

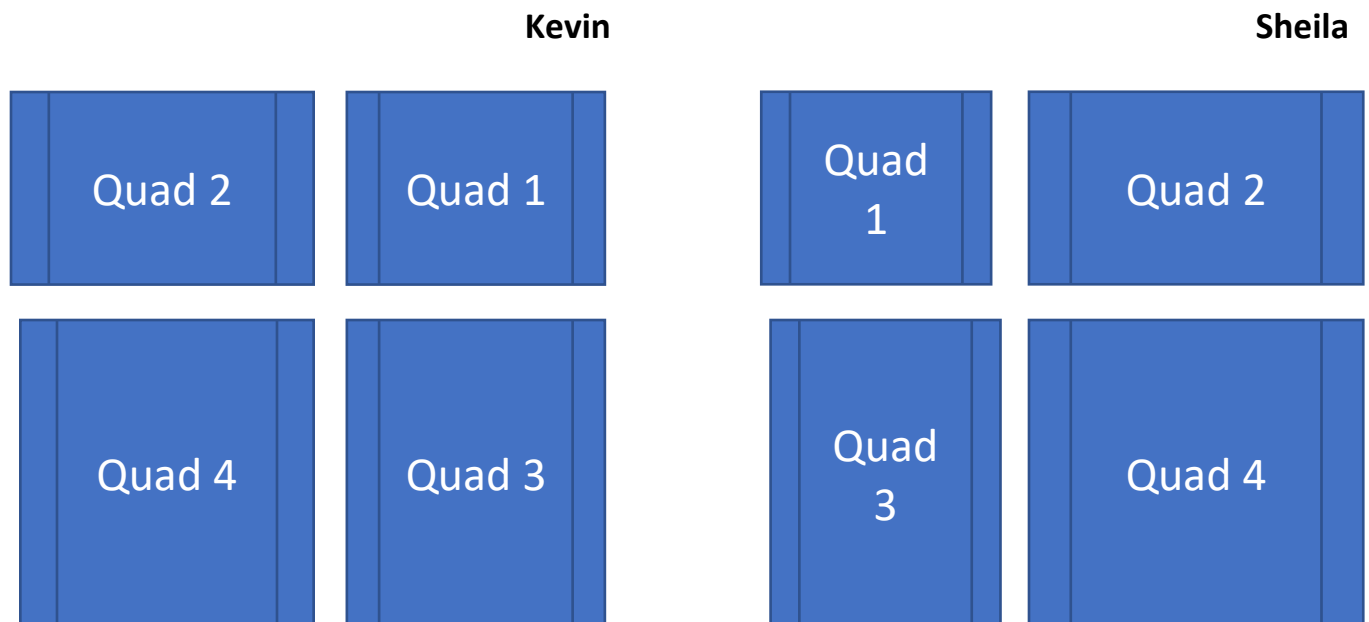
The New Johari Window

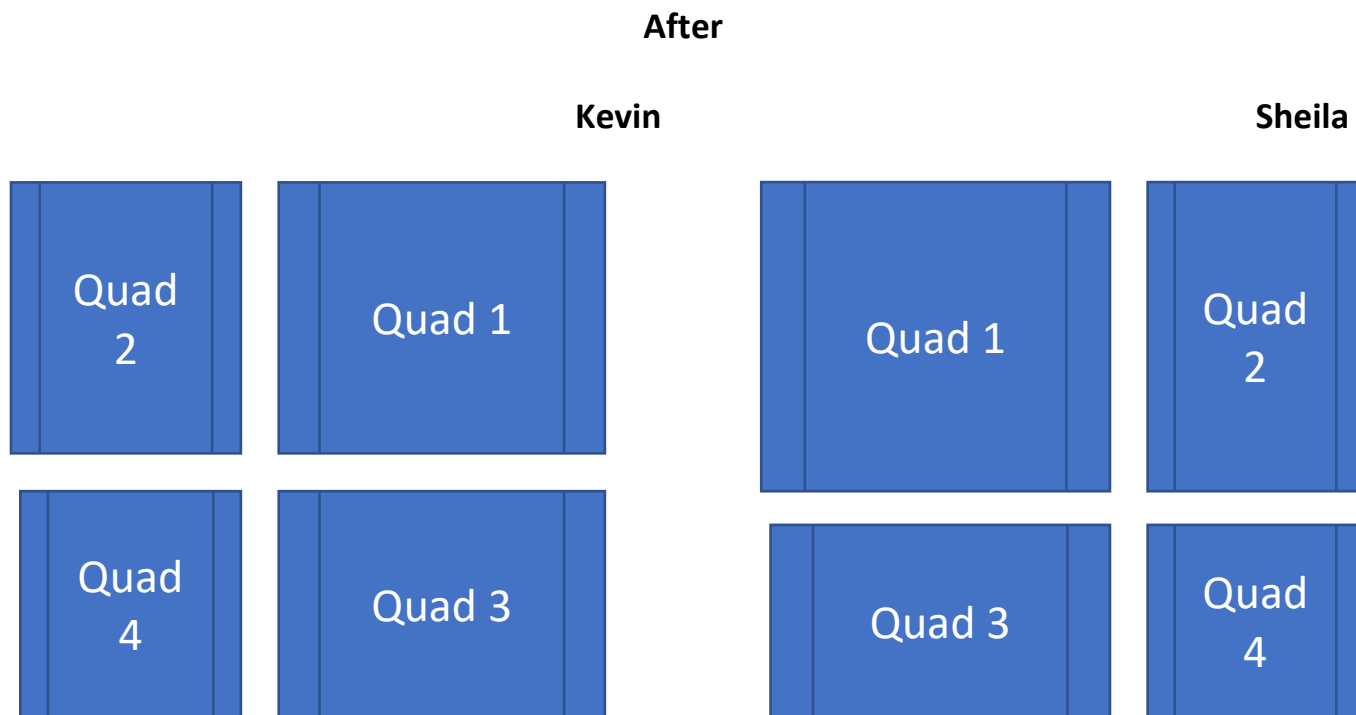
#31: Quadrant Four: Interaction Between Two People

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In order to help both you and I better understand and appreciate the particularly complex dynamics of Quad Four in Luft's original Johari Window, I will turn one last time to the relationship between Sheila and Kevin. Recall that Sheila is Executive Director of the Human Service Agency, and Kevin is her new Board Treasurer. As Kevin reveals more about his own performance fears (Quad Three to Quad One) and his concerns about Sheila's dual relationships (Quad Two to Quad One), Sheila reveals more about her own inadequacies regarding finances (Quad Three to Quad One) and her own perceptions and fears regarding Kevin's competencies (Quad Three to Quad One). According to Luft (in all of his optimism), there is the opportunity for something wonderful (even magical) to occur! New opportunities open up for both Kevin and Sheila—resulting from the movement of Quad Four material (through Quads Two and Three) to Quad One.

Before





What specifically might occur? Luft is sometimes a bit vague at this point—especially with regard to what occurs outside a human relations workshop setting. Given that I might be presenting outcomes of which Luft himself would not approve, let me offer my own personal hypotheses regarding what could happen if Kevin and Sheila’s fourth quadrant material went through Quad Two and Quad Three to Quad One.

Outcome One—Significant Learning

Both disclosure and feedback tend to increase overall levels of trust (all three kinds). Higher levels of trust, in turn, tend to increase the chances that we will ask for and willingly provide *support* to one another. We know, in turn, from both Csikszentmihalyiⁱ and Sanfordⁱⁱ that if challenge is met by a comparable amount of support, then significant, highly motivated learning is likely to occur. This could happen with Kevin and Sheila. Kevin might learn about his own deep-seated fear of failing.

He might come to a profound recognition that he pulls back from new challenges because he lacks self-confidence and always sticks to the tried-and-true. He may come to an even deeper realization that he tends to attach responsibility (and sometimes blame) to other people (in this case, Sheila's relationship with his boss), so that he doesn't have to confront his own role in blocking new ventures. This important revelation might emerge if Kevin is honest and forthright with Sheila about his concerns, and if Sheila, in turn, lets him know that the two of them can learn together about tackling the finances of their agency (perhaps with some consultation or mentoring from the former board member who previously served as Treasurer).

This same moment of candor (and constructive problem-solving) could yield significant learning for Sheila. She might come to realize that she tends to grow overly dependent on other people for expertise that she could acquire herself. While Sheila certainly needs to delegate specific technical tasks to other members of her staff and to members of her board, it wouldn't hurt for her to become a little more knowledgeable about all aspects of her agency (including finances), so that she will be less fearful and ultimately less dependent. Sheila might also come to realize, at an even deeper level, that she can ask for help (such as being taught alongside Kevin about the finances of her agency by the former board treasurer).

While this type of learning is not readily acquired in most interpersonal relationships, it can be achieved if the interaction between two people is *appreciative* in nature. Each person can discover latent competencies and identify previous (forgotten) instances of success that are relevant to this learning (Quad Four material). Sheila, for instance, might recall moments in her own past when she could ask for help, while Kevin could acknowledge his own latent talent as a problem-solver and fast learner.

Outcome Two—Risk-Taking

Knowing that I will get accurate and helpful feedback and that I can readily disclose my fears and failures, the conditions are ripe for making use of the intuitions, dreams, visions and latent memories from Quad Four. I may misread, misinterpret or stumble in making use of this newly uncovered material; however, I have helped to create an interpersonal setting in which it is safe to take a risk.

Sheila and Kevin will undoubtedly make some mistakes in learning alongside one another. Sheila might irritate Kevin by asking too much of him early on in the mutual learning project (falling back on her proclivity to depend too much on people who are responsible for areas in which she has minimal expertise). Conversely, Kevin might be a source of ongoing frustration for Sheila as he waivers in his self-confidence and as he continues to be hesitant about engaging the new knowledge about finances that he has acquired when engaging in the actual job of being Board Treasurer.

Both Sheila and Kevin may rely too much on the former Board Treasurer. Neither Sheila nor Kevin may be willing to “kick off the training wheels” and begin to full engage their new-found expertise in finances. Yet, if Sheila and Kevin can continue to be open with one another with regard to both disclosure and feedback, and if they can both be patient with one another and supportive, then the mistakes can be rectified without blame. Appropriate risks can be taken, and both Sheila, as CEO, and Kevin, as Board Treasure, can become knowledgeable and self-reliant stewards of their agency’s finances.

Outcome Three—Interpersonal Competence

With Quad Four material brought into the public sector (Quad One), it is possible for me to be more accurate in my perceptions of other people (having less intrusion of unconscious biases, assumptions and projections) and in my assumptions about how other people perceive me (having received trustworthy feedback about leakage of my Quad Four material into Quad Two).

Possessing this accurate information, I can be more effective in my relationships with other people. Quad Four still exists and remains very large—this is what makes me a vital and engaging person. However, in certain important domains (especially the significant interpersonal relationships in my life), I have more direct access to some of this material and can share this material in an appropriate and timely manner with other people about whom I care deeply.

This third outcome may ultimately be of greatest importance to Sheila and Kevin. Whether or not Sheila spends the rest of her life as a human service CEO, and whether or not Kevin does any more work with finances, both of these people will inevitably interact with other people in the future. Furthermore, they will inevitably interact with people about whom they have concerns, hopes and other unexpressed thoughts and feelings. Sheila and Kevin can use their shared experience of constructive disclosure and feedback to learn more about their own interpersonal style and skills.

Conclusions

Engaging in an appreciative analysis of their own successful relationship, Sheila and Kevin could identify particular moments of disclosure and feedback that established trust, provided the opportunity for significant learning, and created a safe time and place for appropriate risk-taking regarding their mutual learning about agency finances and about authentic interpersonal relationships. There certainly is much to be gained by both Sheila and Kevin from this appreciative dialogue regarding their productive relationship.

ⁱ Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: The Experience of Play in Work and Games*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1975; Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990.

ⁱⁱ Sanford, Nevitt. *Learning After College*. Berkeley, CA: Montaigne Press, 1980.