

THESE MATERIALS WERE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH

SEMINARS FOR
EXCELLENCE IN
Nonprofit
MANAGEMENT

Personal Leadership in
Tumultuous Times

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RIVIRS
Leaders Guide pages 22,23

Here's a tool that mediators can use.

In any conflict there are causal or contributing factors. Those factors will fall into one of these categories:

Relationships
Interests
Values
Information
Resources
Structures

As a mediator you may want to ask some questions using these categories as a guide so that you can get more background information and some clarify about the issues.

Let's look at the case we've been talking about as it relates to STRUCTURES:

Board of Educ.
Teachers' Union
Corporations

The fact that these different structures exist can impact RELATIONSHIPS:

Board of Educ. Members
Teachers
Business people

Is there any lack of INFORMATION that might contribute to the issues in the case?

What about RESOURCES?

What about INTERESTS?

What about VALUES?

Conflicts involving VALUES are the toughest to address – e.g. all the religious conflicts existing in the world today.

The Johari Window
 Developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955

		Known to Self?	
		Yes	No
Known to Others?	Yes	1 Open (Arena)	2 Blind (Blindspot)
	No	3 Hidden (Façade)	4 Unknown

The Johari Window Model of Communication

Developed in 1955 by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham

The **Johari Window** is a very popular and easily understood model of communication. The Johari Window is essentially an information processing model. The model employs a four-part figure to reflect the interaction of two sources of information - *self and others*. The squared field, representing the "interpersonal space," is partitioned into four "regions" with each region representing particular information-processing elements that have significance for the quality of relationships. Let us look at one of the regions for a better understanding of their implications as they relate to interpersonal process and communication.

The Arena

The Arena is the portion of the total interpersonal space devoted to mutual understanding and shared information. This *known by the self - known by others* facet of the relationship is thought to control interpersonal productivity. The assumption is that productivity and interpersonal effectiveness are directly related to the amount of mutually-held information. Therefore, the larger the *arena* becomes, the more rewarding, effective, and productive the relationship is apt to be.

The *arena* can be thought of as the place where good communication happens. One can increase the size of this region by increasing the amount of *exposure* and *feedback seeking*.

Increasing the Size of the Arena

One can significantly influence the size of the *Arena* in relating to others by the behavioral processes you choose to use in your relationships. To the extent that you make others aware of relevant information which you have and they do not, you enlarge the *Arena* in a downward direction reducing the *Facade*. The process employed toward this end has been called by Luft and Ingham the **Exposure** process. It entails the open and candid expression of feelings and factual knowledge.

Yet it takes two to communicate and the other party must also *expose* in order for communication to be productive. Therefore, active solicitation by you of the information of others must also be employed. This process is known as **Feedback Solicitation**. As one solicits feedback, the *Arena* extends to the right reducing your *Blindspot*.

You can establish truly effective relationships if you will engage in optimum *Exposure* and *Feedback* soliciting behaviors. The fact is, *you have the primary responsibility* for the productivity of, and the interpersonal rewards which can be derived from, your relationships with others.

APPLYING THE LADDER OF INFERENCE

Objectives:

- To learn to listen, probe and understand different perspectives
- To learn to see others' perspectives so that we can collectively create a more complete view
- To move from our tacit assumptions and meaning to an explicit expression of our assumptions and meaning

The Ladder of Inference

Sources:

Chris Argyris - source

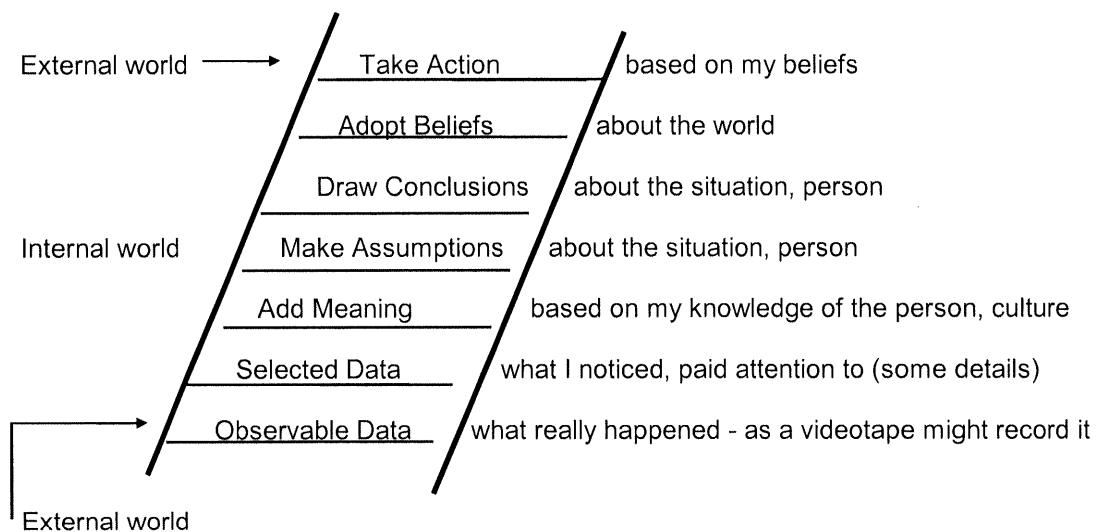
Peter Senge - Fieldbook, 5th Discipline

The Ladder of Inference is really about Perspectives.

The images, assumptions and stories that we carry in our minds of ourselves, other people, institutions and every aspect of the world influence the way we interact with the world.

The Ladder of Inference is a method that helps us to

- understand our own perspectives
- explore our own perspectives
- explore the perspectives of others
- understand the perspectives of others



Example:

I am presenting a new idea to my supervisor. I have her attention at the beginning.

She starts yawning, fidgeting - Selected Data (I don't remember that she was truly engaged in listening to me earlier.)

Add meaning - She wants me to finish.

Assumption - She's bored.

Conclusion - This is a bad presentation; my supervisor thinks I'm incompetent.

Belief - My supervisor doesn't like me, or my idea, I've failed.

Action - I leave, hide in my office and put the idea away.
I try to find a way to get back at my supervisor.
I vow never to present a new idea to my supervisor.
Others?

Undiscussables

Much of what is found in our internal world as we look at the rungs of the ladder are things that are undiscussable.

For instance, the "emperor's new clothes" situation. A senior manager is creating the problem and not taking any responsibility for his/her part in it. That fact alone may be undiscussable as well as the results of the actions.

Sometimes we tend to accept those things that are undiscussable without realizing that they exist and that they are having an impact on how we do our jobs.

We need to recognize that we carry the perception that something is undiscussable.

Exercise #2 - Practice using the Ladder to Understand How I Make Inferences

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Situation #1 | Someone comes into the office late and leaves early. |
| Situation #2 | The board is having lots of executive sessions and no information is forthcoming. |
| Situation #3 | You are working on a project and there is a meeting scheduled to discuss the project. You were not invited. |
| Situation #4 | The board is asking for information without explaining the reason |
| Situation #5 | The Executive Committee is meeting frequently |

Differing Views

We have an inherently limited view of the world because we have inherently limited experiences. If we accept that we will draw different conclusions then we no longer have to argue conclusions, we can explore how we got there.

We often spend our time discussing (arguing about) conclusions which is wasted energy. Understanding alternative assumptions, perspectives and beliefs will lead to greater shared meaning. It is not essential that we come to consensus on assumptions and meanings - what is helpful is to understand them.

Because each of us looks through a different lens, (from the inside, from the side, from the bottom, from the top...) when we combine our lenses we have a more complete view.

Where we Get into Trouble

As we live our lives daily moving up the Ladder of Inference we develop beliefs which are largely untested. The need to test our beliefs can be foreign to use because of our feelings that:

Our beliefs are *the* truth.
The truth is *obvious*.
Our beliefs are based on *real* data.
The data we select are *real* data.

Therefore, we can get a more complete view of the world when we begin to test our inferences.

Exercise #3 – Recent Experiences

Recall a situation where you were involved or a situation you anticipate being involved in and, using the Worksheet, complete the 3 columns:

What is Said:	Your recollection of the interaction - what you said and what the other person said.
What I'm Thinking:	What was in your head during the interaction which you chose not to say.
My Inferences:	What is preventing me from giving voice to those thoughts? What are my conclusions? What assumptions am I making? What data did I select? What meaning did I add?

Select one portion of your interaction that you will be willing to share - all across the 3 columns of the worksheet.

Ladder of Inference Worksheet

What is Said
(Data, Selected Data)

What I'm Thinking
(Undiscussables)

My Inferences
(Meaning, Assumptions, Conclusions)

TESTING OUR INFERENCES

How do we know that our Internal World is accurate? We test it.

Our Internal World is represented by all the “inside” rungs of the ladder.

The first step is to become conscious of our own inferences:

What data did I select?
What meaning did I attach?
What assumptions did I make?
What conclusions did I draw?
How does my conclusion support or challenge my beliefs?

Once we know how we arrived at our own conclusions, then we can venture into the realm of testing our inferences with others.

In order to do that successfully we must ask ourselves the question:

How willing am I to see the same event from a different perspective?

How to Test Inferences

If we are truly ready to test our inferences we do it by going down the Ladder to see what data the individual selected, what meaning they attached, how that led to their assumptions and conclusions.

First we start by extending an invitation:

I have an inference I would like to test, if that would be ok with you.

OR

As you've been talking something is rolling around in my head and if it's ok, I'd like to check it out with you.

OR

As I've been listening to you some thoughts are coming to mind. Would it be ok if I shared them to see if I'm getting it?

AND

I could be completely inaccurate about this

OR

I could be way off base about this

If the other person is agreeable, we state our inference:

My inference is _____

Then wait for their response. At this point they will generally tell you if your inference is accurate or not and may offer an explanation of how and where they differ with your inference.

Be prepared to tell them how you arrived at your inference:

- What data you selected
- What meaning you added
- What assumptions you made

If they don't offer an explanation, you might continue the conversation by asking:

If you would be willing to help me, I would like to better understand your perspective.

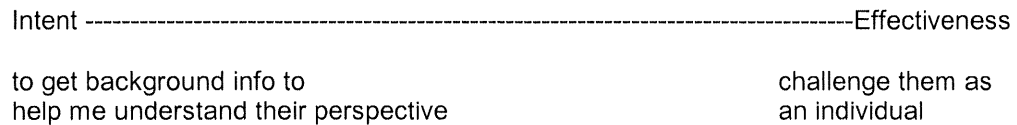
If they are willing then you might ask the following questions, using the language of the ladder.

- What data did you select?
- What meaning did you add?
- What assumptions are you making?

CAUTION:

AT THE VERY LEAST YOU NEED A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF THE LADDER IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT TESTING INFERENCES IN THIS MANNER.

When you ask these questions of someone who is not familiar with the Ladder of Inference and you have not created the SAFETY needed to pursue these questions you run the risk of unintended consequences.



DEEP LISTENING AND PARAPHRASING

- Listen and Focus on the Other Person
- Repeat What You Heard in Your Own Words (Do not Parrot)
- Repeat in Summary form
- Listen to Content and Feelings
- Listen to Understand
- Do not Judge or Evaluate
- Do not offer Opinions or Suggestions
- Draw out the other person by asking questions such as:
 - How do you feel?
 - How does this make you feel?
 - How is this impacting you?
 - Tell me more about that

You may **not** ask content questions, e.g.

“What did he do then?”

“What has been your experience with this person in the past?”

“What do you think you are going to do about this?”

IF

*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
But make allowance for their doubting too,
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:*

*If you can dream--and not make dreams your master,
If you can think--and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:*

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breath a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings--nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much,
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And--which is more--you'll be a Man, my son!*

--Rudyard Kipling