

# **The New Johari Window**

## **#33: Alternative Johari Models I. The Disjointed Model**

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In many ways, the disjointed and stabilized models become most valuable when they are applied to a description and analysis of Quad Four. The disjointed model highlights the dynamic interaction between Quad Four and its opposite quadrant, Quad One. While the original Johari Window requires that Quad Four material move through Quad Two or Quad Three before moving on to Quad One, the disjointed model allows for an immediate movement of Quad Four material into Quad One. Conversely, the stabilized model highlights the dynamic interaction between Quad Four and both Quad Two and Quad Three—being freed from the constraints of the original Johari model. I turn first, in this essay, to the Disjointed Model

### **The Disjointed Model**

This alternative model enables us to explore (or at least speculate about) the rich interplay between Quad Four and Quad One. Such an interplay has been the fodder for many historic psychological analyses. We can point to Freud's analysis of the dynamic interaction between conscious and unconscious processes, or to Jung's analysis of the persona and shadow in dynamic interaction. We can point instead to the British School's (Bion's) equally as rich and provocative analysis of the dynamic interplay between the explicit working agenda of a group and its' implicit agenda regarding the confirmation of unconscious group assumptions.

I will focus, therefore, on this interplay between Quad Four and Quad One in applying the disjointed model to our understanding of human relationships. There are four possible scenarios with regard to the relationship between Quad Four and Quad One: (1) small Quad One and large Quad Four, (2) large Quad One and large Quad Four, (3) large Quad One and small Quad Four, and (4) small Quad One and small Quad Four. Each of these scenarios can be the result of a specific relationship with another person (and their own interplay between quad four).

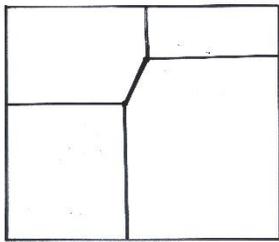
Throughout this set of essays, I have referenced the power of interpersonal relationships in bringing about movement between the quads. However, in this case I am not providing these interpersonal portrayals because the direct movement between quad four and quad one is often produced without the direct assistance of another person. Each of these scenarios might also be a product of the setting in which we find ourselves at any one point in time—such as a retreat setting, hot tub or playground (attending to our child). Each of these

scenarios might also take place without any outside influence—there is a sudden eruption that might be a surprise to oneself (and other people who are present).

I will begin with the scenario that has been assumed by the psychodynamic theorists, such as Freud, Jung and Bion, to be most prevalent, namely a small public quadrant (One) and a very large and powerfully unconscious quadrant (Four).

### **Small Quad One/Large Quad Four**

This is a very scary scenario for both parties in a relationship. It is as if the person with the small Quad One and large Quad Four is about to explode—there is so little exposed and so much that is not only unknown to either party, but so very much not under either party’s control.

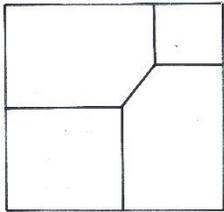


Unpredictability hangs in the air, filling both participants in the relationship with a pervasive feeling of apprehension, a profound sense of mistrust, and often a compelling desire to escape from this threatening relationship. Each party often blames the other and makes the basic error of attributing this undesirable relationship to an enduring flaw in the other person’s personality, rather than to some flaw in this particular relationship or to some destructive dynamic operating in the setting where this relationship is being enacted.

You will notice that the line between quad four and quad one is a bit heavier than the other lines. This portrays the strong barrier that often is set between these two quads. But the pressure is building. This barrier might not hold! The frightening nature of this condition is often exacerbated by several factors. First, the Freudians may be right in suggesting that a large Quad Four will inevitably lead to the leakage of some material into Quad Two. The Quad Four dam is filled to capacity. Some of its contents inevitably will spill over through slips of the tongue, nonverbal messages, inappropriate humor (often called “gallows” or “dark” humor), or other channels of interpersonal communication.

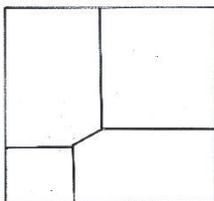
The recipient of this Quad Four material may themselves not be overtly aware that this material now resides in their own Quad Three (Hidden Self) and in the other person’s Quad Two (Opaque Self). However, they are aware that something is wrong and that a substantial amount of important information regarding this relationship is not being addressed by either party. The person who is “leaking” is also aware that something is wrong—but he doesn’t have a grasp of what is happening or how to “fix” the relationship.

All of this is not really new at this point in our analysis of Quad Four dynamics, for the original Johari Window can adequately predict and describe this condition. The real power of the disjointed model concerns the direct movement of Quad Four material into Quad One. There is no intermediate move into Quad Two or Quad Three.



We are talking about the immediate (and often dramatic) public display (Quad One) of unconscious Quad Four material.

This is clearly displayed during the early stages of a psychotherapy session—where both therapist and patient are aware of and seek to identify and talk about the patient’s unconscious material. The patient moves Quad Four matter into Quad One for collaborative review and analysis by the patient and therapist. While the movement is directly from Quad Four to Quad One there is the therapist’s encouragement and facilitation of the patient’s disclosure (movement of Quad Three into Quad One) which supports and amplifies this move from four into one. This collaborative venture often involves the use of free association, projective tests (such as the Rorschach Ink Blots), interpretation of dreams, and analysis of irrational aspects of the patient’s perceptions of and feelings toward the therapist (called “transference”). A similar condition exists in a group therapy session. This is the setting in which Bion first noted the simultaneous existence of both a conscious and unconscious life in groups and in which Bion first sought to openly describe and discuss (bring to Quad One awareness) the unconscious agenda of the group (collective Quad Four).



Another facilitated movement of Quad Four directly into Quad One occurs when we receive extensive (and sometimes surprising) feedback from other people. This might occur in a human relations laboratory or when we receive reports and evaluations of our behavior from many other people in an organizational setting (what is usually referred to as Three Hundred Sixty Degree Feedback). As in the case of the disclosure that facilitates the direct move from four into three during a psychotherapy session, this

movement of Quad Two into Quad One) can support and amplified the directly movement of Quad Four material into Quad One.

What about the movement of Quad Four material directly into Quad One during “normal” interactions? Does this ever occur? Actually, it occurs. The direct movement from Quad Four into Quad One is never really “normal”—in that it tends to evoke strong emotions and can produce remarkable transformations in an interpersonal relationship. However, it is not uncommon and has been the subject of many novels (both romantic and terrifying). We know of this direct movement in the sudden eruption and display of passion between two people who previously were either strangers or were engaged in a very different kind of

relationship. A man and woman who work together suddenly realize that they want to be more than friends and colleagues. They are “consumed” in their newly identified and deeply felt attraction for one another and declare this attraction to the other party (and sometimes the entire world!).

We see this passionate movement from Quad Four to Quad One dramatically displayed in a movie from several decades ago called *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*. This movie explores both the seduction of power and of sexuality in the life of a potential presidential candidate. We repeatedly witness the movement of Quad Four desires into the Quad One of Joe Tynan (played by Alan Alda). In one scene that takes place in a Washington D.C. hotel suite, Tynan and his campaign associate (played by Meryl Streep) suddenly realize that they are physically attracted to one another. Alda is first to verbalize his attraction and wonders if they are about to make love. Streep responds by indicating that they are of course sexually attracted to one another, but she had been hoping that they would both have the good manners not to indicate that these feelings exist or that they are going to make love. She didn’t want their Quad Four passion to move to Quad One (other than through physical action—making love!!).

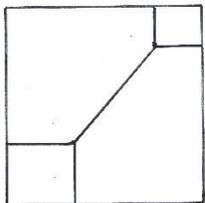
Unfortunately, we also see this direct movement from Quad Four to Quad One in the sudden explosion of anger and attendant violence. A “mild-mannered” husband unexpectedly lashes out against his wife or children, having previously repressed (Quad Four) his frustration and alienation regarding all aspects of his life. While the people we love should never be the target of this Quad Four to Quad One eruption, this misdirection of emotional display is not uncommon. It is very hard to predict what is about to occur when Quad Four material moves to Quad One. That is why this movement is often so frightening—and why it is often represented with great dramatic impact in many science fiction novels, movies and comic books (for example, in Robert Lewis Stevenson’s classic, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and in the widely portrayed comic book figure, the *Hulk*).

Another, more constructive, avenue opens up for the sudden emerges of quad four material directly into quad one. This avenue is what is often called *Incubation*. The creative part of us can often be found in Quad Four—and often appears suddenly when we are awake, but relaxed or distracted. We are taking a shower and suddenly the solution to a problem we have been struggling with for several weeks comes to the fore. With soap in our eyes, we struggle to scramble out of the shower stall and find a pen and paper where we can write down our solution. Perhaps, we are driving to work, and a wonderful new idea pops up (moving for quad four to quad one). Do we write it down while driving (not a good idea!) or pull off to the side of the road and write it down? The setting might be a playground where we are watching our child on a swing. Or it might be a moment when we are just about to fall asleep.

The key feature is that our “defenses” are lowered—the barrier between quad four and quad one is not quite as strong. A new idea is allowed to emerge. We have known about this phenomenon for many years – it is called “incubation” and has often been depicted regarding the occurrence of major breakthroughs in both the sciences and the arts (Ghiselin,1985). I like to think of this as a wonderful stew that is simmering on the back burner (Quad Four) of our stove. We are not attending to it, but the stew is getting better and better. Finally, we notice it and bring it to a front burner (Quad One). We dish it up for our own enjoyment and that of other people.

### **Large Quad One/Large Quad Four**

This scenario offers “fertile ground” for personal growth and interpersonal insight. A large amount of material remains unknown in Quad Four, yet there is a yearning—often a naïve enthusiasm—to bring this material to the surface and to share it. If the small Quad One and large Quad Four is the assumed starting point for a typical psychotherapy session, the large Quad One and large Quad Four represents this session when it is “cooking” — there is still much material that remains unconscious, but there is also much material that has been brought to the surface and analyzed.



This scenario also seems appropriate for human relations training program—which Joe Luft has conducted for many years—and which has served as a base for much of his work on the Johari Window. In human relations programs, participants often are amazed and delighted (after the initial discomfort fades away) to discover new things about themselves not only from the feedback they receive from other participants (Quad Two material to Quad One), but also from other exercises that are conducted during the program that are more oriented to personal growth than to interpersonal sensitivity. This shift (or expansion) in focus from interpersonal to intrapsychic awareness represented a major (and quite controversial) transformation in the human relations movement in North America.

Whereas the traditional T-groups of the 1960s and 1970s tended to focus on interpersonal feedback and disclosure, the “encounter” groups (especially on the West Coast) tended to incorporate a series of exercises that required very little interpersonal interaction, but extensive intrapsychic reflection. John and Joyce Weir have similarly conducted workshops that invite participants to take full ownership for all of their own interpersonal perceptions and feelings and to explore their own sources of feelings through participation in exercises that encourage a regression to more primitive states of being.

Participants in encounter groups or related training programs often drew lifelines or family shields. They used finger painting to discover something about their internal life themes. Other human relations training programs range from climbing mountains or sitting beside lakes (to relate one's own inner states to that of the mountain or lake) to the use of exercises in "ropes programs" that physically challenge participants (triggering intrapsychic issues such as personal courage and interdependence). There are also human relation programs that focus entirely upon one's inner life, without the use of any external events. These workshops often involve very quiet exercises that focus on journal writing and contemplation (notably in the Jungian-based Progoff workshops).

In each of these diverse human relations workshop activities, participants find themselves in an environment or help to create an environment that is filled with trust and support. Firmly established norms encourage the candid sharing of thought, feelings and images (Quad One) that come directly out of one's unconscious world (Quad Four). We find a similar dynamic operating in the Tavistock (British School) programs, though emphasis is placed in these programs on the public sharing of unconscious material (basic assumptions) that has been generated by and plays a powerful role in the life of the group (rather than personal unconscious materials).

In more "normal" settings we find this scenario played out among those people who appear to be spontaneous or even foolish in their sharing of material that has just emerged from Quad Four. We allow (and even encourage) this spontaneity in artists of all kinds, whether they be visual artist, playwrights or poets. Comedians are also allowed and even encouraged to openly share newly emerging Quad Four material. Robin Williams, Jonathan Winters and the cast of a television show called "Whose Line Is It Anyway" come immediately to mind as skillful impromptu comedians.

Through their use of deep-acting (Stanivlovsky) techniques, we also see this occur among actors and even (as I mentioned in a previous essay) among flight attendants, bill collectors and other people who learn to "manage their heart." There is much less admiration or support when this immediate movement of Quad Four material into Quad One is enacted in most other settings. We don't appreciate this type of spontaneity and openness among those working in a business setting, in a commercial interaction, or in most other public settings. We allow people to regress to a more primitive state at a football game, during a *Marti Gras* celebration, or at a New Years Eve celebration, but still expect them to restrain their behavior. We usually don't expect them to explore and share their "inner child" while rooting for their home team or celebrating.

There is one other setting and role that allows for (and encourages) the direct movement of Quad Four material into Quad One. This is the setting of "foolish" play and, more specifically, the role played by the "fool." The fool serves a very important function in most societies—as the British School and, specifically, Kets de Vries has often

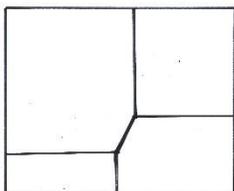
told us.<sup>i</sup> At times, the fool can be a “truth-teller” who “becomes the guardian of reality and, in a paradoxical way, prevents the pursuit of foolish action.”<sup>ii</sup>

In other settings, the fool is a trickster who “is endowed with uncanny powers of insight and prophecy. He (the fool is usually a male figure) is both underdog and cult hero, a mirror to people, a jester who produces order out of chaos by connecting the unexplainable to the familiar. . . . [T]he trickster is a figure onto whom we can project our own foibles, ideals and fears, and as such plays an important role in many societies.”<sup>iii</sup>

We see a strong alignment, in this second role of fool, between the British School’s description and the Jungian notion of a “shadow” function that is served by specific intrapsychic dynamics and by specific people, occupying “shadowy” roles in organizations. At yet other times, the fool is simply foolish – the butt of jokes, the person on whom all blame is assigned, the fallen hero. In this role, according to Kets de Vries,<sup>iv</sup> the king and fool provide a *psychological equilibrium*: “the power of the leader needs the folly of the fool. . . . The duality of the king/fool relationship emphasizes the Janus-faced nature of power. The sage/fool is often the only person who can protect the king from hubris [ego inflation].” The role of the fool is usually highly circumscribed. Only a few people in any one society are allowed to be this spontaneous in their Quad One articulation of unconscious Quad Four material from either their own psyche or the group’s psyche. Furthermore, these men and women ultimately have to pay a major price for this foolish behavior—and they usually are not allowed to play any role other than fool.

### Large Quad One/Small Quad Four

By Joe Luft’s criteria, this third scenario would represent a highly evolved person. She would be found in settings and in specific interpersonal relationships that have been very conducive to personal growth. The evolved person no longer has a large amount of unconscious (Quad Four) material (at least as related to this specific interpersonal relationship or group).



However, they are still open to sharing material (Quad One) that does emerge from Quad Four (or the other two quads). The men and women who conduct therapy or human relations programs are supposedly operating with a relatively small Quad Four, given that they themselves have engaged in training programs (or therapy sessions) that bring unconscious material into full awareness. There is a major fork-in-the-road, however, when it comes to the amount of disclosure (Quad One) in which these “evolved” people participate. In most therapeutic settings, the therapist is not to disclose much about themselves (small Quad One)—but is instead expected to keep this material hidden (Quad Three).

Similarly, in the case of many human relations training models, the trainer or facilitator is not to disclose much about their personal feelings, thoughts or images (regardless of the source). In Tavistock workshops, the group consultant does share their own images of the group's unconscious life as it comes to their own awareness, though they would rarely share information regarding their own personal unconscious material as this comes to awareness. In some other human relations training models (especially those encouraging Quad One sharing of intrapsychic material), the group leaders do openly share their own newly emerging Quad Four material. They model Quad One disclosure and through this modeling encourage the Quad One sharing of newly identified (and appreciated) Quad Four material by the workshop participants.

Out in the “real” world, we find the large Quad One/small Quad Four scenario played out—often tragically—in the “spent” artist, who doesn't have much more to say, write or paint, but keeps replicating the same old themes in her work. The long-standing fear that psychotherapy “robs” an artist of his inspiration and unconscious material may relate to this scenario. We see this scenario also being played out in the “narcissist” who has obsessed about his own psyche so much that he no longer has much new to say about himself to other people. He repeats the same story for the hundredth time about the remarkable insights he gained about himself during a seaside walk in 2006 or the great self-revelation he gained from attending a Harold Pinter play in 2013.

Even more generally—and more importantly—each of us needs to be careful about over-disclosure, even if we are not burned-out artists or boring narcissists. Joe Luft and the original Johari Window have often been misunderstood in this regard. Luft has always advised discretion and thoughtfulness about what we disclose. We must decide what is appropriate to share with other people (particularly about material that has just emerged from Quad Four) and must be sensitive to the feedback other people provide us (directly or indirectly) about their interest in the material that comes into our consciousness from the fourth quadrant. Often times it would be much wiser for us to divert this material from our public quadrant (One) to our hidden quadrant (Three). We lose nothing by being a bit circumspect regarding the new-found insights that come directly from our fourth quadrant.

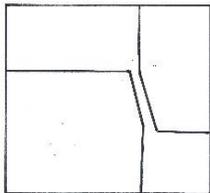
### **Small Quad One/Small Quad Four**

Up to this point, in discussing the first three scenarios, I have focused on the direct relationship between Quad One and Quad Four. In each case, however, something has also happened in the disjointed model with regard to either Quad Two or Quad Three. When both Quad One and Quad Four are large (scenario two), Quad Two and

Quad Three shrink in size—they play a diminished role in this scenario. When Quad Four is large and Quad One is small (scenario one), then Quad Two grows larger.

As I noted in discussing this first scenario, there is likely to be not only spontaneous displays of Quad Four in Quad One, but also leakage (slips of the tongue, nonverbal messages and so forth) into Quad Two. In the case of the third scenario (large One, small Four), the third quadrant grows larger. As I just mentioned, the person who has substantial access to their own Quad Four material (as seasoned therapist or personal growth workshop leader) must be discrete in disclosing her own Quad Four material. Much of it is likely to be moved into Quad Three, to remain hidden from public view.

As we approach the fourth interpersonal scenario, we see that both Quad Two and Quad Three play an important role. Both of these quadrants expand as Quad One and Quad Four decrease in size. In this fourth scenario, I hold considerable information about myself (Quad Three) and you hold considerable information about me (Quad Two) that comes from Quad Four; however, none of this material gets shared by either party.



Where do we see this scenario being played out? The key condition for the engagement of this scenario appears to be one of misplaced or lost trust—of being “burned” by another person or a specific setting. Conditions in the recent past have been ripe for the emergence of Quad Four material into the other three quadrants: we find ourselves in the midst of an intense personal growth workshop, in the midst of a passionate, romantic encounter, or in the midst of a drug-induced euphoria.

Much has come “to the surface” about our self. Our feelings, thoughts and images are exposed regarding another person. It is now “the morning after” and we deeply regret what has been said and done. Furthermore, there is often a sense of betrayal regarding the other person: they have seen more of us than we want them to have seen and now, “in the cold light of day” we face them and their intimate knowledge of us with minimal interpersonal trust. We feel like a fool (“send in the clowns”) and hate the other person for having witnessed (and perhaps helped to elicit) aspects of ourselves that weren’t even know to us (Quad Four).

At this point in the relationship, there is usually little more that can be done—we face interpersonal constipation. “I have learned a lot about myself and I know you know a lot about me that you haven’t shared. However, at this point, I don’t trust (all three types) you or the setting sufficiently to try expanding Quad One either through disclosure or feedback.” As you will note with this graphic portrayal, there is actually a thin corridor (not just a line) between Quad One and Quad Four. This suggests that if there is a move from Quad Four

to Quad One it will be quite an eruption. Jungians might suggest that the shadow has taken full control. Those with expertise in psychopathology might even predict a nervous breakdown—or the emergence of a psychotic episode.

This scenario speaks to the harm that can come from the temporary loss of discrete control over one's disclosures—resulting either from creation of a temporary environment that encourages inappropriate disclosure (a powerful but poorly conceived personal growth workshop) or from production of mind-numbing and disinhibiting neurochemicals (generated by the brain in response to passion or in response to ingestion of alcohol or some other toxic drug). We all know that these conditions are to be avoided—and caution our own children about these conditions. Yet we find ourselves even as mature and responsible adults lured into events or consuming drugs that lead us to temporary “highs” and mind-altering exposure to Quad Four material. These temporary lapses in Quad Four inhibitions leave us, in the end, regretful, embarrassed and angry regarding our short-term flirtation with fourth quadrant and sharing of material from this quadrant.

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<sup>i</sup> Kets de Vries, Manfred. *Leaders, Fools and Imposters*. New York: iUniverse, 2003.

<sup>ii</sup> Kets de Vries, Manfred. *Leaders, Fools and Imposters*. New York: iUniverse, 2003, p. 62.

<sup>iii</sup> Kets de Vries, Manfred. *Leaders, Fools and Imposters*. New York: iUniverse, 2003, p. 62.

<sup>iv</sup> Kets de Vries, Manfred. *Leaders, Fools and Imposters*. New York: iUniverse, 2003, p. 63.