

“The Johari Window”

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Joe Luft and Harry Ingham developed what has come to be known as the Johari Window, a pictorial representation (a structure) that maps what we know (or think we know) about awareness in human behavior and human interaction.

in

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	Known to Self	Unknown to Self
Known to Others	I OPEN	II BLIND
Unknown to Others	III HIDDEN	IV UNKNOWN

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The four quadrants in this representation reflect the presence and absence of awareness (the knowledge that we have of who we are and what is happening in a relationship). The Johari Window applies Freud's insights in psychotherapy (resistance, repression, differentiating the ego and the unconscious, the ego's involvement in self-deception, and the difficulties of self-scrutiny) to our relations to others. The knowledge gained by physicians in treatment of neurosis is recast as knowledge for understanding personal and professional relationships that can be put to use in the law office.

Turning to the quadrants of the Johari window: Quadrant I is *Open*, that part of our interaction of which we are fully aware, that we readily share with others, and that others know as well as we. When we say what we want, or need, express our feelings, and are heard by another, who reflects back to us what we are saying and feeling, the

interaction and communication are taking place in Quadrant I. In the interactions confined to Quadrant I we are known to self and known to others.

Many of the interactions of everyday life, and the conversations and work of the lawyer, take place in this quadrant. So long as the lawyer and the client follow the game plan, do what is expected of them, play their roles, say what they mean and do what they say, then the interaction remains in Quadrant I. If we were perfect human beings, it is conceivable that there would be nothing but Quadrant I interactions; all of our communications would be adult-adult, I-Thou, open, mutually reinforcing, and fully understandable. No person would be able to manipulate another by withholding information: To get the information you need, all you would have to do is ask for it. Dishonesty would be a rarity. Gossip would lose its appeal. Secrecy would be so dysfunctional that it would become obsolete.

That all our interactions might take place in Quadrant I suggest a utopian world, a world we sometimes aspire to, and wish for in times of misunderstanding. Lawyers would flourish in this utopian world, which raises doubt whether it is a world we would truly want. Without secrets there would be no awe and mystery. Without misunderstanding and misreadings (we misread others the way we misread all texts), there would be no curiosity about human motivations. We would, in a world dominated by Quadrant I communication and interaction, have created a totally bureaucratic universe, and a leveling of the human spirit.

Quadrant II is comprised of behavior, feelings, motivation that are known to others but not to self. It is a realm of interaction in which we are *Blind* to what others can see. Freud and Jung, as much as any contemporary or past figures in psychology and psychiatry, were masterful explorers of this region. The ego that helps us test (and create) a reality from our experiences, and to find a place for ourselves in the world, cuts us off from certain kinds of knowledge about ourselves (giving rise to self-deception). When the obstacles to self-understanding become absolute barriers, as in the case of self-destructive behavior and neurotic adaptations (ways of living that are so dysfunctional that they produce extreme unhappiness), we (those who live and must share the world with the person) become painfully aware of the pathology created by behavior to which the person is blind, but others see.

Quadrant II is significant in the attorney-client relationship. We argue that the client is a resource, and has information, knowledge, insights and understanding that can be directed to the resolution of problems. (~~See Chapter Nine~~) But the client is a resource in a broader sense, a resource for the lawyer—the client sees the lawyer as he cannot (will not) see himself. One value of the feedback we give one another is that it tells us about behavior and feelings more apparent to others than to ourselves.

Quadrant III, the *Hidden*, is the realm in which what we know about ourselves is unknown to others. The conscious elements of what Jung called the

“shadow” are found here, as are all secrets, and knowledge of negligence, incompetence, mistakes, and errors. It is Quadrant III which gives rise to manipulation and lies; in this realm of interaction we find a fertile ground for guilt (as Quadrant II is the ground for depression). Quadrant III involves interactions that produce the moral tensions that pull at lawyers: confidentiality, conflict of interest, and the ideal of zealous representation arise in those settings in which what we know, but which is unknown to others, results in harm to others.

A poignant example of the Quadrant III moral tension can be found in a story told by David Hilfiker in his book *Healing the Wounds: A Physician Looks at His Work*. Dr. Hilfiker, at the time of the incident he describes, was practicing medicine in a rural health-care clinic in northern Minnesota, two hours by automobile from Duluth. Hilfiker had delivered Barb Daily’s first baby and considered himself a friend of Barb and her husband, Russ. Barb thought she was pregnant again, and there was no reason to think that Barb Daily’s second child would present complications. Hilfiker explained: “At her appointment that afternoon, Barb seems to be in good health, with all the signs and symptoms of pregnancy: slight nausea, some soreness in her breasts, a little weight gain. But when the nurse tests Barb’s urine to determine if she is pregnant, the result is negative.” The test is not always accurate; Hilfiker had Barb leave a urine sample so that another test could be run. When the second test came back negative, Hilfiker was puzzled.

zled and troubled: "Perhaps she isn't pregnant. Her missed menstrual period and her other symptoms could be a result of a minor hormonal imbalance. Maybe the embryo has died within the uterus.... I could find out by ordering an ultrasound examination. This procedure would give me a 'picture' of the uterus and the embryo. But Barb would have to go to Duluth for the examination. The procedure is also expensive. I know the Dailys well enough to know they have a modest income. Besides, by waiting a few weeks, I should be able to find out for sure without the ultrasound: either the urine test will be positive or Barb will have a miscarriage." This information was conveyed to the patient. A month later she returned to see Hilfiker and nothing had changed—still no menstrual period and no miscarriage. Barb was now confused and upset because she felt pregnant and both she and her husband wanted the baby. Hilfiker's concern intensified when a third urine test was negative. Possible explanations for Barb's condition included a hormonal imbalance and even tumor, explanations which Hilfiker ruled out, concluding that the most likely explanation was that Barb was carrying a dead embryo and that her body had not followed the usual course of miscarriage to get rid of the dead tissue.

Hilfiker again explained the situation to his patient: "Barb is disappointed; there are tears. She is college-educated, and she understands the scientific and technical aspects of the situation, but that doesn't alleviate the sorrow. We talk at some length

and make an appointment for two weeks later." When the patient returned, with her husband, there still has been no menstrual period, no miscarriage, and there was another negative pregnancy test, the fourth. "I explain to them what has happened. The dead embryo should be removed or there could be serious complications. Infection could develop, Barb could even become sterile. The conversation is emotionally difficult for all three of us. We schedule the dilation and curettage for later in the week.

"Dilation and curettage, or D & C, is a relatively simple surgical procedure performed thousands of times each day in this country," but with Barb things did not go easily. What should take ten or fifteen minutes stretches into a half-hour. The body parts I remove are much larger than I expected, considering when the embryo died. They are not bits of decomposing tissue. These are parts of a body that was recently alive!

"I do my best to suppress my rising panic and try to complete the procedure. Working blindly, I am unable to evacuate the uterus completely; I can feel more parts inside but cannot remove them. Finally I stop, telling myself that the uterus will expel the rest within a few days."

Hilfiker learned from the pathologist's report, confirming his worst fear, that he had aborted a living fetus, of about eleven weeks. "My meeting with Barb and Russ later in the week is one of the hardest things I have ever been through. I described in some detail what I did and what my rationale

had been. Nothing can obscure the hard reality: I killed their baby."

Every doctor and lawyer makes mistakes. As Hilfiker puts it, "They happen; they hurt—ourselves and others. They demonstrate our fallibility. Shown our mistakes and forgiven them, we can grow, perhaps in some small way become better people. Mistakes, understood this way, are a process, a way we connect with one another and with our deepest selves." The process and the growth that Hilfiker envisions is stunted if we hide our mistakes from others and ourselves. Hilfiker's book is a moving chronicle of pain and honesty in professional life—of transferring experience and knowledge from Quadrant III to Quadrant I. It is, finally, a powerful moral argument for growth through truthfulness.

Quadrant IV, the *Unknown*, is that area of human interaction that is out-of-awareness for both parties in the relationship. Joe Luft, one of the creators of the Johari Window, provides the following examples of feelings and needs that are difficult to confront and that take up residence in the quadrant of the Unknown:

- feelings of inadequacy, incompetence, and impotence;
- sensitivity to rejection, avoiding displays of affection;
- need to punish or to be punished;

— passive-dependent feelings, especially in men and women who have high achievement aspirations;

— intense feelings of loneliness and isolation;

— qualities in the person that one cannot tolerate in others;

— feelings of unworthiness and despair.