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# Giving and receiving feedback

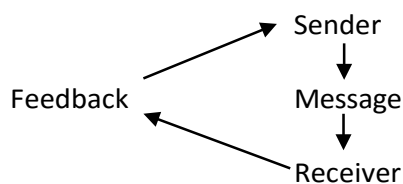
To improve communication feedback is needed. Often people are not aware of the way they communicate. Giving and receiving feedback can help to gain insight. It means that people who communicate inform each other about the effects of the other person's behavior. It's almost impossible to learn without feedback of another person. Only when people are told what the effect is of their behavior, they have clues to change their behavior (if necessary).

It isn't always easy to give feedback in a correct way. In this text you will find some guidelines how to give feedback in a constructive way.

There are 2 parties in a feedback situation: a sender and a receiver. The receiver is able to make a correct interpretation of the message if he:

- understands the content of the message (knowing words and the meaning of a word)
- knowing the intention the sender had with the message (how he should understand the message)

**In scheme:**



Feedback can be given on many different ways:

- consciously (nodding) or unconscious (yawning)
- verbal (no) or non verbal (leaving the room)
- spontaneously (applauding) or by responding to a question (Was it clear? Yes,...)
- formal (answering questions in a questionnaire) or informal (slap on the back)

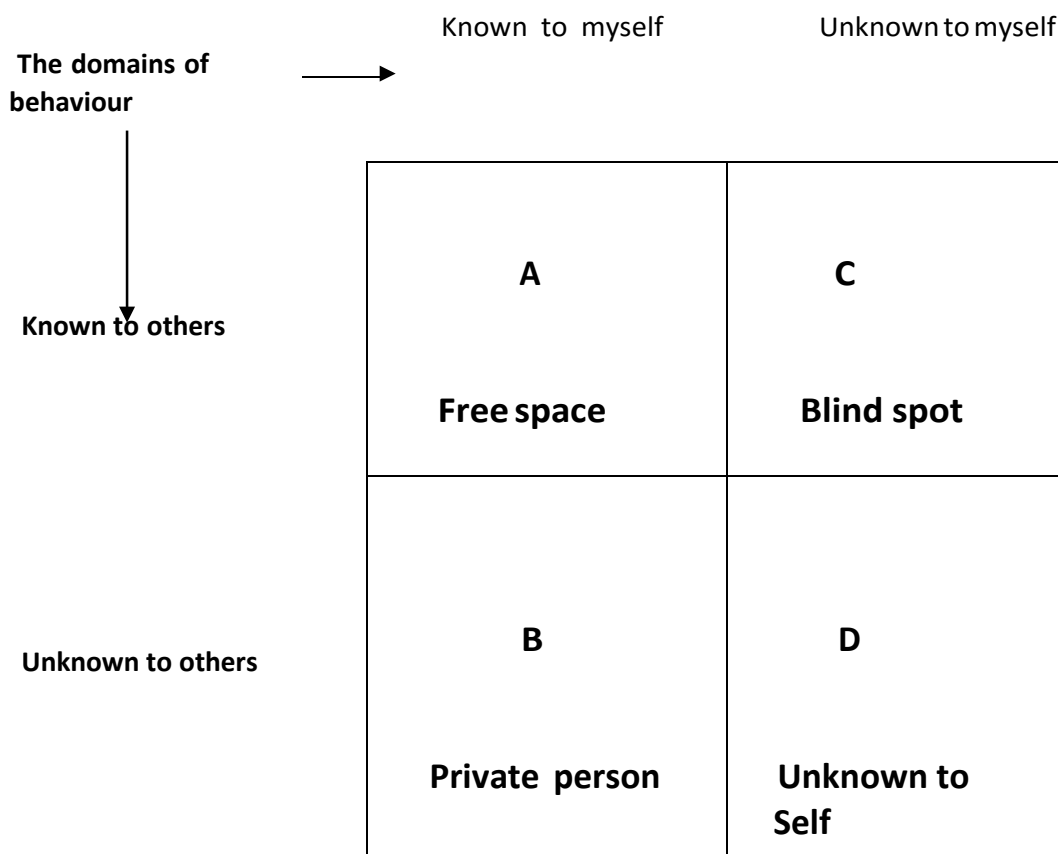
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## The Johari-window

### Johari window

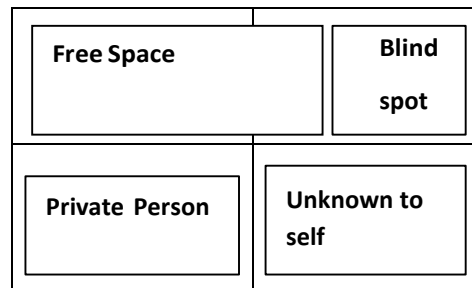
Named after the authors (Joe Luft en Harry Ingham); It is a schematic reflection of someone's personality. The model consists of 4 parts:

- The free space: known to yourself, known to others: the daily conduct to the environment.
- Hidden area: Known to yourself, unknown to others. The part of behaviour which is invisible for others.
- Blind spot: Unknown to yourself, known to others. In this area fall the suppressed and habits you are not aware off. They call it indeed the bad breath area.
- Unknown self: unknown to yourself, unknown to others. (often the area in which a psycho-therapist is working).

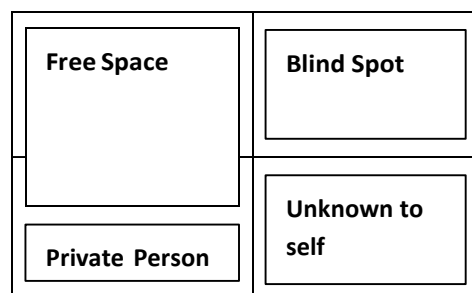


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Receiving **feedback**: By receiving feedback about behaviour, that is unknown to you, the free space becomes bigger and the blind spot smaller.



**Giving feedback**: The sender gives feedback so he gives information to the receiver. The message is also informative about the sender. The space of 'private person' can become smaller.



To make feedback effective a few rules are given:

1. Take your time to think about what you want to say. Writing down (short description) an incident for yourself helps in giving good feedback.
2. Give feedback in 'I-messages'.  
"I think that....". Avoid the use of descriptions in which you start with "You...", such remarks can easily be perceived as accusing or judgmental which makes the feedback lose its purpose.
3. Limit the feedback to what has happened in the contact with this person.
4. Describe your own feeling as an extra to the feedback.
5. Describe the effect of the behavior on you.

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A few extra advices concerning feedback:

1. *What went well?* (positive feedback)  
“I think it was good that you gave me the opportunity to finish my sentence, before you.....”.
2. *What can be improved?* (constructive criticism)  
“It was a pity that you didn’t see that I had some problems with that question”.
3. *How can you improve?* Try to give an alternative.  
“It would have been better if you had explained why you asked that question”.
4. *Is it clear?* Check if the other person understands what you’re trying to explain. If the goal of your feedback is not understood the learning effect will be minimal.

(Source: Nelissen, H. (1978). *Samen werken, samen leren*. Bloemendaal: SOVA.)