

MAPPING “Oppressive” Cultures



NOTE:

From the Four-Quadrant Model, we focus on how Quadrant One (mind) shows up in Quadrants Three (Culture) and Quadrant Four (Society).

We begin by sharing *three pervasive worldviews* – *fragmentation, competitiveness, and reactivity* – with eleven attitudes, and beliefs that keep oppressive cultures in place.

Mind training has been dismissed or neglected.

Therefore, we do not interpret well and have not learned how to discern and dissolve our maps and filters (biases).

This section touches on some of this. The work of bias is clouded in the mind, which prevents connecting to our heart or will. This “cloudiness” is then used to maintain *oppressive cultures* (quad 3) and *systemic bias* (quad 4).



MAPPING “Oppressive” Cultures



A- FRAGMENTED VIEW

- Humankind has succeeded in conquering the physical world and developing scientific knowledge by adopting *analytical* method.
- We study components in isolation to understand problems. We specialize in parts without appreciating the whole.



B- COMPETITIVE VIEW

- Overemphasis on competition and winning makes *looking* good or achieving status more important than *being* good.
- Human potential is viewed as hyper-individualistic: *self*-reliance, *self*-sufficient, and *self*-responsibility.
- The resulting fear of looking bad or foolish is an enemy of learning.



C- REACTIVE VIEW

- Reinforced since childhood, we solve problems identified by others, read what is assigned, and write what is required to cultivate a sense of “rightness.”
- Being accepted (or right) becomes more important than being ourselves.

MAPPING a Majority Mentality



A- FRAGMENTED VIEW

- We specialize in parts without appreciating the whole.
- ***Looking deeply beyond content to discover context.***

Attitudes, Values, Assumptions:

1. Quantity Over Quality
2. Either/Or Thinking
3. Objectivity is Real



B- COMPETITIVE VIEW

- Overemphasis on competition makes *looking* good or achieving more important than *being* good.
- ***Sitting with confusion and the unknown to dissolve control.***

1. Perfectionism
2. Individualism
3. Meritocracy
4. Power Hoarding



C- REACTIVE VIEW

- Being accepted (or right) becomes more important than being ourselves.
- ***Evolve problem-solving mentality (being right) to an inquiry-insight view (being open).***

1. Defensiveness/Right to Comfort
2. Sense of Urgency
3. Paternalism
4. Fear of Open Conflict

*With the **Worksheet** in front of you, review the three worldviews to locate yourself as follows:*

Observe:

1. Notice any automatic thoughts (MAPS) in your **listening**?
2. Why is this inquiry important as a **coach-trainer**?

Reflect on:

1. Body: What feelings, thoughts, emotions, judgements, or opinions are arising?
2. Power: as kept in place with *fear, entitlement* and lack of *accountability*.

FRAGMENTATION: Quantity Over Quality

WHAT TO UNLEARN

The way organizational resources focus on producing measurable goals.

- Organization's ignore what can't be measured, and prefer data, "tasks" and objective transactions.
- Dismiss quality of relationships, inclusive decision-making, ability to constructively deal with conflict.
- Dismissal of these values protects the emotional discomfort of those in power.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Question measures to include underlying concerns.

- Integrate and measure process or quality goals into your planning.
- Ensure that your organization's value statements express the ways you wish to work.
- Develop a practice that **expands awareness of the emotional self.**

FRAGMENTATION: **Either/Or Thinking**

WHAT TO UNLEARN

The view that information is framed as either/or, good/bad, right/wrong, us/them.

- Closely linked to **perfectionism**, it is difficult to learn from mistakes or accommodate conflict.
- Encourages binary thoughts that simplify complex things. Encourages speed with no time (**urgency**) to consider alternatives.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Slow down to question immediate solutions.

- When observing either/or language, **slow down to encourage deeper inquiry beyond quick solutions**. Seek more than two alternatives.
- Honor both *detail* (many variables) complexity and *dynamic complexity* (subtle effects)*
- Appreciate partial views: what you observe is part of a whole that is not yet present and may require both questioning and time.

*displaces cause-and-effect by time-and-space. Requires *both* awareness *and* time to expect subtle signs to unfold over a period

FRAGMENTATION: **Objectivity**

WHAT TO UNLEARN

Strong belief in the notion of being objective.

- Emotions seen as inherently destructive, irrational, and dismissed in decision-making or group process (see “quantity over quality”).
- Objectivity results in a linear thinking that ignores or invalidates those who think in other ways, and impatience with those deemed illogical by those with power.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Increase capacity for discomfort.

- Realize that yours is not the objective worldview.
- Realize that everybody – including you – has a worldview that affects the way they understand things.
- Practice **sitting with discomfort** when people are expressing themselves in ways that are not familiar to you.
- Assume that **everybody has a valid point** and your job is to understand that point.

COMPETITIVENESS: Perfectionism

WHAT TO UNLEARN

The attitude that mistakes should not exist; that no learning is possible from mistakes.

- Appreciation is narrowly doled out and often to those in power.
- Making a mistake or doing wrong is confused with being a mistake or being wrong.
- The concern with our “ideal” or “proper” image that finds us controlling situations and hiding problems.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Shift view from controlling to learning.

- Create a learning culture of ***practice not perfection***, where mistakes are an expected part of *uncertainty* that evolve understanding.
- Frame mistakes as learning opportunities that **cultivate humility**.
- Expand **clarity** (knowing next choice), and let go of **certainty** (knowing outcome of that choice).

COMPETITIVENESS: Individualism

WHAT TO UNLEARN

The belief we are unique and separate selves; that if something is going to get done right, I have to do it.

- Reinforces *separateness and otherness*, and leads to isolation.
- Human potential is viewed as hyper-individualistic: *self-reliance, self-sufficient, self-responsibility*, and individual achievement.
- Attachment to individualistic notions of leadership that block emergence of teams, organizations and societies that can lead themselves.
- Any accountability is vertical, not to peers or to those the org. serves.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Cultivate shared commitments (whole) bigger than self (part) and cultures that normalize interdependence (honoring history and society).

- "There's no such thing as human nature independent of culture." (Geertz)
- Evaluate people based on their ability to **work as part of a team**, and encourage mutual accountability to accomplish shared goals.
- Create a culture where people **use groups to bring their problems** to discuss and solve, not just to report activities.

COMPETITIVENESS: Meritocracy

WHAT TO UNLEARN

Strong belief in logic of meritocracy based on assumptions that everyone has had the same access and opportunities.

- Confuses *equality* (access) with *equity* (power). Achieving equality focuses on policies; achieving equity shifts power dynamics.
- When colleagues who are marginalized complain about their ‘oppressive’ work conditions, they are labeled difficult.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Receive concerns openly (with non-reactive awareness).

- **Listen from the speaker’s point of view.** Understand the context and content of the concerns and seek out actions to mitigate or alleviate those concerns.
- Design management structures that include cultural differences.
- Recognize difference between defensive feelings about racism (or bias), or the need to prove “fairness” – instead of taking real action.

COMPETITIVENESS: Power Hoarding

WHAT TO UNLEARN

The assumption that power is seen as limited, with little, if any, value for sharing it.

- Those with power personalize change: they feel threatened when anyone suggests change, and view it as reflecting on their leadership.
- Those with power assume they know what's best, viewing those wanting change as ill-informed, emotional, and inexperienced.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Develop view that appreciates questions

- Share power with others to advance their goals and efforts.
- Appreciate change is inevitable; understand that **challenging questions can be healthy and productive** (to leadership).
- *Develop ability to **live in the question***, not attached to immediate answers/solutions, not trapped by need to be certain and in charge/control at all times.

REACTIVENESS: **Defensiveness/Right to Comfort**

WHAT TO UNLEARN

The belief that those with power have a right to emotional and psychological comfort (valuing logic over emotion).

- *Systems designed to protect existing power rather than clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it.*
- Criticizing those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude). People respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness.
- A lot of energy spent working around defensive people; defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Increase capacity for discomfort; not taking things personally

- Understand **discomfort is at the root of growth** and understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege).
- **Employ mindful practices to recognize and name fears or threats.**
- Cultivate “brave” spaces for *courageous conversations* that care for well-being as different from safe spaces that reinforce comfort.

REACTIVENESS: **Speed & Urgency**

WHAT TO UNLEARN

The virtue in speed & urgency as necessary to succeed or achieve.

- Discourages inclusive, thoughtful decision-making, long-term thinking, or considering consequences in favor of expediency.
- Continual sense of urgency results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results.
- “Digital” expectations encourage speed, and fragment attention that diminish care, thoughtfulness, which reinforces “survival strategies.”

WHERE TO FOCUS

Slow down, create space, question assumptions below surface.

- Adopt leadership view that appreciates things take longer than anyone expects.
- **Include diverse voices/ideas** (quality) over instant results (quantity).
- Reframe expectations around “productivity” – **letting go of *Multitasking and 24/7 Access*** as performance-based competencies.

REACTIVENESS: Paternalism

WHAT TO UNLEARN

The belief in decision-making that is clear to those with power and unclear to those without it.

- Those with power often believe they can make decisions in the interests of those without power.
- Those without power do not really know how decisions get made; yet, they are quite familiar with the impact of those decisions on them.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Increase capacity for Inclusive decision-making.

- Make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization.
- **Include people who are affected by decisions** in the decision-making.
- Move beyond the heroic leadership model.

REACTIVENESS: Fear of Open Conflict

WHAT TO UNLEARN

The assumption that equates raising difficult issues with being impolite, rude, or out of line.

People in power are:

- Scared of conflict and will deny, ignore, or run from it.
- Scared of losing control and work to avoid any sign of conflict or learn to control it.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Receive concerns openly (with non-reactive awareness).

- Distinguish being polite from raising difficult issues. Avoid prescribing “acceptable” ways to raise difficult issues.
- Acknowledge those who surface difficult issues.
- **Notice when you stop or resist listening**, or are nominally listening by making the issue about yourself rather than the topic.

Resources

1. **Michelle Alexander**, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*
2. **James Baldwin**, *The Fire Next Time*.
3. **Don Beck**, (a) *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change*; (b) *Spiral Dynamics in Action: Humanity's Master Code*
4. **Ta-Nehisi Coates**, (a) *Between the World and Me* (b) *We were Eight Years in Power*
5. **Robin DiAngelo**, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*
6. **Jennifer L. Eberhardt PhD.** *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do*.
7. **Paulo Freire**, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
8. **Anand Girdiharadas**, *Winners Take All*.
9. **Thich Naht Hahn**, (a) *The Heart of The Buddha's Teachings*, (b) *Communications*, (c) *Interbeing*,
10. **Ibram X. Kendi**, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*.
11. **Ethan Nichern**, *The Road Home: A Contemporary Exploration of the Buddhist Path*
12. **Peter Senge**, (a) *Heart of a Community of Learning*, with Fred Koffman, (b) *Fifth Discipline*, (c) *Presence*
13. **Otto Scharmer**, (a) *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, (b) *The Essentials of Theory U: Core Principles and Applications*
14. **Ken Wilber**, (a) *Sex Ecology and Spirituality*, (b) *Integral Buddhism*.
15. **Rev. angel Kyodo Williams**, (a) *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation*; with Lama Rod Owens, Jasmine Syedullah Ph.D. and (b) *Being Black*.
16. **Tim Wise**, *White Like Me, Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son*

Resources

The [Trevor Project: statics on LGBT Suicide rates](#)

From [Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups](#), *The characteristics of white supremacy culture* by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun, ChangeWork, 2001

Showing up for racial Justice: <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/>

Special acknowledgement for the seminal paper (1993) [Communities of Commitment: The Heart of Learning Organizations](#) by Peter Senge and Fred Kofman. *This seminal paper is a must read – dissect, digest and absorb -- for anyone who wishes to create a integral environment where accountably leads to evolving issues that can normally oppress cultures. It involves the integration of change, with wisdom and evolution of human capabilities.*

[Research says there are ways to reduce racial bias. Calling people racist isn't one of them.](#)

(Updated Jul 30, 2018, 3:39pm EDT, Vox News Media)

[The science of equality, volume 1: addressing implicit bias, racial anxiety, and stereotype threat in education and health care](#): by Rachel D. Godsil, Linda R. Tropp, Phillip Atiba Goff, john a. powell (November, 2014): **Perception Institute** partnered with the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at UC Berkeley and the Center for Policing Equity at UCLA to examine the role of implicit bias and racial anxiety in education and healthcare.

Work provided by these *thinkers* and *wisdom practitioners*

1. Ruth King
2. Eric Hoffer
3. Hannah Arendt
4. Robert Kegan
5. Martin Heidegger
6. Fernando Flores
7. Pema Chodron
8. Seth Godin

Definitions

Intersubjectivity-1 (standard definition): *consensual validation between **independent subjects*** via exchange of signals; referred to as semiotic intersubjectivity.

Intersubjectivity-2 (weak-experiential definition): "*mutual engagement and participation **between independent subjects***, which directly conditions their respective experience."
More accurately referred to as psychological intersubjectivity.

Intersubjectivity-3 (strong-experiential definition): "*mutual co-arising and engagement of **interdependent subjects***, or 'intersubjects' which creates their respective experience."
This is better defined as ontological or metaphysical intersubjectivity.

(Reference on second Slide Deck) Clifford James Geertz --"There is no such thing as human nature independent of culture." an American anthropologist who was considered "for three decades...the single most influential cultural anthropologist in the United States.



***Managing the Human Side of Change
by bringing Wisdom to Learning***

For additional resources contact us at info@bhavanalg.com
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