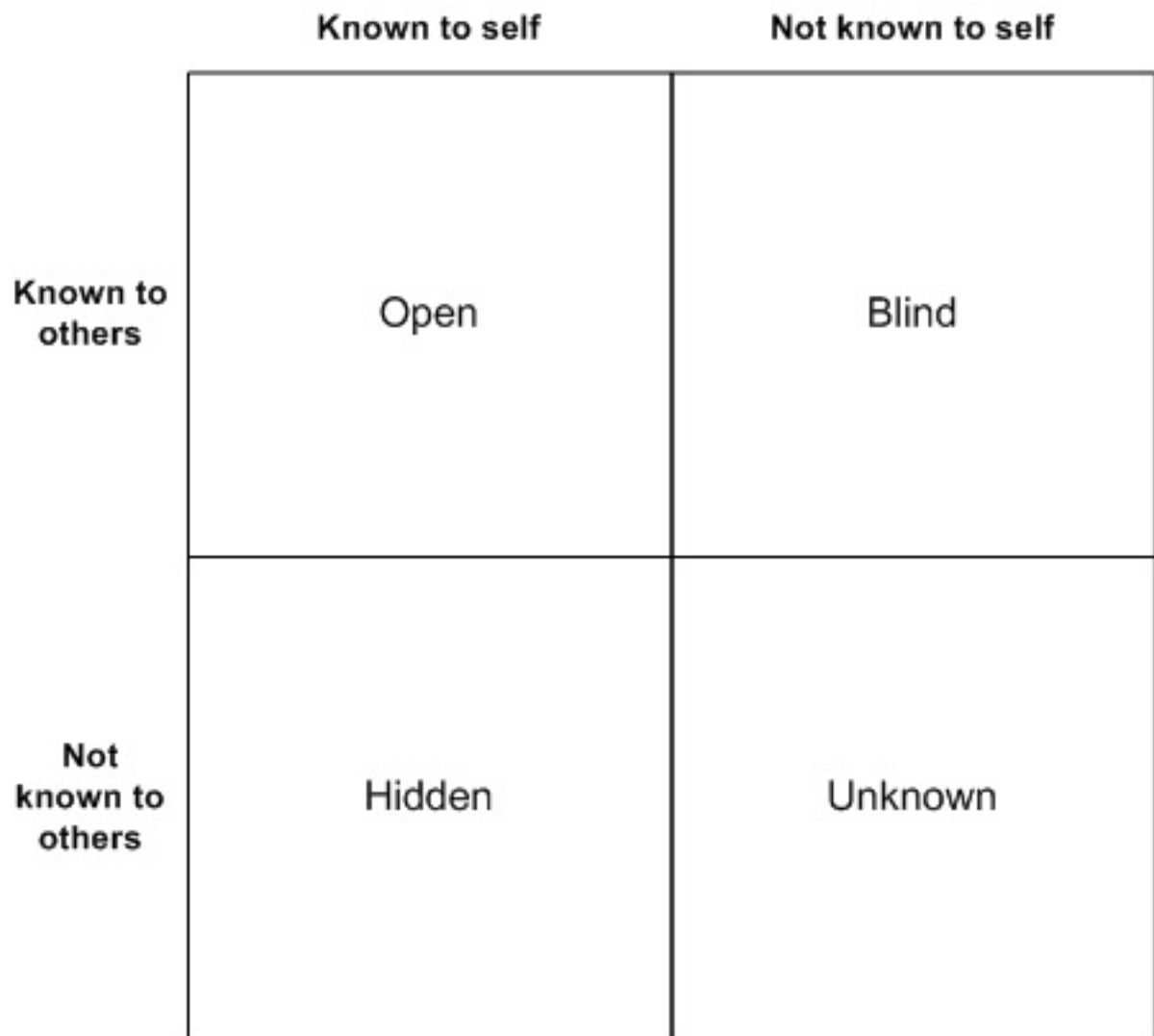


The Johari Window

The Johari Window,[1] created by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, is a model of communication, describing how an individual gives and receives personal feedback. It encourages free and open communication, thereby fostering good interpersonal relations and helping people to realise their full potential.

The model can be used for developing self-awareness in any communication context, although it serves as a particularly useful framework for effective two-way communication in the coaching or mentoring relationship.

The model can be displayed as follows:



At first glance the model appears complicated, but in reality it is quite straightforward. In the context of coaching and mentoring, the terms 'self' and 'others' can be replaced by client and mentor/coach respectively. Below is an explanation of the model.

Open

This box contains the things that the client knows about themselves, as well as the things that the mentor/coach knows about them. Put simply, it is the public self of the client, which everyone knows everything about.

Blind

This contains the information about the client of which the mentor/ coach is aware, but of which the client themselves are unaware. For example, the client may have a habit of scratching their nose before speaking. The mentor/coach will be aware of this, but the client may not. This is the client's unaware self.

Hidden

This box contains things that the client knows about themselves, but are kept hidden from others (i.e. the mentor/coach). This may be because there is a lack of trust, and so the client makes assumptions as to the mentor/coach's reactions to this information. This is the private self.

Unknown

This box contains those things about the client that are unknown to both the client and the coach/mentor. This may be deeply buried memories or untapped potential, some of which may never come to light. However, some of this may become known through exchanging feedback. In this case, the information moves into the public self box, through the process of insight.

A sub-set of the unknown is the unconscious. This is information that will always be unknown, and therefore stays outside the realm of the subconscious self, as there is no possibility of it becoming an insight.

Interaction

The boxes are not static, and they can, due to the interactive nature of coaching and mentoring (in particular the feedback element), increase or decrease in size. For example, if the client solicits feedback from the mentor/coach, it is likely that they will uncover a portion of their 'blind spot', hence increasing the size of their public self:

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	Open	Blind
Not known to others	Hidden	Unknown

At the same time, because they are getting feedback from the mentor/coach, it is likely that the client's unknown area will decrease. However, this will increase the size of the individual's hidden box, as the information will not pass into the arena until he/she is prepared to discuss it further to the mentor/coach. Similarly, if a client provides feedback to the mentor, giving previously unknown information, the hidden box is reduced, and again, the public self box increases:

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	Open	Blind
Not known to others	Hidden	Unknown

By decreasing the hidden box through giving feedback, the unknown will again decrease, this time so that the blind box can increase, as the mentor/coach will gain more information about the client.

At the same time as the hidden or blind box decreases in these examples, so does the unknown box. This happens because as the public self increases due to increased feedback in either or both directions, more information is shared between the two, and sections of the subconscious self are transformed into areas of the public self. Thus the size and shape of the arena is dependent on the amount of information shared and the ratio of giving feedback to soliciting feedback.

The model therefore demonstrates the key role that two-way communication plays in the coaching/mentoring relationship. The aim of coaching/mentoring is to increase each person's public arena, whilst at the same time decreasing activity in the other three boxes, to heighten awareness of each other's thoughts and processes and build a relationship based on trust, honesty and openness. In this way, the relationship will become more and more effective, as each person develops the 'ideal' Johari Window:

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	Open	Blind
Not known to others	Hidden	Unknown

[1] Luft and Ingham first demonstrated the model in 1955 in a summer laboratory session. It first appeared in print in J Luft and H Ingham, *The Johari Window: A Graphic Model For Interpersonal Relations* (University of California Western Training Laboratory, 1955). It was subsequently published in chapter 5 of J Luft, *Group Processes: An Introduction to Group Dynamics* (Mayfield Publishing Company (Now part of the McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc), 1963).