



How curious! Your team members know things about you that you don't even know!

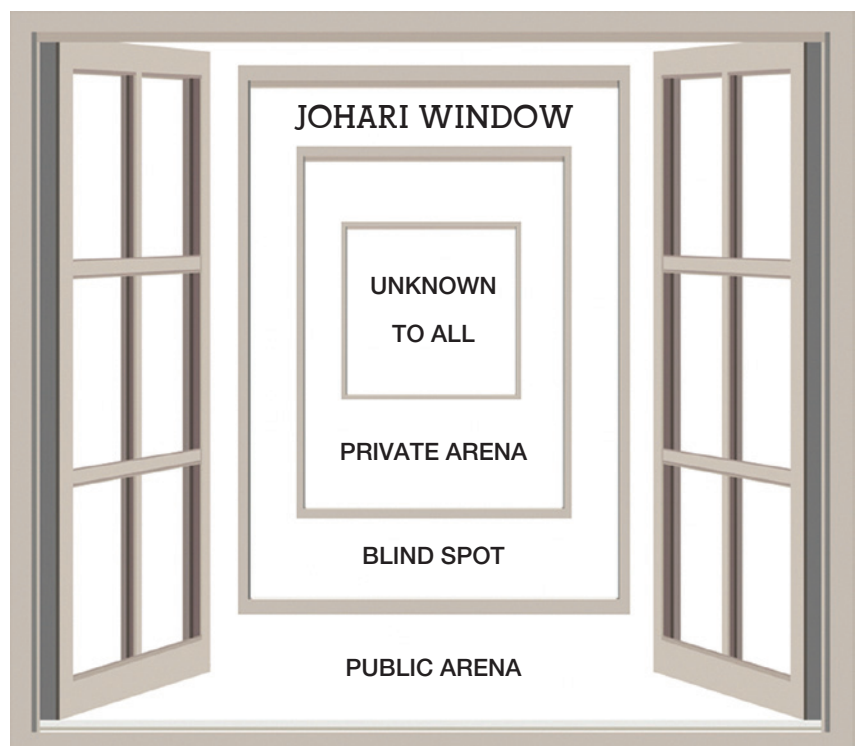
By Julie Parker

One of our main motivators as human beings is the intrinsic desire to keep getting better. That is, to develop MASTERY in what we do.

We have all felt that giddy feeling of accomplishment when we finally feel competent in something that we used to find uncomfortably challenging. Reflect on the first time you climbed to the top of a tree or when you learned to ride a bike. The journey to confidently master such skills was not easy. I am sure you experienced feelings of fear and frustration. But then, after much practice and continuous adjustments in your actions, you became a master and these hobbies became “easy-to-do” activities that you enjoyed throughout your childhood.

As children, we are born quite incompetent but eager to learn. We start off not knowing how to eat, walk or dress ourselves. Then, we grow older and enter school where we don't know how to multiply, spell or develop friendships. By the time we reach adulthood, we have mastered enough of life's lessons to live on our own, work to earn an income and enjoy the company of friends and loved ones. We often settle in to this space and get comfortable. Too comfortable...

I want to challenge you to get uncomfortable! To shake yourself up!



To become BETTER! And always remember, that “all things are difficult before they are easy!”

If you're not becoming better, then you're not growing. And if you're not growing, you run the risk of stagnating and slowly becoming incompetent again, particularly in fast-changing times such as we're experiencing in the dental industry.

The following is a self-improvement technique called the Johari Window. It was developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955.

The Johari Window is a method used to uncover not just how we see ourselves, but also what others observe about us. This is particularly useful when we work in teams. The way team members interact and behave has an enormous impact on team happiness and the results they achieve. Your contribution of a robust performance needs not only your mastery over your skills, but also an understanding of how you are being perceived by your teammates. The positive impact you have on your team's performance will strengthen

Table 1. 55 adjectives to describe your personality

Able	Accepting	Adaptable	Bold	Brave
Calm	Caring	Cheerful	Clever	Complex
Confident	Dependable	Dignified	Energetic	Extroverted
Friendly	Giving	Happy	Helpful	Idealistic
Independent	Ingenious	Intelligent	Introverted	Kind
Knowledgeable	Logical	Loving	Mature	Modest
Nervous	Observant	Organised	Patient	Powerful
Proud	Quiet	Reflective	Relaxed	Religious
Responsive	Searching	Self-Assertive	Self-Conscious	Sensible
Sentimental	Shy	Silly	Spontaneous	Sympathetic
Tense	Trustworthy	Warm	Wise	Witty

when you become curious about how you perceive yourself and what you can do to improve.

When I have used this exercise with teams that want to improve their overall performance, the results are almost always wonderful if the exercise is done properly.

We all have elements or character traits about ourselves that we are quite open about and elements that we prefer to keep private. Consider, though, that there are elements about you that others see, but that you cannot see! Isn't that curious? It is identifying such "blind spots" and then doing something about them that can help improve your performance.

The Johari Window is divided into four areas as follows:

PUBLIC ARENA

What is known by you about yourself and is also known by others.

BLIND SPOT

What is unknown by you about yourself, but which others know.

PRIVATE ARENA

What you know about yourself that others do not know.

UNKNOWN TO ALL

What is unknown by you about yourself and is also unknown by others.

Putting Johari into action

The purpose of the Johari Window is to share more information about yourself and to reduce your blind spots. The following exercise can be done with your team:

1. Consider the list of 55 adjectives in Table 1. Pick 5 or 6 that you feel best describes elements of your personality;
2. Give your team members the same list of 55 adjectives and ask them to honestly select 5 or 6 that they feel best represent elements of your personality; and
3. Allocate the chosen words in your Johari Window based upon your current awareness into four groups as follows:
 - *Arena* - Adjectives selected by you and your team members are placed in Arena.
 - *Façade* - Adjectives selected by you only are placed in Façade.
 - *Blind Spot* - Adjectives selected ONLY by your team are placed in Blind Spot.
 - *Unknown* - Adjectives not selected by anybody are placed in unknown.
4. Ask yourself:
 - What were the biggest surprises to you regarding your blind spots?
 - Which adjectives may be helpful to you now that you are aware of perceptions and observations of you by others?
 - Which façade adjectives would you like to show more often to your team members?
 - What would be a first step you could take to show more of your façade adjectives?

Your openness to feedback from trusted sources, such as your team members, provides you with increased awareness of how you behave and therefore of how effective you are in your practice.

Use what you discover to improve your performance in the key areas that are important and relevant to you.

About the author

Julie Parker's whole career has been devoted to the dental industry, starting in 1987 as a dental nurse. In 2003, Julie became the first non-dentist to buy a dental practice in Australia. She owned and managed her practice in Brighton, Victoria for 10 years. During this time, she more than trebled the turnover and her staff base grew from 3 to 12 members. Julie successfully cultivated a winning team and a winning business. Her business programs on how to accomplish a dream dental business are gleaned from her wealth of experience, intensive education and an inquisitive business mind. Julie is a Certified Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Time Line Therapy and Hypnotherapy.

Julie Parker Practice Success provides dental teams with coaching and training so they can work together and achieve successful outcomes for their dental practice. Contact Julie on 0407-657-729 or julie@julieparkerpracticesuccess.com.au and discover what is on offer to help your team members develop the skills to run an efficient, productive and happy practice.