

The Johari Window

By

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Dynamic Leadership
— A C A D E M Y —

The Johari Window

Sharing our worldview with others creates risk. Self-disclosure has costs and benefits. Leaders must decide every day when and how it is appropriate to share or utilize worldview. A valuable tool for this process is the Johari Window. Developed in 1955 by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, this model of interpersonal communication is simple and easy to use.

Inside the first frame of the Johari Window (Figure 1), it is all about you. It contains everything there is to know about you, or, your conscious worldview. While you might like to think you know everything about yourself, it is simply impossible. In examining your worldview, you will discover things about yourself that you did not realize or know. As a result, the first frame must be divided into two parts, with the new half containing everything about you of which you are not aware (Figure 2).

The frame as shown above (Figure 2) demonstrates this and is divided into “Known To Self” and “Not Known To Self.” This same frame can also be divided differently to contain everything about you in another way. This division, shown in Figure 3, represents the things about you that others know and the things about you that you keep to yourself.

Figure 1. The first frame of the Johari Window.

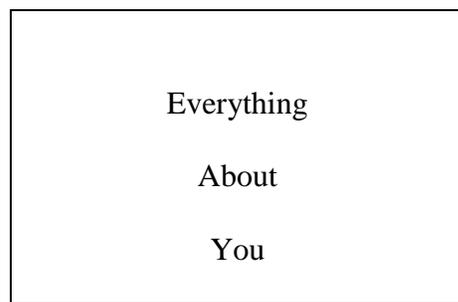


Figure 2. The first frame of the Johari Window divided in two parts.

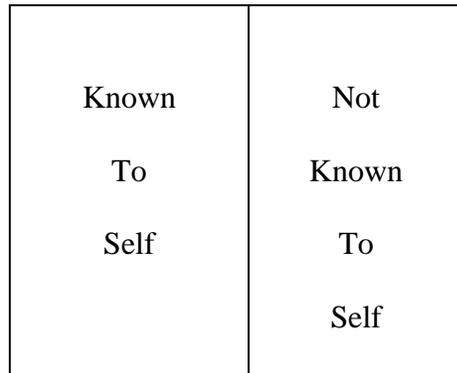
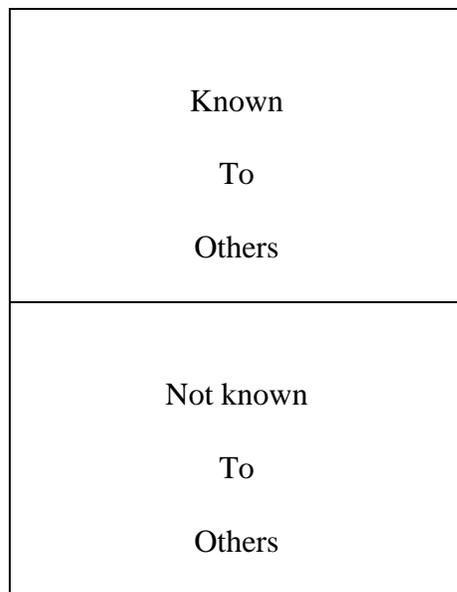


Figure 3. Another division of self-knowledge in the Johari Window



When you combine these 2 methods of dividing the frame, you have the Johari Window as shown in Figure 4. The Johari Window divides everything about you into four parts.

Figure 4. The completed Johari Window.

	Known to Self	Not known to Self
Known To Others	1 OPEN	2 BLIND
Not known To Others	3 HIDDEN	4 UNKNOWN

As you look at the completed Johari Window (Figure 4), the pane depicted as “1 OPEN” represents the part of you that you are aware of and that you share with others. This is your open area. “1 OPEN” represents your worldview as you share it with yourself and others through communication, which includes decision making and actions or behavior. Pane “2 BLIND,” your blind area, represents the part of you that you are not aware of or are unconscious of, but others realize. From a worldview perspective, your blind area represents those times when your actions are in conflict with your worldview. Your hidden area, pane “3 HIDDEN,” represents the part of yourself that you are aware of but you do not allow others to know. You may have doubts regarding some aspect of your worldview, but would never admit it to anyone. And finally, pane “4 UNKNOWN” represents the part of you that is known neither to you or others, the unknown area. Earlier it was stated that some of your beliefs that affect your worldview may be subconscious. Pane “4 UNKNOWN” contains your unconscious beliefs that may or may not affect the decisions you make that neither you nor others are aware of.

It is simple to create your own Johari Window by simply drawing the four panes of the window as you think it represents you. If you are very open with your worldview, you are very self-aware, you hide very little, and there is very little you do not know about yourself, your window might look something like Figure 5.

Figure 5. A Johari Window with a large “Known to Self” area.

	Known to Self	Not known to Self
Known To Others	1 OPEN	2 BLIND
Not known To Others	3 HIDDEN	4 UN-KNOWN

I believe that as leaders, we need to reflect on our worldview so that pane “1 OPEN” of our Johari Window is the largest frame of the window. In other words, the more you understand your worldview, the more open you are, the more you know yourself, and the more you let yourself be known by others. A person who seeks out self-knowledge interprets his/her findings based on personal experience and establishes his/her personal reality. The Johari Window helps explain this concept with a focus on communication or a hermeneutic view.