

9 What are some useful tools and techniques?

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Introduction

This chapter describes some tried and tested techniques in coaching and mentoring. We have used all of these in our own work and found them to be valuable. We present them in the order in which you might use them if working with a framework which starts with helping a client to tell their story, then proceeds to ways of helping them to explore possibilities and set goals, and finally develops and manages action plans.

These tools and techniques can be powerful. The less experienced coach or mentor would be advised to familiarize themselves with the techniques in a safe and appropriate context before using them with clients. Each technique or approach is presented by addressing these questions:

- What is it?
- When should it be used?
- How does it work?
- What skills does the coach or mentor need?
- What are the advantages?
- What are the disadvantages?
- Are there any useful references?

Johari Window

What is it?

The Johari Window (Luft 1970) is a tool for increasing a person’s self-awareness and understanding of how they interact with others. ‘Johari’ is an abbreviation of the first names of its inventors, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. The Window, which represents a person, has four panes or quadrants, as illustrated in Figure 9.1. Each quadrant represents an element of personal awareness:

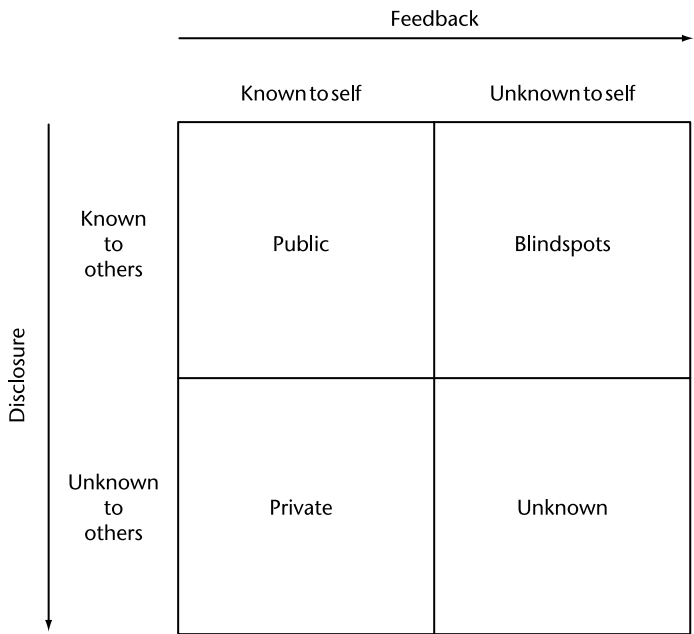


Figure 9.1 Johari Window

- The public quadrant represents what is known by a person about themselves and which others also know about them.
- The blindspots quadrant represents things a person is not aware of about themselves, although these things are known to others.
- The private quadrant refers to things a person knows about themselves which they do not reveal to others.
- The unknown quadrant represents things about a person that are unknown both to themselves and to others.

A person can draw their own window, reflecting the relative sizes of each panel. Quadrants can change over time and in different situations. When a person seeks information – for example, by asking for feedback, the size of their public quadrant increases and so their blindspot quadrant decreases. When a person discloses information about themselves, the size of their public quadrant increases and their private quadrant decreases. Notice how change in the size of one quadrant affects the others.

When should it be used?

The Johari Window can help clients to reflect upon how they see themselves in relation to others, and how they communicate with others. It can encourage the client to consider, for example:

- The blindspots quadrant: is there any mismatch between their view of themselves and how others see them? How could this be reduced?
- The private quadrant: how much do they share of what they are thinking and feeling? Could more (or less) disclosure improve trust and relationships?
- The hidden quadrant: do they have hidden talents or potential that is currently undeveloped?

How does it work?

The client is invited to draw their window and talk in as much detail as they wish about each quadrant and the relationship between quadrants. They can discuss any changes they would like to make in the relative sizes of the quadrants.

What skills does the coach or mentor need?

The coach or mentor needs to explain the Johari Window and prompt the client to consider the relative sizes of each quadrant, and their

contents. For example, looking at the private quadrant they might ask the client, either in relation to a particular context (e.g. a work team), or more generally:

- How much about your background and history do you tell others? About your personal and your professional life?
- How clear are you with others about what you are thinking? About what you are feeling? About your expectations of others? About what you want?
- What is the impact on relationships of what you tell others, and what you don't tell them?
- Is there anything you would like to change? How would this improve your relationships and effectiveness?

What are the advantages?

The Johari Window can help a client to increase their self-awareness. They can review their assumptions about what information they can disclose or ask for, and whether they are getting useful feedback from others. They can gain insight into how others see them, and how their behaviour may affect the impression they make on others.

What are the disadvantages?

A client may feel that they 'ought' to disclose more about themselves or 'ought' to ask for feedback. There are risks in inappropriate disclosure and feedback, and clients should be encouraged to evaluate for themselves what might be safe and appropriate. The coach or mentor should avoid creating the impression that feedback and disclosure are always helpful, regardless of circumstances.

Are there any useful references?

- Covey, S.R. (1989) *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. London: Simon & Schuster.
- Goleman, D. (1998) *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Luft, J. (1969) *Of Human Interaction*. Palo Alto, CA: National Press Books.
- Luft, J. (1970) *Group Processes: An Introduction to Group Dynamics*. Palo Alto, CA: National Press Books.

Transactional Analysis

What is it?

Transactional Analysis, often abbreviated to TA, is a way of understanding a relationship by looking at the transactions between people (Berne 1972). The theory states that in any communication with another person we may operate from any of three ego states: parent, adult or child. Sometimes we get stuck and can only operate from one of these. Ideally, we can flex between them as the occasion demands.

When should it be used?

The coach or mentor can use TA to help the client understand why certain relationships are not working. Either the client is stuck, or the person with whom they are having difficulty is stuck. Self-limiting patterns of relating to another person can be perpetuated. TA can be used to highlight these and to practise different responses which make both parties feel better about each other. It gives the client new perspectives and resources.

How does it work?

In some situations with certain people, we may have a tendency to revert to certain patterns of behaviour and ways of thinking. These tendencies can be triggered by the way the other person is acting. To change our behaviour, we need insight into these patterns and we need to want to change them.

In Figure 9.2 you will notice that each person is able to operate, or indeed move between, any of the ego states in any transaction. If person A is operating from parent state it may well induce in person B the child state. In parent state, the person can be either critical or nurturing. Either way, they are not allowing for the autonomy of an 'adult' transaction in the other person. They could produce in person B a 'child' response, either overly adaptive and conforming, or rebellious. Sometimes such transactions can be useful and creative. Often, they are counterproductive.

Sometimes a comment or a situation can trigger a certain reaction. A bullying manager may trigger 'rebellious child' in a colleague. A difficult employee may trigger 'critical parent' in a manager. The task is to help the client to be aware of what is happening and to practise some different responses.

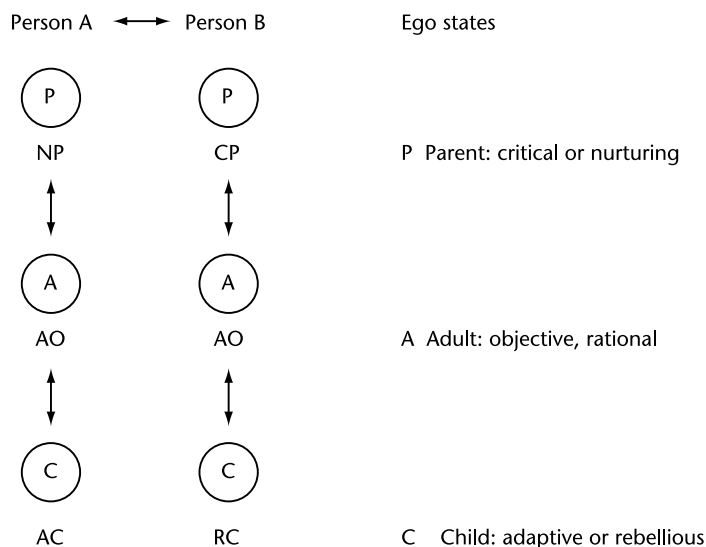


Figure 9.2 Transactions and ego states

What skills does the coach or mentor need?

These skills are all useful:

- listening to the story of the transactions;
- identifying themes or patterns;
- reflecting these back to the client;
- explaining parent, adult and child ego states with an accompanying diagram;
- giving examples of these that relate to the transaction described;
- asking the client to practise from different ego states.

This is how statements and responses could be reframed:

Bullying or harassment

You will finish that work by tomorrow or I will report you to the manager. (critical parent)

No, you won't. It is up to me when I finish it. (rebellious child)

I will be doing my best to get it finished. (adult)

Underperformance

These departmental meetings are a complete waste of time. Nobody ever has any good ideas. I don't want to waste my time attending any more. (rebellious child)

You don't have any choice in the matter. (critical parent)

Would you like to tell us what, specifically, would make them work better for you? (adult)

What are the advantages?

TA is a quick way of helping people to make small changes in behaviour that can produce very different ways of communicating. The insights can be used in individual interactions, group work, meetings and socially. The insight can stop problem situations from escalating and improve relationships.

What are the disadvantages?

The main disadvantage is that a client may develop insight into their patterns of interaction but be unable, in the short term, to change the way they respond to others. This client may need help beyond coaching or mentoring, for example counselling.

Are there any useful references?

- Berne, E. (1972) *What Do You Say After You Say Hello?* London: Corgi Books.
 Berne, E. (1976) *Beyond Games and Scripts*. New York: Ballantine.
 Harris, A. and Harris, T. (1985) *Staying OK*. London: Pan Books.
 Hay, J. (2007) *Reflective Practice and Supervision for Coaches*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
 Steiner, C. (1974) *Scripts People Live*. New York: Bantam Books.
www.ericberne.com/transactional_analysis

Karpmann Triangle

What is it?

The Karpmann Triangle (Karpmann 1968) is a way of looking at interactions between people. Sometimes people are stuck in unhelpful patterns of behaviour and they are unaware of these. When they recognize a pattern, they can make choices about changing it and relating to others in ways which make them more productive and fulfilled. The Karpmann Triangle describes one set of unhelpful patterns or 'scripts'. There are three roles, persecutor, rescuer and victim (see Figure 9.3). These roles refer to states of mind. The persecutor role