

Chapter Eight - Individual Frameworks

The Power of the 2 x 2 Matrix: Using 2 x 2 Thinking to Solve Business Problems and Make Better Decisions

by Alex Lowy and Phil Hood

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PERSONAL AWARENESS AND STYLE FRAMEWORKS

What are my unique strengths, interests, orientation, and values? How can I be more effective in my life?

Understanding and managing oneself is a core competency that touches every aspect of personal effectiveness. We are all somewhat different in style and preferences. As we learn more about our own makeup, we are able to make better sense of experiences and wiser personal decisions. Like petals of a flower, each framework reveals another aspect of our nature. An important part of the personal journey is deciding which of these aspects to explore.

This section contains many of the oldest and best-tested frameworks available. The Johari Window provides a powerful lens into how others perceive us, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is probably the most widely applied personality model, and the Learning Styles Inventory is the entry point for understanding how we prefer to learn.

Johari Window

Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham

Oh would some Power the giftie give us
To see ourselves as others see us!
It would from many a blunder free us, and foolish notion.

—Robert Burns^[3]

The Johari Window (Figure 8.2) was developed by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham at the University of California and was first presented to a group at the Western Training Laboratory in 1955. Since then, it has been incorporated into hundreds of educational and awareness-training curricula and has been adapted to address unique industry, topic, and community interests. Based on principles of feedback and learning, individuals and groups use the framework to increase levels of openness and self-understanding. It assumes that more self-knowledge is preferable, as is more openness. The framework is used to sensitize one to both of these areas and to expand them.

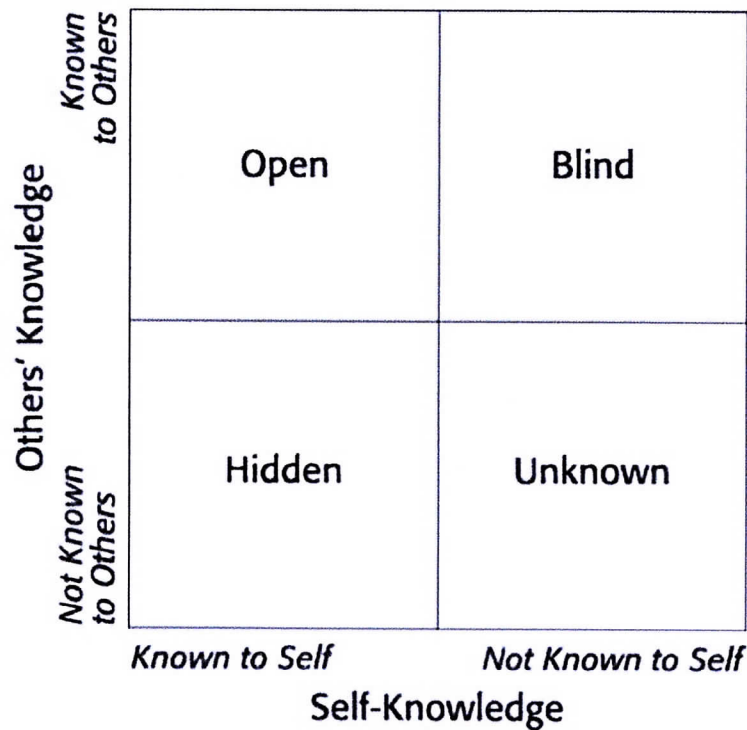


Figure 8.2: Johari Window

The Two Dimensions and Their Extremes. The Johari Window is structured in the reflexive form, looking at the same subject matter, oneself, from two perspectives:

Others' Knowledge: Known to Others versus Not Known to Others. As you participate in activities with others in the world, they learn about you and form impressions based on what you communicate and reveal, as well as from their observations of you.

Self-Knowledge: Known to Self versus Not Known to Self. There are things about ourselves that we know and understand fully and accurately. You may be funny or a good singer and know these to be true about you. Equally, for most of us, there are qualities about which we are not aware. You may have a good singing voice and truly not realize it. The x-axis divides self-knowledge into these two categories.

The Four Quadrants. Through the exchange of feedback, we are capable of expanding our self-knowledge and modifying behaviors that may annoy others and undermine our success in the world. A 2001 study by Development Dimensions International of five thousand professionals found that an amazing 69 percent of leaders behave in ways that actively derail their careers.^[4] Interestingly, 16 percent of leaders were described as unknown to their colleagues. It's hard to trust someone you don't really know. Working to alter your Johari Window helps to change this.

Unlike most other 2 x 2 frameworks, the quadrants are not fixed and equal in size. Think of them as panes in a window, with some more transparent than others. The lines separating the boxes are like shades that can be pulled more or less open. When an aspect of oneself is revealed and shared through the feedback process, one has an opportunity to expand the window of self-understanding. By choosing to share more with others, we are better understood and seen as more authentic. The ideal Johari configuration is uneven, with the public, shared zone larger than the rest:

- **Upper left: Open (the Public Arena).** This is the self that is well known to both you and others. People tend to trust others who are open to sharing their thoughts candidly and receiving feedback. These people tend to learn more from their experiences and are more effective leaders and influencers. Self-disclosure, however, can feel risky and requires confidence and comfort with oneself. Feedback can also be a scary proposition and is most effective when one seeks it out and when the conditions are sufficiently psychologically safe.
- **Lower left: Hidden (the Facade).** This box includes things we know or believe but choose not to share with others. We may have a hidden agenda or feel embarrassed about an experience. Often the decision to hide is made automatically, without consciously thinking through the possible consequences. The trouble with hiding behind a facade is that it consumes a lot of energy to hide what is true. And others sense they are not seeing the whole picture when actions and motivations don't line up, eroding trust. Things often turn worse when the reality is revealed. Remember that two recent U.S. presidents, Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton, tried to suppress facts, only to have them blow up in their faces.^[5]

- Lower right: Unknown. Within each of us reside talents, opinions, fears, and motivations that are unknown to our self and others. Some of this material lies in our subconscious, surfacing in reaction to triggering events. Blind spots can be dangerous, and it is preferable to be familiar with these parts of ourselves. There are various ways to accomplish this, all of which involve becoming more self-reflective. The Unknown category is problematic when it is permitted to grow and dominate.
- Upper right: Blind. There are aspects about us that others see more clearly than we do. Friends, bosses, and our kids all hold valuable knowledge that can help to complete our sense of who we are. This box represents a major learning opportunity waiting to be tapped. Openness and encouragement of others are needed. People are uncomfortable with giving feedback they worry may be hurtful or that is unwanted. By working with the Johari Window, we can slowly reverse the self-protective mechanisms that keep the light out.

Example: When Being Right Isn't Enough. Geoffrey had worked hard to earn the job and reputation he now enjoyed. He had joined the company as a young engineering graduate twelve years ago. Progressing from analyst to designer and then shift team leader over a seven-year period had felt natural and easy. Somewhere around that time, his advancement stopped, and try as he did, nothing seemed to help his cause. He believed he was effective and respected, perhaps even a little feared, for his laser-like analytic prowess. His performance reviews were consistently positive, if a little vague. He had heard that company management liked it when staff signed up for effectiveness training provided by the in-house professional development group. Geoffrey registered, not expecting much but hopeful this might at least send a message he was serious about his career. If things didn't improve soon, he would start to consider outside opportunities.

Prior to arriving at the session, all attendees were asked to complete a two-page Johari Window questionnaire (Figure 8.3). The session began with reviewing the results. Then the group of twenty participants engaged in a simulation exercise involving building some equipment together using plastic blocks. Geoffrey did this, feeling pretty good about how it went until the group ignored one of his suggestions about halfway through the game. He had been right, and if only they had followed his suggestion, the team would have performed more successfully.

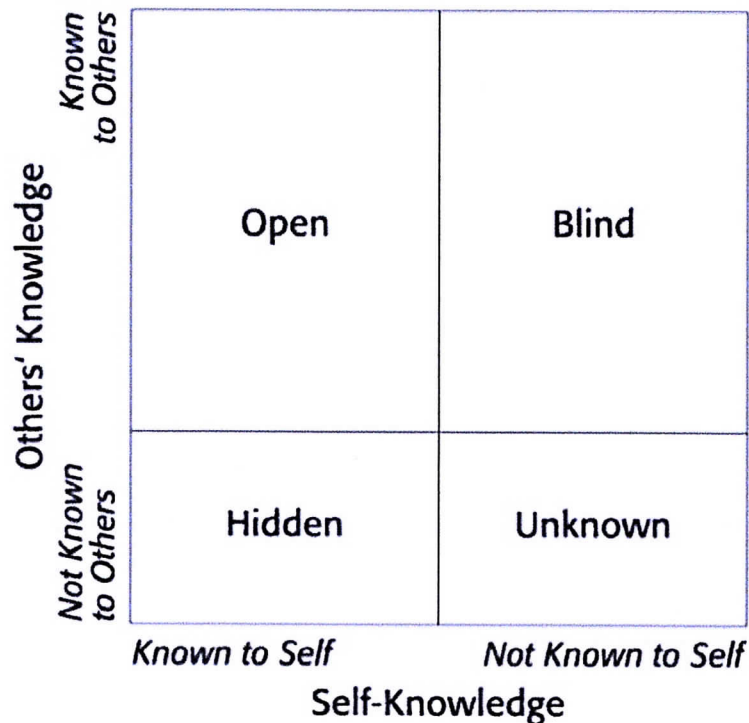


Figure 8.3: Geoffrey's Self-Assessment

The next thing they did was to fill in the same Johari Window rating form for each other (Figure 8.4) that they had completed prior to the course for themselves. The feedback to Geoffrey was clear and devastating. It didn't matter that Geoffrey had been right about the solution. The group saw him as closed and manipulative. Not only did his team members not appreciate his suggestions, they actively resented him.

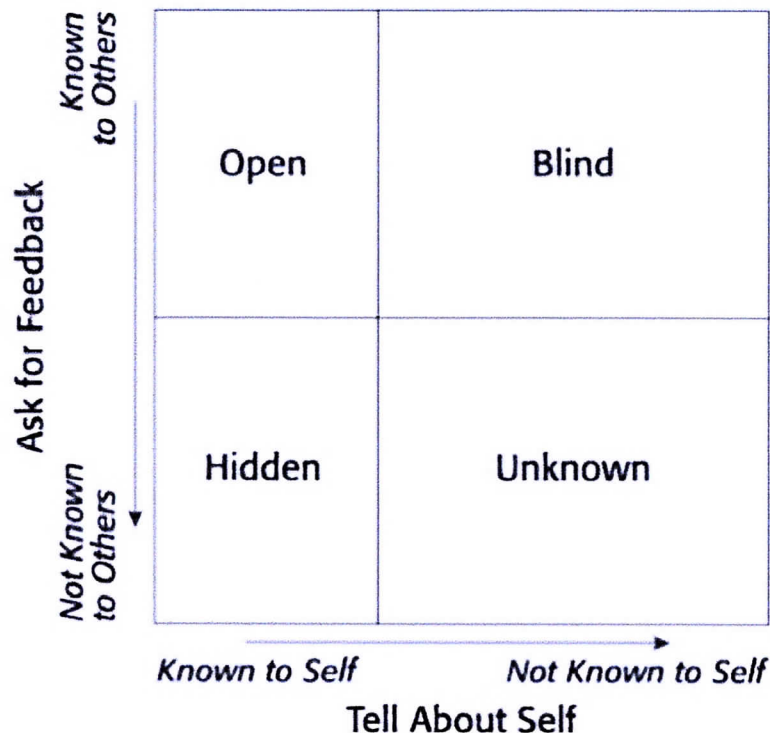


Figure 8.4: Geoffrey's Team's Feedback

Disappointed with the feedback, Geoffrey was asked if the views of the other participants surprised him. He thought about that for a moment. Then the facilitator asked him what had motivated his behavior. Finally, she asked what insights he had about the other members of his team. What could he share with them that would help them to be more effective team members in future? He realized that aside from their rejection of his idea, he had not really observed anything of note. This was stunning to him. He prized himself on his ability to observe and analyze, and here he had noticed nothing worth telling.

He shared all these thoughts, feeling at first anger, then embarrassment, and finally relief. By the end of the day, he knew he was beginning to understand why he was not being considered for promotion in the company. More important, he was beginning to see how guarded and blind his ambition had made him over the years, and he questioned whether he wanted to continue to live in this way. On days 2 and 3, Geoffrey started a journey of self-discovery that had been long overdue.

Context. The Johari Window is used by training groups, teams, and individuals to sensitize themselves to issues of self-knowledge, impact on others, and personal and group effectiveness. This is a highly adaptive tool and can be applied lightly as a context for other processes, or as a framework around which to structure activities.

Method. The Johari Window provides a framework for looking at interactions and ourselves differently. Typically, the process begins with learning about the model itself. This is followed with generating data about ourselves and others. Finally, perceptions are exchanged as individuals give and receive feedback. Use of the window can quickly take you into sensitive areas of personal feelings, fears, and perceptions, so it is important that application is led by experienced practitioners in human development. The Johari Window has been applied in countless team-building sessions around the world and is frequently used in educational and therapeutic contexts:

- **Step 1: Educate.** To benefit from the Johari Window framework requires a basic understanding of the core ideas, the dimensions, and the quadrants. This education is usually accomplished through lecture and reading. There are many sources to choose from, and some of the best are available for free on the Web. Depending on the depth of understanding needed and the purpose, you can select a short overview piece from Augsburg College (<http://www.augsburg.edu/education/edc210/JoHari.html>) or a more in-depth treatment by David M. Boje (http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dboje/503/JoHari_window.htm).
- **Step 2: Self-assess.** As a prelude to receiving feedback from others, it is often helpful to conduct some reflective self-assessment. What would others say about me? How open am I? Would it be better if I were more open? The two approaches to achieving this are to complete a brief self-scoring survey, or to draw the window, adjusting the size of the four quadrants to reflect how you see yourself.
- **Step 3: Give and receive feedback.** The transformative impact of the Johari Window is the result of the exchange of meaningful feedback. Feedback is a surprisingly powerful force and needs to be treated with care and respect. Safe conditions for all are necessary. Even then, the process will contain risk for

participants. At times, it is helpful to stop and discuss the feedback process itself as people grow more comfortable in the roles of both giver and receiver. Beware of a tendency to become defensive in receiving or protective in giving feedback. Both are natural responses, but neither is particularly helpful. Feedback received should be about areas the receiver is willing to pursue. It is often best for the recipient not to speak at all while receiving feedback, so he or she neither deflects nor misses important information. Feedback given should be honest, descriptive, and nonjudgmental. Sharing the feeling level impact of others' actions is particularly powerful and helpful.

- Step 4: Plan and experiment. It is possible to improve one's window configuration through active exploration in a discussion or group experience. To lock in gains, however, it is important to change some of our behaviors in the world. The goal is to be both more open and to learn from others on an ongoing basis. This step consists of making some specific commitments to being different that will maintain and increase progress.

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Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

Isabel Briggs Myers and Katherine Briggs

The MBTI [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator] is primarily concerned with the valuable differences in people that result from where they like to focus their attention, the way they like to take in information, the way they like to decide, and the kind of lifestyle they adopt.

—Isabel Briggs Myers^[6]

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is the most widely used personality test in the world, completed by approximately 2 million people each year. Developed by the mother-daughter team of Katherine Briggs and Isabel Myers, the work is based on Carl Jung's personality theory described in his 1921 book, *Psychological Types*. Two basic cognitive functions define differences between humans: how we take in information and how we make decisions. Jung also looked at differences in how we get and expend energy. The survey produces sixteen individual profiles based on four sets of preferences (Table 8.2).^[7]

Table 8.2: The Sixteen Myers-Briggs Types

Sensing Types		Intuitive Types	
Introverted	Extroverted	Introverted	Extroverted
ISTJ	ESTJ	INTJ	ENTJ
1. Depth of concentration	1. Depth of concentration	1. Depth of concentration	1. Depth of concentration
2. Reliance on facts	2. Reliance on facts	2. Group of possibilities	2. Group of possibilities
3. Logic and analysis	3. Warmth and sympathy	3. Warmth and sympathy	3. Logic and analysis
4. Organization	4. Adaptability	4. Organization	4. Organization
ISTP	ESTP	INTP	ENTP
1. Depth of concentration	1. Depth of concentration	1. Depth of concentration	1. Depth of concentration
2. Reliance on facts	2. Reliance on facts	2. Group of possibilities	2. Group of possibilities
3. Logic and analysis	3. Warmth and sympathy	3. Warmth and sympathy	3. Logic and analysis
4. Adaptability	4. Adaptability	4. Adaptability	4. Adaptability
ISFP	ESFP	INFP	ENFP
1. Breadth of interests	1. Breadth of interests	1. Breadth of interests	1. Breadth of interests
2. Reliance on facts	2. Reliance on facts	2. Group of possibilities	2. Group of possibilities
3. Logic and analysis	3. Warmth and sympathy	3. Warmth and sympathy	3. Logic and analysis
4. Adaptability	4. Adaptability	4. Adaptability	4. Adaptability

The four sets of preferences used by the MBTI are:

- Introversion-Extraversion (I, E): A focus on the inner world of ideas and reflection versus the outer, external world
- Sensing-Intuiting (N, S): Perceiving and acquiring new information through intuition versus the five senses

- Thinking-Feeling (T, F): Making decisions based on reason versus values
- Judgment-Perception (J, P): A basic orientation toward either judging (thinking/feeling) or perceiving (sensing/intuiting)

The Myers-Briggs team developed their survey and related methods and materials over a twenty-year period, producing a rich and comparatively stable instrument. It is a model in which there are no good or bad personality types. There is a need and a place for all of us. Your psychological type indicates what you are naturally drawn to, but you still can choose to pursue other kinds of endeavors and succeed at them. The MBTI does not measure functional strengths and weaknesses or intelligence. Understanding type preferences gives us a language to appreciate the interests and benefits of unique individual orientations. Combining education with personal feedback, the framework helps both individuals and groups to make crucial decisions, improve effectiveness, and resolve conflicts.

The two inner scores—how we take in information and how we make decisions—provide a useful introduction to MBTI assessment (see Figure 8.5). We focus on these as a way to become more familiar with one of the most important diagnostic tools available for understanding ourselves and others. *This is not intended as a working tool.* The MBTI should be administered by a qualified and trained professional in the psychology or social work fields. For those interested in delving further into the MBTI, a good next step is to take the quick self-scoring survey created by Personality Pathways, available on-line at <http://www.personalitypathways.com/>.

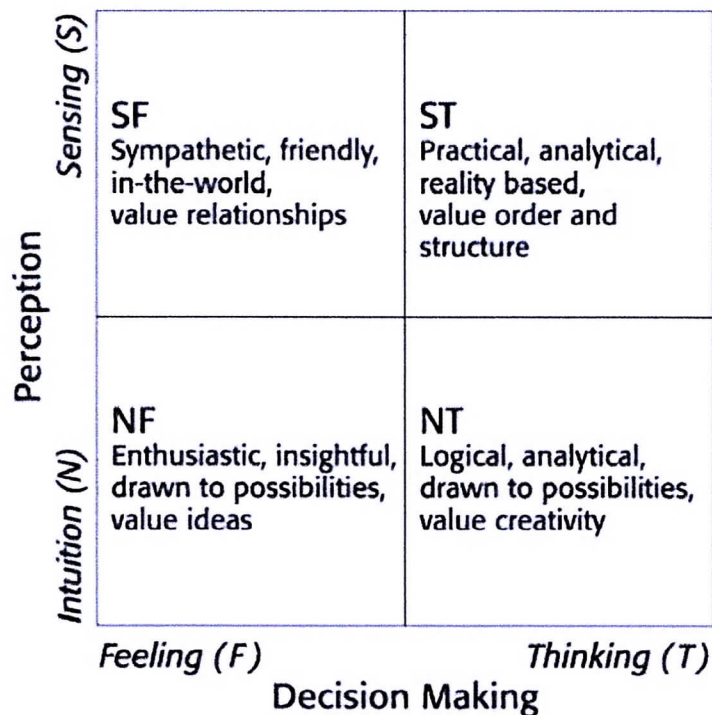


Figure 8.5: Perception and Judgment Matrix

The Two Dimensions and Their Extremes. It is reasonable to think of Perception and Judgment as cognitive functions and the remaining two (introversion-extraversion and judgment-perception) as orientations. It was Isabel Briggs Myers's insight that combinations of all four preferences painted a full picture of individual personality. We encourage interested readers to learn more by checking out some of the authoritative sources listed at the end of this section. However, let's examine what we learn by creating a basic 2 x 2 matrix with the two core functions.

Perception: Sensing versus Intuition. How do you acquire information? Sensing types experience the world through their five senses. They tend to be practical and able to quickly accept and work with constraints in a given situation. They are realistic and tend to be good at remembering lots of facts. Intuiting types go beyond the five senses to identify meaning and patterns. They look at the big picture and see new possibilities. They value imagination and inspiration.

Decision Making: Thinking versus Feeling. How do you make decisions? Thinking types make decisions based on analysis and logic. They explore logical consequences and try to be objective even if some of the facts are unpleasant. Feeling types make decisions based on what is important to themselves and others. They are interested in others and tend to be sympathetic and ready to get involved if they can help out.

The Four Quadrants. In *Introduction to Type*, Isabel Briggs Myers examines the combinations of cognitive types for direction in selecting a suitable career:

- Upper left: SF. People with an SF orientation are caring and practical, often making them ideally suited to service-oriented careers. They are efficient and drawn to applying their efforts to work that makes a difference to others. Typical careers for SF types are in health care and teaching.
- Lower left: NT. NTs are the theoretical modelers and problem solvers. They are interested in exploring possibilities by applying methods and logic. NTs are drawn to careers in computers, engineering, management, and law.
- Lower right: NF. NFs are passionate, caring dreamers. They are drawn to inventing rather than implementing and are particularly adept at seeing the possibilities in any situation. They thrive in careers like research, art and music, and teaching.
- Upper right: ST. ST types care about facts and tangible evidence and draw their conclusions from logical analysis. They can be counted on to investigate matters in a very reasoned and empirical fashion. With their real-world, practical orientation, they excel at careers like law enforcement, applied science, and banking.

Example: A Work Team Composition Case. The MBTI is often used extensively in team situations for diagnosing problems, resolving conflicts, and increasing understanding among members. Once people understand type differences, it becomes easier to accept a range of behaviors and work out accommodations. Teams need to address different issues as they progress through stages of maturation and project completion. The MBTI helps to tackle interpersonal issues in a dispassionate and constructive way. The example here looks at how conflicts are reframed and energy is rechanneled using MBTI modeling. We have constructed the analysis around the two dimensions of perception and decision making (Figure 8.6).

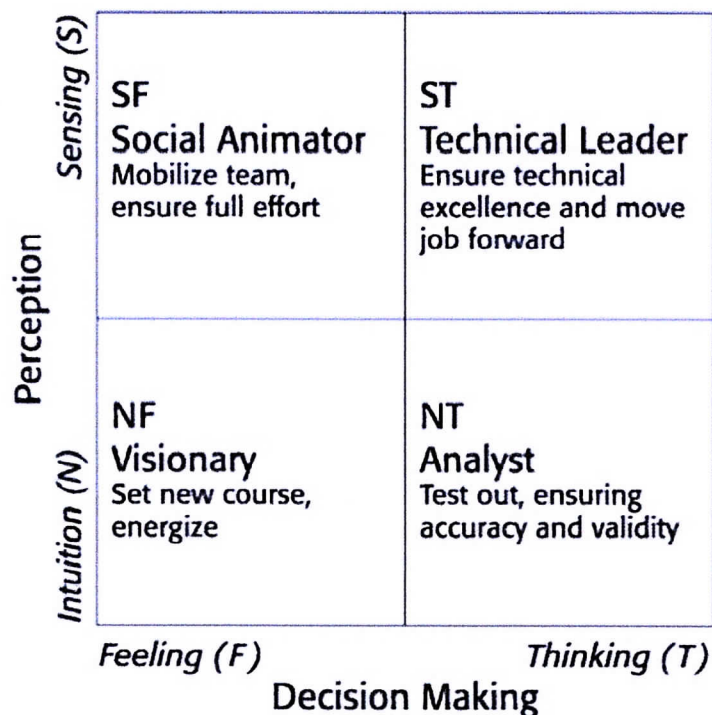


Figure 8.6: Harnessing Type Power Matrix

Conflicts in teams often arise around role definitions and decision making. Differences that appear to be about direction and content may well have more to do with style.

As conflicts intensify, people sometimes stop listening to each other or trying to understand what is motivating their behavior. Small misunderstandings grow into major problems as people increase their efforts to influence others and protect their own interests. This creates a downward spiral, leading to more conflict and dysfunction.

By understanding the type profiles of team members, motivations and actions come into better focus. What at first may appear as irreconcilable differences can be viewed as uniquely different styles. As indicated in Figure 8.6, each type has strengths that can be accessed for the benefit of the group. The NF member challenges norms and initiates new direction, the NT member qualifies and validates the proposed path, the SF member engages others on the team and rallies participation, and the ST member makes sure work proceeds in a professional and economical way.

Context. The MBTI is well suited to a range of individual and group situations, extending from career counseling and personal awareness to conflict resolution and staff planning. In all situations, a qualified, trained professional should be

engaged to administer and help interpret and process test results.

Method. Methods may vary depending on the purpose and context. The following steps are offered as a general map relevant to most situations:

- Step 1: Establish purpose and context. The MBTI produces a set of results that can be applied in general or to assist with a specific need. It is advisable to establish the context in which results will be reviewed. Respondents should feel at ease completing the survey honestly and trust the method and administrator of the overall process.
- Step 2: Complete the survey. The survey is processed after completion.
- Step 3: Orient to the MBTI. Respondents must understand key MBTI concepts to derive the benefits of the survey process. Readings and presentations help to accomplish this.
- Step 4: Report and interpret results. Survey scores are delivered, interpreted, and applied to the specific goals of the intervention.

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Learning Styles Inventory

David Kolb

Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand.

—Confucius

Adults learn differently from children. They are not empty vessels seeking to be filled or clay in need of shaping. Adults have knowledge, values, relationships, and intentions that influence how they behave and learn new things. Often unlearning is half the battle.

David Kolb has recognized these factors in his development of the Experiential Learning Cycle. Most learning for adults occurs in natural settings as opposed to formal situations and institutions. Learning and problem solving are closely related. Typically, learning involves four phases: concrete experience (feeling), reflective observation (reflection), abstract conceptualization (thinking), and active experimentation (doing). The Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) identifies four different orientations to learning, depending on the parts of the Experiential Learning Cycle one prefers (Figure 8.7). The LSI has been completed by millions of people and is used frequently in group, educational, and career counseling situations.

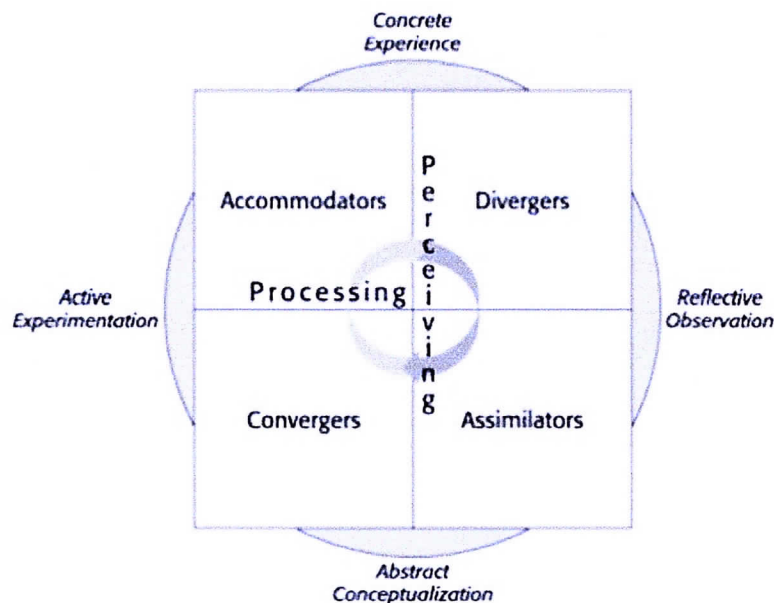


Figure 8.7: Learning Styles Inventory

The Two Dimensions and Their Extremes. The Learning Styles Inventory explores two key dimensions: Perceiving and Processing:

Perceiving. This describes our preferred means of acquiring new information, ranging from Concrete Experience to Abstract Conceptualization.

Processing. This refers to how we make sense of things, ranging from Active Experimentation to Reflective Observation.

The Four Quadrants. The four learning styles represent preferences, as opposed to strengths and weaknesses. Each of the styles is legitimate and well represented in the general population. It is common for people to draw on more than one style, indicating a degree of flexibility. Understanding one's learning style can be helpful in improving learning speed, depth, retention, and enjoyment:

- Upper left: Accommodators. Accommodators are activists who learn best when they become fully involved. They enjoy simulations and case studies and are adventurous types who will try anything. They are intuitive problem solvers who will often rely on others for information and analysis.
- Lower left: Convergers. Convergers are pragmatists interested in finding the practical application of ideas. They enjoy solving problems, and tend to prefer technical tasks over social and interpersonal issues. They learn well in laboratories and through fieldwork.
- Lower right: Assimilators. Assimilators are theorists who enjoy working with ideas and constructing models. They tend to be concise and logical and are more concerned with abstract concepts than their practical or human implications. They learn well with lectures and papers.
- Upper right: Divergers. Divergers are reflective learners who prefer to learn by observing and making sense of experiences. They enjoy lectures and benefit from recording their thoughts in a learning log. Divergers are imaginative and tend to be interested in people and their emotions.

Method. The Learning Styles Inventory can be employed with individuals or groups. Sample surveys can be found on the Web at <http://www.ncsu.edu/felder-public/ILSpage.html>. Presurvey orientation and postsurvey completion debriefing may need to be adjusted:

- Step 1: Complete the survey. This takes less than thirty minutes and should be done within a psychologically safe context to ensure candor.
- Step 2: Score the LSI. Results to the LSI are easy to calculate and can be done electronically or by respondents themselves.
- Step 3: Education: Prior to discussion of the results, it is helpful to teach the core set of ideas pertaining to the Experiential Learning Cycle and the LSI.

- Step 4: Interpret and apply. Scores are reviewed and implications examined. The approach taken for this will vary depending on the purpose and context.

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I'm OK, You're OK: The Four Life Positions Thomas Harris

We do not drift into a new [life] position. It is a decision we make. In this respect it is like a conversion experience.

—Thomas Harris^[8]

Thomas Harris's best-selling book, *I'm OK, You're OK*, helped jump-start the modern self-help phenomenon when it was released in 1967. It was based on the principles of Transactional Psychotherapy, first formulated by Eric Berne in an article, "Transactional Analysis: A New and Effective Method of Group Therapy." TA (as it came to be known) sought to shorten the time required for traditional therapy by dealing directly with the problems of adult behavior here and now. TA defined three dimensions of a person's ego: Adult, Child, and Parent. The Parent represented discipline and rules; the Child, spontaneous emotions; and the Adult, the rational perspective that made decisions based on data and experience.

The basic unit of analysis in TA is a transaction, an interaction between two people. Our propensity to transact in the Parent, Child, or Adult mode is set in early childhood by our nurturing, or lack of it. Berne's belief was that people play parent-child "games" throughout life, adopting roles that help us get the positive responses we need to survive. How successfully we learn to give and get positive responses—*strokes* in TA parlance—determines our ability to interact successfully with others. The goal of Transactional Analysis is to liberate the Adult from painful and often unconscious behavior patterns imposed on it by the Parent and the Child, enabling freedom of choice and rational decision making.^[9]

The Two Dimensions and Their Extremes. The I'm OK, You're OK matrix explores two key dimensions: You and Me:

You. The You axis measures the extent to which one values and respects others.

Me. The Me axis describes how one values and feels about oneself.

The Four Quadrants. Healthy relationships between adults are based on respect that begins with acceptance of self and the other. The I'm OK, You're OK matrix (Figure 8.8) presents this relationship in the upper right quadrant, along with the three remaining suboptimal options. These are known as the Four Life Positions:

- Upper left: I'm Not OK, You're OK. The newborn begins life in a state of dependency with a sense of Not-OK-ness based on helplessness. Normally, the child cycles out of this quadrant as she matures. People who maintain this role live in anxious dependency, often feeling at the mercy of others. Two life roles or "scripts" often present themselves. One is the person who continuously seeks the approval and strokes of Parents—people who enjoy the power to give or withhold approval. The other is a perennial bad boy or girl who is always proving to him- or herself that "I'm Not OK."
- Lower left: I'm Not OK, You're Not OK. As a child matures, he needs positive stimulus or strokes. If those are not forthcoming as the infant becomes a young child, the person may get stuck in this quadrant. Unable to get strokes, the person eventually gives up on life. The I'm Not OK, You're Not OK person rejects positive reinforcement later in life and resists interacting with others as an Adult.

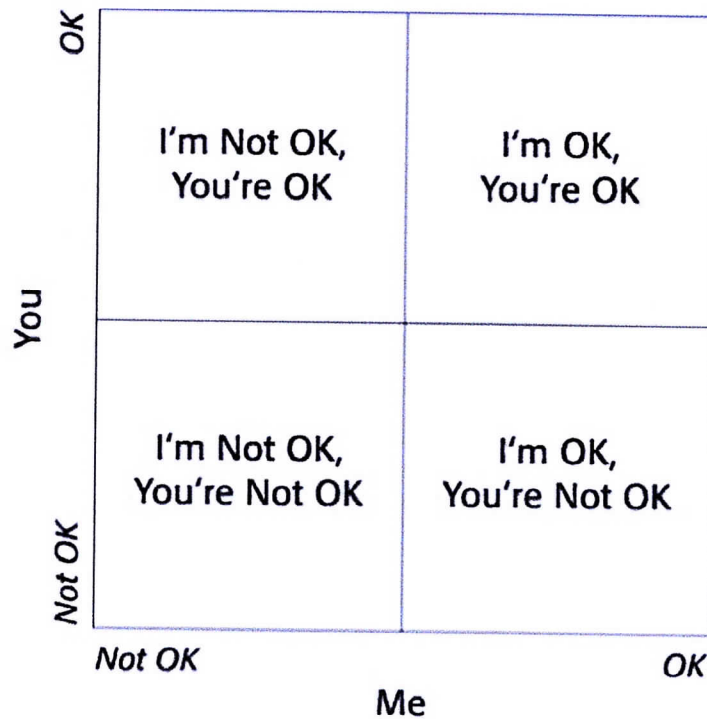


Figure 8.8: I'm OK, You're OK Matrix

- Lower right: I'm OK, You're Not OK. The child whose psychological needs are ignored turns inward, in effect, nurturing herself. Career criminals often characterize this life script—the fault in any situation lies with others. A more successful depiction of this quadrant is the powerful man who surrounds himself only with “yes” men. Since there are no OK others, they remind him that only he can provide authentic approval to himself.
- Upper right: I'm OK, You're OK. The goal in TA is for a person to make a conscious and concerted decision to assume the Adult role. Rather than operating on feelings programmed into us in childhood, one learns the skills of inter-acting as a responsible Adult.

Method. To benefit from TA, people need to become more competent and astute transactional analysts. By understanding interactions more accurately, we are able to step out of an unhealthy interaction or role and consciously assume the Adult perspective. TA is practiced in individual and group sessions:

- Step 1: Diagnose. Identify your role (Child or Parent) in unsatisfactory transactions and why you are in it.
- Step 2: Envision. Analyze how life interactions could be improved by adopting a more rational adult position in your interactions with others.
- Step 3: Commit. Make a decision to transact as an Adult. Experiment with approaching interactions from this perspective. Expect some challenges, and proceed with patience and an openness to feedback.

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Conflict Mode Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann

The conflict behaviors which individuals use are therefore the result of both their personal predispositions and the requirements of the situations in which they find themselves.

—Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann^[10]

Conflicts arise when people hold different views on a subject. Although conflict is a natural part of human experience, it can be problematic if it becomes entrenched or destructive. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (Figure 8.9)

is widely used to sensitize individuals to conflict styles and options for resolution. Response to conflict situations is a combination of one's dominant style and the attendant circumstances. No one is limited to one conflict style; however, our natural inclination and prior experiences cause us to favor one response style over the others. By understanding ourselves better and learning about a range of conflict approaches, we can consciously choose to respond in the most helpful and effective way.

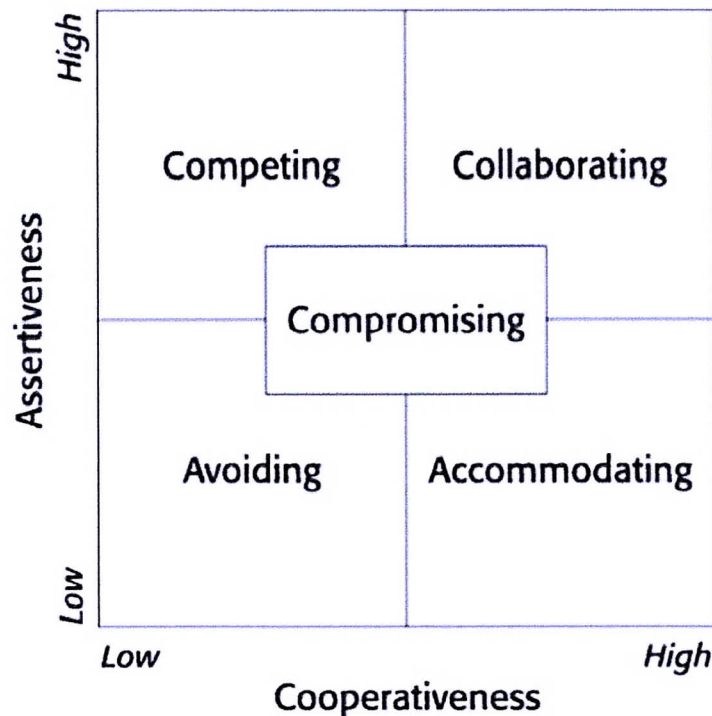


Figure 8.9: Conflict Mode Matrix

The Two Dimensions and Their Extremes. The Conflict Mode matrix explores two key dimensions: Assertiveness and Cooperativeness:

Assertiveness. Assertiveness is the extent to which an individual acts to satisfy his or her own needs and interests.

Cooperativeness. Cooperativeness describes the extent to which one acts to satisfy the needs and concerns of the other party.

The Four Quadrants. Each conflict style has strengths and weaknesses and is more appropriate for some circumstances than for others:^[11]

- Upper left: Competing. Might makes right. Assertive and uncooperative, this is a power-oriented approach. Competing is appropriate when quick, decisive action is needed or when an unpopular but necessary course must be followed.
- Lower left: Avoiding. Leave well enough alone. Unassertive and uncooperative, this is a delay-action approach characteristic of the ostrich with its head in the sand. Avoiding is useful when the issue is superficial, when more time would be helpful, or when others are better suited to resolving the matter.
- Lower right: Accommodating. Kill your enemy with kindness. Unassertive and cooperative, proponents of this style will sacrifice their own needs in the interest of satisfying the other party. Accommodating is beneficial when it is crucial to preserve harmony and when an issue is much more important to the other party.
- Upper right: Collaborating. Two heads are better than one. Assertive and cooperative, this involves working with the other party to find a mutually agreeable solution. Collaborating is ideal when seeking to integrate diverse approaches or to maintain commitment and goodwill.
- Center: Compromising. Split the difference. Intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness, this approach leads to expedient and acceptable outcomes that fall short of ideal but which both parties are willing to accept. Compromise is suitable when goals are only moderately important, time is short, and equally powerful parties remain strongly committed to their points of view.

Method. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument is at the heart of this method. Follow these steps to conduct a high-level intervention to increase awareness and help resolve conflict:

- Step 1: Set the context. Establish a meaningful context. Is this to resolve a conflict or to promote personal insight?
- Step 2: Test. Complete the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument.
- Step 3: Score. Calculate scores and examine for insights. What can we learn, and what changes in approach should be considered?

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[9]The I'm OK, You're OK matrix has been adapted from the information and models presented in Harris, *I'm OK, You're OK*.

[10]K. Thomas and R. Kilmann, *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Davies-Black, 2002). [<http://www.cpp.com/products/tki/index.asp>].

[11]This model incorporates a fifth cell in the model, Compromising.

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