

It's All About Effective Relationships

*Frameworks for
Understanding Ourselves and Others*

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Nothing can be accomplished on school teams when the members don't respect or work well with each other—and anything can be accomplished when they do. SDP's director of Teaching and Adult Development offers several ways in which to nurture good relationships on teams by (1) making sense of our own and others' motivations, behavior, and personality types, (2) giving and receiving feedback appropriately, and (3) developing well-founded trust in team processes.

This chapter sets forth two key relationship frameworks that can be used as tools to understand, support, and develop healthy relationships. These frameworks are (1) “windows” to understanding ourselves and others, and (2) models of personality types to understand patterns of human behavior. By examining these frameworks, it is possible to see beyond the complexity of human relationships and to harness their power in order to support effective change and school improvement. These frameworks provide a guide for creating healthy and productive

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relationships. By developing basic understandings of people and the ways they relate, it is possible to effectively address current and potential problems. Before discussing the frameworks, I will begin by creating a picture of the nature of relationships.

Recently, I called a computer company to request technical assistance. The support person asked me what was wrong and what I saw on my screen. She promptly told me to take a series of steps on the computer. Then she told me we would have to wait a moment. As I waited, we chatted briefly. Something else came up on my screen. She paused, and then said, "Okay, now hit the enter key and another menu should pop up." She continued her directions and then asked me to wait again, saying that this action would take a few moments as well. While I was waiting, I said that I wished I had a job like hers—where someone could tell me what was wrong in clear and precise terms. Then I could tell them exactly the steps to take to fix the problem.

Unlike working with computer problems—where we can lay out a step-by-step formula to solve the problem—the issues that we face in schools are more complex, involving the interplay of issues of trust, power, self-esteem, miscommunications, cultural differences, and role differences, to name a few. The human condition and the interactions between and among adults are considerably less predictive than computers and infinitely more complicated. Nevertheless, human relationships are the cornerstone of school change and school improvement. The relationships in our schools can either support or hinder efforts at improvement and growth.

To illustrate the nature of the complexity of relationships I will share a scenario culled from a number of similar conversations, relationships, and work that I have conducted with principals in Comer schools throughout the country. It is intended to highlight points relevant to building effective relationships through the frameworks.

A HUMAN RELATIONSHIP SCENARIO

The new principal, Fred Rivas (pseudonym), and I sat in his office together. He was perplexed. "How could potentially excellent teachers end up like this?" he asked, not looking for an answer from me. His discouragement was palpable.

After Rivas had been in the school system for 10 years as an elementary school principal, the superintendent had asked him to take on the challenge of managing the middle school. One principal had been there for 19 years. After that principal had retired, the school had four principals in the next three years. Rivas was now the next new principal. He was most concerned about a core group of aging faculty who seemed sour, angry, sullen, and bitter.

Rivas had received a grant to start the School Development Program (SDP). A few years earlier, he and I had discovered that we had similar interests in spirituality, development, psychology, and of course, education. Our work started when he shared with me that he wanted a sounding board to help him reflect on himself, his role, and the needs of his school. He wanted to be able to talk with someone who was outside the school system, someone who had a neutral perspective. He had asked me to meet with him on a regular basis to think and plan.

"I have been in every classroom, and this faculty is smart," he said to me on this cold January afternoon. "They are good teachers and they could be excellent. At this time in their careers, they could be master teachers—stars of the teaching profession. They could and should be teaching courses in the teacher prep program at our local

college. However, anything I propose to them for improving the school is rejected. They only complain. They fight with each other over petty issues. Worst of all, they don't seem to enjoy being with and teaching children. How could they have gotten to this point? And how am I going to get them to be motivated to do Comer?"

Earlier in the year, Rivas had asked me to meet with the staff and interview them individually and in small groups. In the interviews, I had learned that the differences among staff members were readily apparent. For example, as in all middle schools, teachers were teaching at different grade levels (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades). And of course, they were teaching different subjects. However, what was somewhat different in this school was the age range of teachers, from newcomers to 30-year veterans. Most of the staff were either first- or second-year teachers or very seasoned veterans. Teaching philosophies were also very different. Teachers who had formerly taught at the elementary level focused on kids, teachers who had formerly taught at the high school level focused on subject matter, and teachers with the true middle school philosophy tended to see school as being about developmental transition time for children. In addition, some teachers hung on to the traditional philosophy of the junior high concept—preparing students for high school.

These differences surfaced around the following relationship-based issues:

- *Conflict with authority:* The teachers complained: "He [the principal] should be in charge and not try to collaborate so much." "He doesn't seem to have a sense of direction. He wants us to make the decisions for him." "It's about time we got a leader who will listen to us. But he listens too much to parents." "He says we can make more decisions collaboratively, but we know he has already decided to do Comer. The principal's decision-making process is not collaborative."

- *Trust:* The teachers lamented: "You can't trust anyone in this building." "I hear stories all the time. There is too much gossip."

- *Low morale:* The teachers voiced discouragement: "There is too much negativity in this building." "The veteran staff members are too critical and don't give any idea a chance." "New teachers think they know it all and get favored by the principal." "I am too old, I guess. I see the same ideas get recycled in a new package. But this principal won't stay, and we will have to live with whatever he started." "As special education, we are forgotten. Our needs and concerns are not addressed." "Music and art are considered the unimportant subjects by other teachers." "As a teacher aide, I don't think my opinion matters." "A long time ago we would get together on a regular basis outside of school. Now, few show up even for our holiday party."

- *Communication:* The teachers asserted: "We don't always know what is going on." "We are told at the last minute we have to show up at a meeting."

Needless to say, the principal felt discouraged and unable to move the faculty in any positive direction. Issues of blaming, gossiping, and lack of collaboration had led to a climate that left him feeling defeated as a school leader.

MAKING SENSE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Although the story recounted above gives only a brief description of the types of issues that teachers raised, the power of these voices is too often omnipresent in school environments.

Tensions

The types of issues that these statements reveal have inherent tensions that frequently exist in relationships, specifically:

- *In versus Out*: Some people are perceived as part of the “in” crowd, with a strong relationship and alliance with the principal, while others look in from the outside and see the principal identifying “favorites.”
- *Personal versus Professional*: Often teachers feel overwhelmed by change and pressure (e.g., to raise test scores). They feel either isolated from each other because of so much work or resentful that they do not have time for a personal life.
- *Change versus Locus of Control*: Individuals perceive that they are part of change, or that change is “done unto” them. In the scenario described above, everything was changing so fast that the staff felt a loss of control over their professional lives (e.g., “I’m not unwilling to change; it’s just that change is being shoved down our throats”).
- *Personal Decision Making versus Organizational Power*: Individuals feel the organization is controlling their lives and experiences. For example, the changes demanded are coming from arenas that are external to the classroom, such as the central office and the state. Teachers perceive that they have little say in what needs to happen for kids.

Evolving Stages

I shared with Rivas the notion that relationships in schools typically evolve through three stages of development: dependence, independence, and interdependence.

Dependence

At this stage a teacher new to the school is dependent on others (e.g., the school secretary, principal, and other teachers) for help in learning even the basics, such as where to park, how to use the phone system, what forms need to be completed, understanding the curriculum, discipline procedures, how they will be evaluated, and so on. Adults tend not to like being dependent and may struggle with many uncomfortable feelings at this stage.

Independence

When teachers have been in a school for a number of years they now “know the ropes.” They have learned both the formal and informal rules, and they know the personalities of their colleagues and leaders. Life in the school becomes predictable because they know, in general, what to expect from their principal, the parents, and their students. People find a niche and this becomes their comfort zone, where they gain confidence by developing skills, practicing, and being in a consistent environment that supports their growth.

Yet, there are so many changes occurring now in schools: new programs and expectations of teachers that they will “leave no child behind,” students having to meet standards on the state testing program, new administrators at both the central

office and their schools, retiring colleagues, influx of new teachers, accountability through new evaluation procedures, new training in curriculum, new teaching methods, and whole school reform efforts. Many teachers respond with, "Another thing we have to do? I can't keep up." Having all these changes occur simultaneously throws even the veteran back to the dependence stage, resulting in feelings of discomfort, being overwhelmed, resistant, and being out of control.

Interdependence

At the interdependent stage teachers realize that we (parents, teachers, and administration) are all in this together and we need one another to succeed with children. No one has all the answers and no one can do it alone. At this stage, teachers are able to feel a degree of comfort despite realizing that they do not know everything. They will ask questions, and they will answer the questions of others when they can.

It is the responsibility of each individual to work to gain personal confidence to progress through these stages, and indeed, to go back and forth between stages when appropriate. It is also the responsibility of the school system to create a culture and context in which the adults develop all of their potential so that they can use their natural gifts to foster the growth of children.

Creating Strength From Diversity

SDP is designed to help schools progress to this most advanced stage, interdependence, at which point all of a school's diversity becomes its strength. SDP achieves this by valuing each voice within the school: child, parent, teacher, support staff, and administration. (A Comer school recognizes that each member of the school community has a view to contribute.) What supports the development of the faculty and allows them to keep their focus on children is their adherence to the three guiding principles: no-fault, consensus, and collaboration. By committing to (1) solve problems without focusing on who's to blame; (2) make decisions, when appropriate, by consensus; and (3) work in collaborative relationships, the faculty experiences a sense of community. In many schools, when faculty members become paralyzed in their work, what needs to be addressed is an additional commitment by the adults to learn the skills that will help them live the guiding principles with one another, and to develop themselves in order to develop children.

Understanding Our Own Behavior in Relationships

When Rivas started to talk about the previous principal who had been at the school so long, he talked about the faculty's dependence on him and the mixed feelings the faculty seemed to have about him. The conversation triggered something I learned about relationships from Eric Berne (1964) in a book on the subject of transactional analysis. The brief overview of the concept is this: At any age, each person has within himself or herself a "parent," an "adult," and a "child." When one person acts toward a second person "from their child," it tends to activate the "parent" within the other person. And vice versa; when someone acts as a "parent" toward another, this will tend to activate the "child" within the other person.

This response from either side could be positive or negative, but one important point is this: People are often not aware of this transaction. The real problem is that relationships become dysfunctional when people are not interacting from the adult in themselves to the adult in the person with whom they are in a relationship. This becomes even more critical when the relationship involves an authority figure. In cases such as these, the adult/child relationships that occurred in their families of origin can easily become reenacted without either side being aware of it.

True adult-to-adult communications are direct, honest, open, and straightforward. Each person takes responsibility by asking questions if there is not enough clarity. Each may openly state what the potential problems might be in a proposal someone is suggesting and then offer solutions or help if it is needed. There is little dependence, game playing, being a victim, complaining, defensiveness, fighting, or the like.

If Rivas expected his staff to act in more adult and responsible ways, then he needed to make sure that his own behavior came from the adult in him—not the parent in him. Scolding, praising, lecturing, taking care of, or being fatherly in any way would only activate the child response from his teachers, and that response would probably not be constructive or helpful. It would tend to bring out the qualities of rebellious child, victim child, or passive child in his staff.

Moreover, if we return to the relationship-based issues identified earlier, it is clear that a lack of trust was a major factor impacting the relationships and development of the staff. At another meeting with Rivas, I had shared with him that there were two issues related to trusting relationships:

- *Does each teacher trust himself or herself?* Do they trust their own thoughts, feelings, intuitions, perceptions, and judgments?
- *Do teachers trust each other?* Do they trust that others can be counted on, will listen, will respect and honor their point of view, and will try to see the situation by putting themselves in the other's shoes?

If trust is the foundation, then the process of supporting change in schools must begin with asking the question, "How do we develop trust when we are at present in an untrusting environment?" This question leads to the discussion of the first framework for understanding relationships, the Jo-hari Window (Luft & Ingham, 1963).

RELATIONSHIP FRAMEWORK 1: THE JO-HARI WINDOW

In Chapter 10, "A Team Approach to Educational Change," I covered the following points:

- Among the concerns that people bring into their school are these: Who am I? How do I relate to others? Do I have any influence, power, or impact on others?
- People's concerns in schools need to be held and supported within a strong container that enables everyone to keep their focus on the development of children.
- There is always a need for reflection.
- Feedback informs our reflection process.

A Framework for Developing Trust and Healthy Relationships in Schools

To take these ideas further, imagine that people in schools have a window that they can hold psychologically in front of other people. In Leadership Training 101, I explain to participants that the window is called the “Jo-hari Window” because it is named after the people who created the concept, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham (1963).

The Jo-hari Window is a means to help individuals understand some aspects of the dynamics of relationships. It fosters an understanding of the importance and place of trusting relationships. Effective, constructive relationships help us to build strong, cohesive bonds that ensure that teams stick together through the difficult times—the times of intense differences and conflict. Trust is the glue that keeps relationships together. If relationships are not built on trust, then they can easily fall apart. It is the trust among all the adults in the community that creates the strong container needed for children so that they know what is expected of them by adults in the school community.

This psychological framework can be seen in Figure 12.1, the Jo-hari Window. Pane D represents the unconscious part of us, unknown to ourselves and others. I have started with Pane D because in this discussion we will not need to address it further. However, it is important to note that people are often not conscious of the interactions that take place between themselves and others.

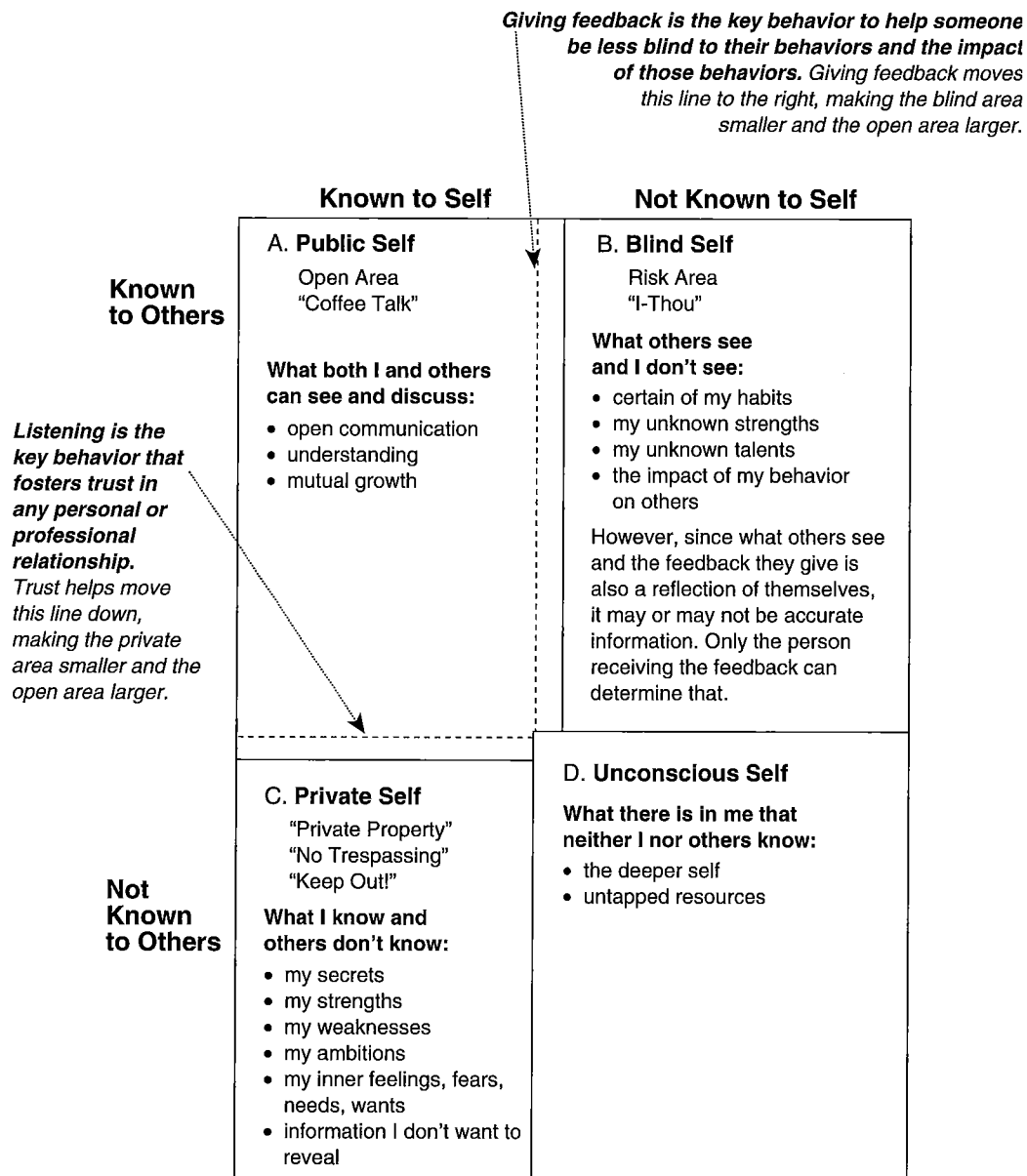
Public Self and Private Self

Pane A represents the part of us that is known to ourselves and known to, or easily knowable by, others. This is called the Public Self or Coffee Talk window. Let’s say I come into a school as a substitute teacher, and we meet for the first time in the faculty room. You might ask, “Who are you today?” meaning, who are you subbing for? We might ask questions like, “How long have you been doing this?” “Do you like being a substitute teacher?” I am open to and would easily answer the questions, and, in fact, appreciate your interest in me. This is coffee talk. It is a way to get to know one another and communicate on a regular basis. Faculty in a school may remain at a coffee talk level of openness and make exchanges like, “You’re on duty in the hallway today, and I’m on tomorrow.” “How was your vacation?” or “I had a great weekend. How was yours?” This type of conversation pretty much stays at the surface level. It may be sufficient communication to enable staff to work together. For school relationships to move to a more effective level of communication, however, we need to consider the value of entering into the behaviors described in the remaining two Panes: C and B.

The difficulty with talking coffee talk all the time is that although it is possible to maintain a functional connection to one another, when important issues surface it is easy to avoid them. Individuals play it safe by not taking the risky steps of addressing the issues directly, and they therefore do not gain the potential rewards found in the remaining two panes. It is understandable why most people remain in the safety of the coffee talk pane: There is too much risk involved. Yet, if the goal is to grow and develop into a cohesive faculty, it becomes essential to put our cards on the table. There is risk—yes, but there are also potentially high payoffs in the remaining two panes: C, the Private Self, and B, the Blind Self.

Pane C is information about ourselves that we know but others do not. It’s as if I have a sign on my front lawn that says “Private Property. Keep Out!” We all have the right to our privacy, and yet the question is always there with us: How much do

Figure 12.1 The Jo-hari Window



SOURCE: Adapted from Luft and Ingham (1963).

I tell others about myself, both personally and professionally? Some people feel that if they reveal too much, even about their professional selves, it leaves them vulnerable. If someone shares, for example, that they are having difficulty with a child in their class, they might fear that others would perceive them as not being able to handle disruptive children. And of course, others may actually have that perception.

The value to people of sharing more about their professional selves is that more information is available and, therefore, there is less chance of a miscommunication. Most problems that schools have are rooted in communication problems.

If one teacher has learned what has worked well with a child and another teacher is struggling, it only makes sense that they share. If a teacher has gone to a workshop and learned some effective teaching strategies, it is beneficial to the school for that teacher to share the new knowledge with colleagues.

Facilitating Trust

In the SDP Leadership Academy 101 I ask, "What would it take for me to open up to you—to move information about myself from the Private Self up into the Public Self?" The answer is usually "trust." I then ask, "What can you do—actually do in your behavior—that will establish or create trust?" This is more difficult to answer, but I sometimes get very insightful responses. The primary answer that I look for (it is not the only right answer) is this: "I can listen."

Before I address the fourth pane of the Johari Window (Pane B, the Blind Self), I need to elaborate further upon how we build trusting relationships through listening.

Rogers (1980) comments that three conditions (see sidebar) constitute the "growth promoting climate," and they apply "whether we are speaking of the relationship between therapist and client, parent and child, leader and group, teacher and student, or administrator and staff." Rogers goes on to say that people who experience the three facilitative conditions move consistently toward having the following habits of behavior and mind:

Carl Rogers, who has written extensively about listening, uses what he calls a person-centered approach. Three core conditions are necessary, he said, for a trusting relationship, and for growth and change to occur in that relationship. These core conditions or qualities or attitudes are (1) being genuine or real, (2) unconditional positive regard (prizing, acceptance, or caring), and (3) being able to demonstrate accurate empathetic understanding.

- They are more open to experience, more aware of the here and now, less defensive, less rigid in their beliefs, and more tolerant of ambiguity.
- They are self-trusting, relying on their experiences when making decisions.
- They look more toward themselves for answers instead of looking outside for validation.
- They are more willing to continue growing and learning.

A relationship built on these conditions creates trust. By trust I mean not only trusting the person in the relationship but also deeply trusting the very process of growth. Rogers talked many times about how as a young child he observed potato stalks growing in his basement. The conditions were not right, yet the stalks continued to grow, however grotesquely, toward the only light available in the dark, damp cellar. They grew toward a condition they needed, sunlight.

Karen Horney (1950), a psychologist, said something similar:

You need not, and in fact cannot, teach an acorn to grow into an oak tree, but when given a chance, its intrinsic potentialities will develop. Similarly, the human individual, given a chance, tends to develop his particular human potentialities. . . . In short, he will grow substantially un-diverted toward self-realization. (p. 17)

This means trusting that deep within each person lies an expert that becomes a foundation for experience, making meanings and decisions. When people are less defensive, they listen better and they learn more. How do we create the conditions in which people can be less defensive? How can we create the psychologically safe conditions for human beings? Listening deeply seems to be the primary way to create the conditions that both Horney and Rogers talk about that build trust in relationships.

The Blind Self

The final Pane is B, the Blind Self. This is information that is known to others but is not known to the person. A superintendent once presented SDP to two schools in his district. He only wanted to give them some information about the model so they could make their own decision. When I went to one of the schools, the principal and the teachers said that they “*had* to do Comer.” Although the superintendent had presented SDP as an option, they *knew* that they must do it.

When I met with the superintendent, he was shocked that the school administration and staff had received the information that way. He was blind to the fact that in his role of superintendent, his act of presenting the model to the school would be seen as a demand of the school. The key skill that people develop to address this blind side is learning to give and receive feedback. If someone at the school had taken the risk of telling the superintendent that it appeared to them that he was telling them to implement the Comer Process, he would have been able to respond and clarify his intentions.

People are not always aware of how their behavior affects others at the levels of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. There are sometimes very subtle behaviors that the always-observing mind picks up and reacts to, yet initially the conscious mind is not aware of them. That is the inner feeling that says, “Something is not quite right here.” If we reflect on it more we might pinpoint what we have seen, explore what we think and feel, and then risk sharing it—give feedback.

Feedback in the Jo-hari Window

What, then, is feedback? What is the purpose of using this process? And how can people best use feedback skills to improve their schools?

Feedback is the information component of a process of growth and development. In this process, a person shares his or her perceptions about another person or a situation. The feedback itself has three parts: (1) a description of observed behavior, (2) a description of the impact of that behavior on others, and (3) a description of feelings and thoughts. The behavior of the person giving the feedback has a powerful influence on the outcome of the process. The more the person offering feedback demonstrates Rogers’s three core conditions, the more likely it is that the feedback will be considered to be constructive.

The purpose of practicing sound feedback skills is to

- strengthen the processes of consensus, collaboration, and no-fault
- provide opportunities to give differing viewpoints of children
- strengthen our commitment to faithful replication of the Comer model
- provide a constructive way to bring issues and problems to the surface so that the problems can be addressed

In the service of promoting effective teamwork, SDP uses facilitators and process observers to ensure that the team meeting honors human relations. The facilitator carefully delineates the context in which feedback is appropriate. At the beginning and end of each meeting, time is devoted to checking in with one another about the process.

The six areas in Comer schools about which feedback is appropriate are the following:

1. leadership
2. facilitation (and other team roles as described on the role cards)
3. living the three guiding principles
4. the six developmental pathways
5. gifts, strengths, and contributions of members in the school
6. what we would like to change about our team to improve it

Figures 12.2 and 12.3 offer specific guidelines for giving and receiving feedback to optimize acceptance and use.

Figure 12.2 Principles of giving individual feedback

1. Make your intent to provide information.
2. Be unemotional as you give information.
3. Be straightforward, descriptive, and specific.
4. Focus on observed behaviors and their observed effect on others.
5. Recognize that you are sharing observations, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and experiences, and not necessarily true facts.
6. Trust what is experienced, and share it with a conviction that people have a right to share their experience with others.
7. Make a commitment to act in ways that are fully respectful of everyone.
8. Be gentle, sensitive to the feelings of others, and caring.
9. Take the time to discuss the process of giving and receiving feedback in order to clarify misperceptions, miscommunications, and misunderstandings.
10. Share ideas and information rather than give advice.
11. Focus on the value the feedback would have for the receiver rather than your need to give feedback.
12. Focus feedback on what, when, how, where, and not why.
13. Be direct rather than indirect.
14. Be descriptive rather than interpretive.
15. Feedback should be nonevaluative and nonjudgmental.
16. Provide a freedom of choice rather than a pressure to change.
17. The motivation to provide feedback is to help, not attack.
18. Encourage others to solicit feedback rather than impose it.
19. Focus on behavior that can be modified.

SOURCE: Adapted in part from Hanson, P. G. (1975). Giving feedback: An interpersonal skill, in Jones, J. E. & Pfeiffer, W. J. (Eds.), *The 1975 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators (the fourth annual)*. La Jolla, CA: University Associates.

Figure 12.3 Principles for receiving individual feedback

Listen!

Try not to say anything right away.
 Let the information soak in.
 Think: I don't have to change, and I may not want to or be able to.
 Keep in mind that what a person is saying to you is *not* the truth:
 It is their *perception*.

Listen to the feedback, even if you don't agree with it.

There might be some valuable information that may help you learn about yourself.

Ask for more information.

Rarely do people give feedback that is easy to hear and understand immediately.

Ask the speaker about his or her intentions.

Sometimes we forget or don't realize that the other person is only trying to help us improve ourselves.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO CHANGE!!

You will change only if you want to change and only if you can change.

The Jo-hari Window can be a helpful guide for adults who are interested in interacting in a more effective manner. Principal Rivas realized from the Jo-hari Window that although he could not understand the hidden motivations and needs of all staff members (Pane D), he still could encourage his staff to be more open with him and to listen to one another (Pane A). He also could foster community building and team building workshops so that teachers could get to know each other better and create more trusting relationships (moving information from Pane C to Pane A). And finally, he could provide strategic, skillful, nonjudgmental feedback that encouraged his staff (1) to stop to think about what they were doing to each other, and (2) to reflect on what they were doing in the classroom to develop children (Pane B).

Working With Our Awareness of Self and Others

Principal Rivas knew that teachers' ability to change (to develop) children depends on their commitment to their own development. Well-developed adults foster well-developed children. He also knew that changing his teachers would begin with deepening his own awareness of himself. His own professional development included his exterior world of learning (his professional development) to be a good principal. He also attended to his interior work (his personal development), in

which he explored his personality and leadership style through the Myers-Briggs® model.

Rivas began slowly and deliberately to create strategies for developing his staff, both as professionals and as persons. He created a team to examine the climate and culture of the school. He asked that team to list their concerns about staff's behavior and children's behavior. They discussed the causes. He asked this team, which later became the school climate subcommittee of the School Planning and Management Team (SPMT), to describe their ideal school. The team slowly began to formulate a direction for development for both the children and the adults along the six developmental pathways. Rivas not only respected differences in his staff, he valued those differences. Through self-awareness work, Rivas became more aware of others and of what they needed from him as a leader. He brought the adults in the building together by being aware of, and then attending to, their developmental needs. He was able to direct their energy to the developmental needs of children.

RELATIONSHIP FRAMEWORK 2: THREE MODELS OF PERSONALITY TYPES—A SHORT COURSE IN UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE

Human beings have an interior life. When we are unaware of this, we cannot see the human beings behind the roles they fill. Whether we are observing a student, parent, teacher, principal, secretary, or social worker, if we look deeper we will see a life full of feelings—zest, anger, joy, resentment, excitement, fear, hope, helplessness, love, sadness, fullness, emptiness, wounds, fond memories, scars from abuse, and a desire to be the best the person can be. Even the strongest of us have a need for hugs, a smile, some warmth, a little recognition, a dose of validation, a firm hand of support, a need for help to tackle what we don't know, an empathetic ear, a reaching out when we have failed or made a mistake. All of us have experienced being confused, frustrated, mistrusted, misunderstood, ignored. None of us has escaped the onslaught of constant change, of having to learn something brand new (like computers and Palm Pilots). We can't get away from feeling that our life is being driven by the dictates of the central office, Board of Education requirements, state mandates, and federal regulations. We seem to be under the microscope of a public that expects more of us yet appreciates little. We in education have been on trial, found guilty, and condemned as incorrigible.

We think, we act, but we also feel. Unless we are forced to, however, most of us give little acknowledgment to our own feelings or to the feelings of others. We forget our own inner life; we can't see it or don't want to recognize it, much less recognize the inner life of someone else. It is too painful to feel our idealism shatter before us. And we certainly do not want to see or hear from someone else's inner life, as it might be a mirror of our own soul. We forget that behind the façade of our professional attitude or our mask of indifference, bitterness, or cynicism, we not only have an interior professional life of feelings, we also have an interior personal life of feelings. These two worlds, the personal and the professional, are inextricably interwoven. We cannot separate one from the other.

We have been taught a certain way to see the world and ourselves by our parents, family, friends, and teachers. We may have been taught that to love ourselves we have to prove ourselves and accomplish something. Or we may have learned disdain for ourselves because we see ourselves as lazy. We may enter the classroom as a beginning teacher with confidence or with trepidation. But, we do feel. And these feelings affect how we think—how we think about school, children, teaching, learning, and ourselves.

We may be experienced teachers who are just tired sometimes. We don't have the energy we once did, and we may fear our own aging process and even resent the youthful innocence of others. We may sense that our opinions are not as valued as they once were. We may even feel like orphans: abandoned, ignored after we have dedicated all of our youthful energy to our school and classroom. The trust and confidence we once felt in ourselves and for others have been replaced, first, by the hurt of betrayal, and then by disappointment, anger, and a warrior-like need to attack. We may be principals who feel caught in the middle between the needs and demands of children, parents, teachers, and the central office. We may be parents feeling overwhelmed with making a living, raising our children, and striving to make a better life for ourselves and our family.

Not only do we forget that people have an inner life, but we also forget that each of us has had to deal with the everyday traumas of life: not earning enough money, losing jobs, differences and conflicts with loved ones, losses, mistakes made, illnesses, accidents, and deaths. We carry all of that around each and every moment. It affects how we see and feel about this world in which we all live.

Developing an awareness of self is the first step in developing relationships. In order to understand others and to develop more meaningful and effective relationships, it is critical to begin by developing a deeper understanding of self. What follows is a brief summary, or short course, of models for understanding self and others. Teams using the models can (1) develop new insights, (2) begin to open up to one another, and (3) invite and receive feedback that will promote healthy and effective interpersonal relationships in schools.

Developing this awareness is not about doing therapy or delving deeply into our own psyches or those of others. What these three models have in common are characterizations of different types of people that are concrete, accurate, and descriptive rather than judgmental. These models can support people as they begin to understand and respect differences that they encounter as they work together. This understanding enables collaborative work and creates a no-fault environment.

The behavior of others may seem pretty random and unpredictable, yet if viewed through the right lens it begins to be quite easily understood. "We then can more easily live in a no-fault way with others because," as Isabel Myers (Myers with Myers, 1995) has said:

All too often, others with whom we come in contact do not reason as we reason, or do not value the things we value, or are not interested in what interests us. The merit of the theory . . . is that it enables us to expect specific personality differences in particular people and to cope with the people and the differences in a constructive way. Briefly, the theory is that much seemingly chance variation in human behavior is not due to chance; it is in fact the logical result of a few basic, observable differences in mental functioning. (p. 1)

Although people can and do change, there are certain energies, ways of collecting information, reflecting on the information, and making decisions that are integral to individuals. Knowing about self and others creates an ability to build bridges among individuals. This awareness can create relationships that balance and complement individual strengths and weaknesses. It then becomes possible to learn from people who previously may have seemed to be a threat. And they, in turn, learn about us.

Education is about people—children and the adults who work with them. The nature of the relationships that have developed within a school may appear to have little logic. In a most beautiful way, sometimes, there is a logic and it is understandable. The brief descriptions found on the following pages point out this logic. The help that these models provide can be tapped by exploring each of them in more depth. Our short course will provide a brief overview of three models for looking at yourself and others: the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®, the Enneagram, and Archetypes.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) is a self-report questionnaire (indicator) that helps people identify which of 16 personality types is most like them (see Figure 12.4). It has been used for more than 50 years.

The descriptions are nonjudgmental, helping people to see their natural and unique gifts. The descriptions of the 16 types come from the variations of the four variables of opposite qualities: Introvert and Extravert, Sensing and Intuition, Thinking and Feeling, and Perceiving and Judging.

Briefly, Introverts tend to reflect first, before acting, while Extraverts will act first, and then reflect on the action they took. High Sensing people tend to pay more attention to details, while Intuitives (we use the letter *N* for Intuition and the letter *I* for Introverts) tend to look at the big picture and how things are connected or related. Thinking Types on the MBTI tend to look at the world more logically to help them make decisions, while the Feeling Types tend to make decisions more by what they value. People who are more Perceiving tend to want to put off making decisions until they have enough information to feel comfortable, while people who prefer Judging will push more quickly to make a decision.

Since none of these variables are in themselves right or wrong there are no right or wrong types, yet the descriptions enable people to see how they differ from others, and how they may be like others in particular ways. The MBTI describes preferences in how people use their energy, how they collect information, how they use information, and how they make decisions. Using the MBTI allows individuals in a workshop to appreciate both themselves and the unique gifts of others. For example, one principal now provides questions for his leadership team ahead of time, so that Introverts, who tend to “think to talk” as described in the MBTI, will participate more during the meeting.

Our purpose in using the MBTI in SDP is to foster an understanding and appreciation of both ourselves and others so that we are more likely to act in no-fault ways. As we learn about and accept ourselves, we are able to move beyond our type. As we learn about and accept others, we are able to help them move beyond their type. Although probably not possible in a lifetime, the ideal of the fully developed person is one who has developed all of the preferences of each of the 16 personality types.

Figure 12.4 The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) short descriptions

<p>THOROUGH (ISTJ)</p> <p>Success earned. Will concentrate and are thorough. Serious and quiet. See to it everything is organized.</p>	<p>RESPONSIBLE (ISFJ)</p> <p>Quiet, friendly, responsible, and conscientious. Thorough, painstaking, and accurate.</p>	<p>PERSEVERE (INFJ)</p> <p>Succeed by perseverance, originality, and desire to do whatever is needed or wanted.</p>	<p>ORIGINAL MINDS (INTJ)</p> <p>Usually have original minds and great drive for their own ideas and purposes. Independent and determined.</p>
<p>ANALYZE LIFE (ISTP)</p> <p>Cool onlookers—quiet, reserved, observing and analyzing life with detached curiosity. Look at cause and effect.</p>	<p>LOYAL FOLLOWERS (ISFP)</p> <p>Relaxed, retiring, friendly, sensitive, and kind. Modest about their abilities. Do not force their opinions or values on others.</p>	<p>HELPERS (INFP)</p> <p>Full of enthusiasms and loyalties but seldom talk of these until they know you well. Ready to help anyone with a problem.</p>	<p>LOGICAL (INTP)</p> <p>Quiet, reserved, impersonal, and logical. Can argue either side of an issue. Interested in ideas. Have sharply defined interests.</p>
<p>MATTER OF FACT (ESTP)</p> <p>Tend to be mechanical. Do not worry. Enjoy whatever comes along. Tend to like taking things apart and putting them back together.</p>	<p>COMMON SENSE (ESFP)</p> <p>Outgoing, easygoing, accepting, and friendly. Enjoy everything. Best at common sense and practical ability.</p>	<p>ENTHUSIASTIC (ENFP)</p> <p>Warm, high-spirited, ingenious, and imaginative. Quick with solutions. Ability to improvise.</p>	<p>RESOURCEFUL (ENTP)</p> <p>Quick, alert, outspoken. One new interest after another. Quick, ingenious, and resourceful in solving new and challenging problems.</p>
<p>ORGANIZE AND ADMINISTRATE (ESTJ)</p> <p>Practical and realistic. Like to organize and run activities.</p>	<p>COOPERATORS (ESFJ)</p> <p>Warm-hearted. Talkative and born cooperators. Like harmony. Active committee members.</p>	<p>RESPONSIVE (ENFJ)</p> <p>Social, responsible, and sympathetic. Feel real concern for what others think and want.</p>	<p>DECISIVE LEADERS (ENTJ)</p> <p>Hearty and frank. Good at anything requiring reasoning. Usually well informed.</p>

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The Enneagram

Ennea in Greek is *nine*; the Enneagram describes nine personality types (see Figure 12.5). For convenience, I have listed the nine personality types as a square, although the Enneagram is usually depicted as a circle, showing how the nine personalities connect to one another.

The Enneagram is an oral tradition that has been passed down through many centuries, and its exact origin is not known. Only recently have people begun to describe in writing the nine personalities that are a part of the Enneagram. The focus of the model, unlike the MBTI, has been on helping people discover the primary fixation (addiction, fault, negative, defensive trait) of their personality type. Studying each of the nine personality types in depth supports the development of self-knowledge and wisdom and the eventual discovery of where one fits on the chart (the "gram"). Each

Figure 12.5 The Enneagram

1 Perfectionist I want to be perfect. Use high standards to point out how to improve.	2 Helper I want to be caring. Pay attention to what others want and need.	3 Motivator I want to be successful. Set goals and strive for accomplishments.
4 Individualist I want to be unique. See many sides to a situation.	5 Observer I want to be all knowing. Study situations with a detached point of view.	6 Questioner I want to see what could go wrong. Question and analyze situations.
7 Adventurer I want to experience everything. Put focus on future possibilities.	8 Boss I want to be powerful. Take action to make things happen.	9 Peacemaker I want to be content. Work to resolve conflicts by listening and accommodating others.

personality is assigned a number. For example, if you ascertain that you are a “1” on the Enneagram, your negative trait is said to be “perfection.” What that means, briefly, is that unconsciously you frequently overwork yourself to achieve perfection in order to hide your insecurities.

The Enneagram enables people to do more in-depth self-reflection and to free themselves from their negative traits. In interpersonal relationships, it helps us to accept that everyone, including ourselves, has deficiencies. The Enneagram provides a way to understand and accept this fact. It also gives specific suggestions for how people can develop.

Archetypes

The Archetype model is a description of 12 energies or patterns (see Figure 12.6). Unlike the first two models, however, the Archetype model is based on the notion that all of the archetypes exist in everyone and are available to them. They are patterns that are found throughout time and in all cultures. Because of upbringing, training, experiences in life, or present situations, certain archetypes emerge in the moment and drive behavior. Because each of these energies or patterns can take a positive or negative form, the archetypal pattern has the potential to “grab hold of us” and make us act in ways that we do not intend.

An example of Archetypes in action might be the parent who comes into a classroom after school and shouts at the teacher for “being unfair” to a child. In archetypal language this would demonstrate the tendency of that parent to react with the strong negative archetypal energy of the Warrior. A natural reaction of the teacher would be to become defensive by being critical of the parent—in effect, tapping into the teacher’s own negative archetypal energy of the Warrior.

Figure 12.6 Archetypes: Short descriptions of patterns of energy within us

<p>Innocent</p> <p>Trusts others and creates trust. Is open and willing to try new things. Is idealistic and optimistic.</p>	<p>Seeker</p> <p>Searches for opportunities. Ventures into the unknown. Is curious and inquisitive. Explores new ideas.</p>	<p>Ruler</p> <p>Organizes and structures activities for self and others. Takes responsibility and provides stability.</p>
<p>Orphan/ Empathizer</p> <p>Knows and relates to how others feel because of having had the experience of how difficult life can be.</p>	<p>Destroyer/Judge/Liberator</p> <p>Ends old ways to make way for the new. Can make hard decisions by facing reality and prioritizing.</p>	<p>Magician</p> <p>Intuitively knows what, when, and how to change. Can transform others through use of energy. Heals others. Demonstrates win/win possibilities.</p>
<p>Warrior</p> <p>Challenges wrongs. Fights for a cause or to accomplish own goals. Has strength of conviction.</p>	<p>Lover/Motivator</p> <p>Has passion for a cause, people, ideas, LIFE. Dedication leads to making strong commitments.</p>	<p>Sage</p> <p>Reflects using a global perspective. Uses own experiences and knowledge to see patterns and to guide others.</p>
<p>Caregiver</p> <p>Reaches out to others and provides help and support. Nurtures, guides, and serves others.</p>	<p>Creator</p> <p>Thinks "outside the box." Is innovative and inspired. Looks for the unusual. Solves problems by having a different perspective.</p>	<p>Jester</p> <p>Enjoys life. Is uninhibited. Plays and has fun. Does not take self or others too seriously.</p>

SOURCE: Adapted in part from Carol S. Pearson's concept of twelve archetypes. For more information, see *Awakening the Heroes Within: Twelve Archetypes to Help Us Find Ourselves and Transform Our World*, New York: HarperCollins, 1991. Copyright © 1991 by Carol S. Pearson.

By becoming aware of his or her probable response, the teacher could choose to act from another, positive archetypal energy and change the whole tone of the interaction. If, for example, the teacher responds as a Caregiver and says, "Oh, I am sorry, I was just trying to help when I told your child that she had to study harder. She felt so badly the last time she took the test and received a poor grade." Or the Ruler might say, "I want every child to succeed so I make sure I tell every child they have to work hard. I would not want to single your child out." A positive Orphan response might be, "I feel bad if your child was hurt or embarrassed by what I said. I will talk to her tomorrow so that she feels better." The point of this is that we do not have to just react to what comes up in us first. Humans are complex; we can tap into other parts of ourselves that are just as authentic and yet at the same time may be more appropriate and constructive.

The Archetypes are similar to subpersonalities that emerge, as needed, to help achieve goals. But, because they are unconsciously learned, they may drive people to act in ways that are not appropriate to a particular situation. People may ignore a certain archetypal pattern, or only see, experience, or act from the negative side of the archetype. The value in using this model is that it helps individuals to become aware "in the moment," and to change their responses in ways that can be more helpful to them and to others.

As I said earlier, this is meant to be a very short course in understanding people. It is most helpful when adults commit themselves to developing over the course of their lives. However, just knowing this much may help people to be more patient, more accepting of differences in others, and less fault finding. In fact, people may begin to see that the very uniqueness of each human being contributes to the richness of everyone in the school community.

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For a full description of the framework of the container, see Chapter 10 in this volume, "A Team Approach to Educational Change."

For more information on feedback, see the section titled "Feedback Description Guides" in Chapter 10 in this volume, "A Team Approach to Educational Change."

