

The Johari Window*

DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS

So how can it be that our self-perception and observers' perceptions may not be the same? Here are two possible answers.

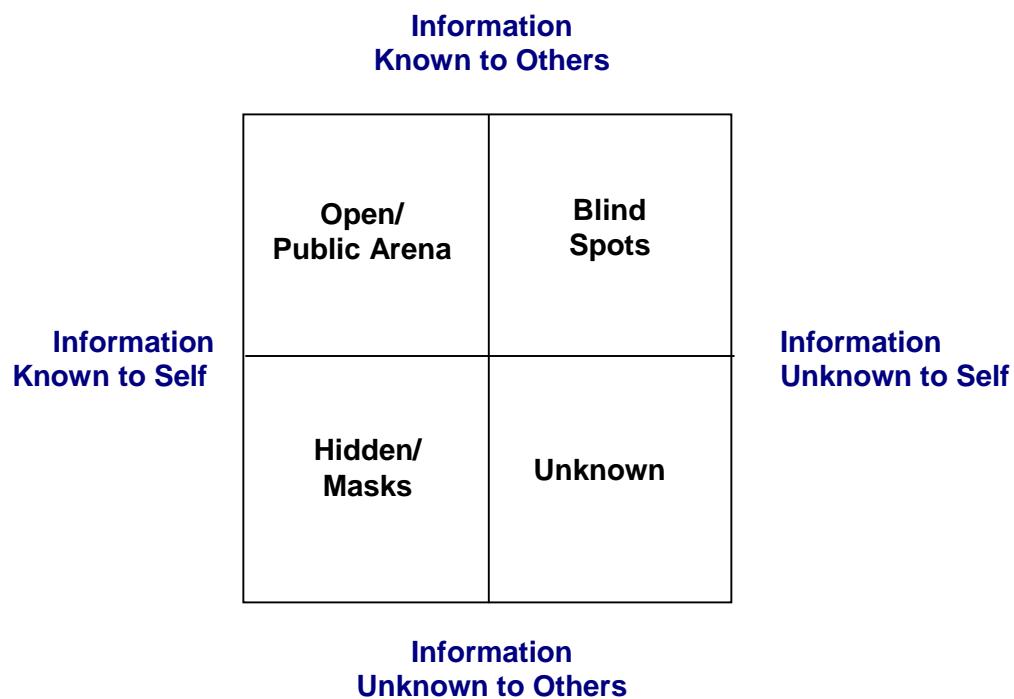
1. Different roles and relationships call for different behaviors. You have already recognized this and adapted your behaviors to fit the situation and relationships.
2. People do not know the real you.

If you are already adapting your behavior to fit different situations and people, Congratulations! Keep up the good work! However, always be aware of that one relationship or situation that could work a little smoother.

If people see you differently and your reaction was... "Well, they just don't know me, how can that be?" The best way to talk about this is to reference the Johari Window named after the originators Joseph Luft and Harry Ingram.

The Johari Window identifies four types of information about you that affects communications with others. Using this model, you can explore the potential to increase your levels of awareness and acceptance. The more time and energy you spend hiding information and feelings about yourself, the communications with others will be less clear and effective.

Think of the window as representing your total self in relationship with others. It deals with information known and unknown to yourself and others. There are four panes in the window: Open/Public Arena, Blind Spots, Hidden/Masks, and Unknown.



*Source: Adapted from Joseph Luft, *Group Processes: An Introduction to Group Dynamics*

OPEN/PUBLIC ARENA

The Open or Public Arena represents your “public” self. This pane represents the things both you and others know about you. As your relationship with another person grows, the open pane becomes larger. A person with a great deal of self-awareness and who openly shares information and feelings about themselves will have a large open area.

If your Open/Public Arena is big, this may explain similarities in your self-perception and your observers' perception.

How open is your Open/Public Arena?

How different is it personally and professionally?

BLIND SPOTS

The upper right pane is called our Blind Spots. It represents information about yourself that, primarily through observation, others know about you but you are not consciously aware of or perhaps are in denial about. You may view yourself as open and approachable, others may view you as more guarded and not easy to approach. This may explain differences in your self-perception and your observers' perceptions.

This information is very valuable in order to increase your personal effectiveness. Perhaps your observer feedback provided you with some areas to take a look at. The more you can learn about your blind spots, the more opportunities you have to modify behaviors that may be a barrier to a more effective work position or meaningful relationships. Building relationships involves working to enlarge the open area. As you become more open, people are more willing to give you feedback.

Be receptive to feedback. Sit down with others and ask them how you can modify your own behavior to make the relationship more effective. You might be surprised that they may be willing to meet you half way and ask you the same question. “How can I modify my behavior to make our relationship more comfortable?”

Were there any behavior observations that you were surprised about on your observer eGraphs?

HIDDEN/MASKS

The bottom left pane represents information about you that you know, but others do not. These are private feelings; experiences and needs that you prefer to keep to yourself. Everyone is entitled to conceal personal thoughts, feelings, etc. that are of no concern to others.

You need to find a balance. Too little sharing can be a barrier to building strong relationships with others. Sharing may help others understand your behaviors and attitudes. You also do not want to overwhelm someone with too much information too early in a relationship... Information Overload – “WOW! That's more than I needed to know.”

By sharing more of the real you, the Open/Arena becomes larger and more trust is developed in a relationship.

What masks are you wearing to hide the real you?

What natural behaviors are you choosing not to reveal just yet?

What might happen if you began to show a little more about yourself?

UNKNOWN AREA

The bottom right pane is the unknown area of information both unknown to yourself and others. This area never completely disappears. It represents talents not yet discovered; things about yourself that have never been recognized by you or others. A person capable of rising to a management position may always remain an assistant because the potential for advancement is unrecognized. As you open your communications and sharing with others, more of these talents, behaviors, and potentials will be revealed.

As you change the size of one area, other areas are affected. When you first meet someone or take on a new position, your open area may be somewhat small. As time goes by and trust is built, you share more about yourself and your open window enlarges and the hidden areas become smaller. Remember, the bigger the Open/Public Arena, the more effective and clear your communications will be with others.

