

Johari Window

Developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham the Johari Window is aimed to show us the process of giving and receiving feedback. The concept as shown in the diagram below helps us understand better our behaviours and helps us to understand how we manage ourselves in our interpersonal relationships with others and how we can be more open or closed with those around us. The model is a dynamic one in the sense that we and the people around us are continually giving and receiving some form of feedback that changes the sizes of the squares.

Open area: Is the most obvious of the squares. This is where all our experience is known by ourselves and those that surround us. It could be called our “public” face as it the area where we openly give and receive information and act in a certain way i.e. a colleague would know how we act and react in a certain work situation. As we have more confidence with someone or a group of people this square grows as we divulge more information from the hidden areas and those around us give us feedback from our blind area.

Blind area: In this area, the upper right hand box is the area that contains information about us that we don’t personally know but those around us do. It is what our colleagues know but don’t tell us for what ever reason. This is especially the case when we don’t have a close level of professional or personal friendship and people “fear” giving the feedback. Typically when we are receiving feedback this is the square that is shrinking as people make us more aware of ourselves.

Hidden area: The lower left hand corner is the hidden or “private” area. In this area is all of the information that we know but keep from others. This is where the majority of what we know about ourselves stays. Often people have a “fear” over expressing their true feelings, perceptions and opinions about issues, other people or even ourselves and this is where this information stays. Typically over time as people build up friendship and more importantly trust this area shrinks as the information passes into the Open area. It is quite a difficult area to open up because as well as needing trust it also requires some risk to tell others what we think. We can also keep information hidden in order to control or manipulate those around us.

Unknown area: The bottom right hand area contains all of the information that neither ourselves nor others know about us. This is the area of unconscious motivations and represents our “unexplored” self that could include amongst other things; hidden talents, unknown resources and things that happened in early childhood.

Johari Window in use

The principal uses of the model are to support personal development through the use of giving and receiving quality feedback. As such it provides a framework for allowing people to understand the value of feedback and that as receivers of feedback we choose what we want to do with that new information in a proactive way. Typical training and development uses include leadership development, new team development, change management and coaching.

