are thinking and feeling, as well as what we are doing. President Jimmy Carter's "lust in my heart" exemplifies this lingering sense that our internal state (Quad Three) is ultimately known at least to God (and perhaps to other people through the "leaking" of Quad Three into Quad One).

There is one other dimension to add to this portrait of the Protestant psyche. Behind all the dynamics operating in Quads One, Two and Three stands the power of Quad Four. The fourth quadrant in the Protestant psyche is filled with evil and temptation. Satan is sitting on our shoulder, just as Beelzebub once sat at the right hand of God. The British School would suggest that the Protestants (especially the Calvinists) are quite right in suggesting that their fourth quadrant is filled with evil and temptation—for they have been in massive denial about these aspects of their own psyche, thus making these all-too-human forces powerful and menacing.

This denied content (thoughts, feelings, blocked actions) lurks in the background, assigned to and becoming a major component of the unknown psyche (the fourth quadrant). Furthermore, this denied content threatens the independent and isolated Protestant worshipper, who must face these demons (what I will later identify as the "numinous") alone, without the support of priests, rituals or a caring community.

From Hunting to Growing to Producing

I want to go further back in this analysis of the etiology of profound individualism in our society. I propose that we turn to an even earlier factor, as represented in Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel*.[iii] Diamond proposes that Agrarian societies have tended to foster hierarchy, warfare, and government throughout human history—leading to profound individualism. While Hunter/Gatherer societies (the earliest form of human community and enterprise) requires that everyone in the community engage in the same tasks (hunting and/or gathering of food), this is not required in an Agrarian society. An Agrarian economy allows for specialized tasks—for not everyone needs to engage in basic survival activities, as is the case with Hunter-Gatherer societies.

With specialization comes the potential for distinct and individual identities and roles. Initially, these individual identities and roles were assigned by the community (usually passed down from parents to children (one need only listen to Tevya in *Fiddler on the Roof* sing about "traditions"). However, with democratization, migration (intermixing of traditions) and movement beyond agriculture to industry there was less need (or desire) for roles to be assigned by the community. Individuals could take the initiative to improve their condition in the world (encouraged by the Protestant Ethic). The whole history of humankind (using Diamond's analysis) can be described as a movement from external locus of control (hunters and gatherers), to a mixture of internal and external locus of control (agriculture: domestication of animals and plants), to an internal locus of control (industry: mass production).

Diamond takes his analysis further in examining the role to be played by language in the evolution of human societies. From Diamond's perspective, Luft's Quad One would be identified as the primary repository of a fundamental human invention—language. It is in Quad One that we communicate via spoken (and written) words. Like other animals, we communicate non-verbally through our body language (both Quad One and Quad Three). We save Quad One for our distinctly human capacity (both good and bad) to describe, plan, lie, insult and praise.

In a Hunter/Gatherer society, the same language is likely to be shared by all members of the hunter/gatherer group. If there is a lie, insult or plan, it is likely to be held in common by all members of the group. When a society moves toward agriculture and eventually toward industry, we find specialized and individualizing use of language. There is no longer a shared language; rather there are jargons and in-group idioms. We lie to others, hold secrets (Quad Three) and plan against (rather than with) other members of our society. Language becomes not the basis, primarily, for coordinated activities (as must be the case in a Hunter/Gatherer society), but instead the vehicle for isolation and differentiation. Language now encourages individualism rather than collective identity.

We can move beyond Diamond at this point in our analysis of individualism, bringing in the notion of premodern, modern and postmodern societies.[iv] As people throughout the world have moved away from premodern and modern societies, an even greater emphasis has been (and can be) placed on individual initiatives and there is even greater opportunity for individual accomplishments. A premodern society tends to rely on the cultivation or extraction of natural resources (agriculture, fishing, logging, mining, etc).

Typically, these resources can only be cultivated or extracted by those who own the land (or have traditional rights to a specific fishing ground, region of a forest or mine-site). This ownership is passed down through one's extended family. It is not easy in such a setting to readily shift one's identity. One is born into a family of farmers. One is expected to till the soil as one's father, mother and ancestors have done for many generations. The same holds true for those who fish, cut down trees, enter the mines, run a bakery, or serve as military officers or government officials.

A modern society tends, in a similar manner, to rely on industrial production. Substantial capital (money) is required to purchase the heavy equipment that is needed for mass production. This type of money is not easily raised by someone who has not inherited wealth. It is also rarely available to people who can rely neither on family expertise or reputation nor contacts in the financial community. The modern world was (and still is) *not* the place to explore new roles and identities (despite the myths of self-made millionaires and Horatio Algers).

It is only in emerging postmodern societies that a much greater range of roles and identities can be explored—the digital revolution has made it possible for new enterprises to be established with much less capital. Furthermore, a wide array of occupations and professions are now available—most of which had not even been invented when our parents were establishing their own identity as members of a premodern or modern society. Thus, individualism is likely to thrive in the postmodern world of the 21st Century and to recreate itself in new ways that may be just as alienating and challenging as the individualism of the Protestant Ethic or withdrawal of the private self in 18th Century Europe.

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[i] Orwell, George, "On Shooting an Elephant," In Bennis, Warren G and Associates (Eds), *Interpersonal Dynamics: Essays and Readings on Human Interaction*, Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1968, pp. 267-273.
[ii] Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.
[iii] Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs and Steel.* New York: Norton, 1997.
[iv] Bergquist, William. *The Postmodern Organization*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.