

PSY 240

**COMMUNICATION
&
MAINTAINING
A RELATIONSHIP**

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WEEK 7

Communication and Relationship Maintenance

**WHAT FACTORS CAN HELP MAINTAIN CLOSE
RELATIONSHIPS?**

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- For a person, being connected to another is not sufficient.
- It is also necessary to maintain this connection.
- In order to sustain a relationship, satisfaction must be derived from it; therefore, commitment to maintaining the relationship is required.
- Shared hopes and goals...
- Duck (1994) defines relationship maintenance as a shared system of meaning.
- Within this system of meaning, **communication** is extremely important!!

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Relationship Maintenance Strategies

Laura Stafford and Daniel J. Canary (1991) suggest that there are several strategies to maintain a relationship:

- *Assurances** (expressing commitment, loyalty, and love verbally)
 - *Social Networks** (engaging with shared social networks)
 - *Openness** (self-disclosure and communicating in alternative ways)
 - *Positivity** (being optimistic and cheerful)
 - *Task Sharing** (sharing daily responsibilities)
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- Relationship Maintenance Strategies Laura Stafford and Daniel J. Canary (1991) emphasize that more emotional strategies—such as open communication and expressing love—are stronger in maintaining relationships.
- For example, a gift received on your birthday can be an impressive strategy for maintaining a relationship. However, clearing the table together every evening after dinner may seem less impressive, yet it can be a stronger form of task-based maintenance.

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Relationship Maintenance Strategies

- The maintenance of a relationship operates differently across different types of couples.
 - Daniel J. Weigel and Pamela Ballard-Reisch (1999) examined relationship maintenance strategies among different types of couples:
 - **Traditional** (traditional gender roles, sharing, interdependence)
 - **Independent** (egalitarian gender roles, flexibility in the relationship)
 - **Separate** (emphasis on individual independence, less inclination toward sharing)
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According to Daniel J. Weigel and Pamela Ballard-Reisch (1999), couples' relationship maintenance strategies can be classified into three types:

Traditional

Independent

Separate

They propose that each group employs different strategies to maintain their relationships.

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- **Traditional Couples:** These are couples who show higher levels of commitment and cohesion and tend to adopt traditional gender roles.
Relationship Maintenance Strategies:
 - Provide assurances.
 - Actively use **social networks** to build close relationships with family and friends.
 - Strengthen their relationship through **positivity** and **openness** in communication.
- **Independent Couples:** These couples value their individual identities and personal space more, while still maintaining emotional closeness.
 - Use **openness** and direct communication.
 - Are more open to discussion and focus on resolving conflicts through conversation.
 - Flexible with roles and do not adhere strictly to traditional patterns.
- **Separate Couples:** Couples who maintain their individuality despite being together, often preferring emotional distance.
 - Generally use fewer assurances and positive behaviors.
 - Their **social networks** may be separate; they maintain social circles independent from their partner.
 - Use **task-sharing** primarily for functional purposes rather than relational closeness.

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Relationship Maintenance Strategies: Personality Traits

- Personality traits play an important role in maintaining relationships.
- Thomas N. Bradbury and Frank D. Fincham (1988) suggest that partners' personality traits significantly affect the relationship.
- Traits such as **agreeableness** can positively influence how the relationship functions.
- Conversely, traits like **quick temper** can disrupt the rhythm of the relationship and have negative effects.

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- **Relationship Maintenance Strategies:**

Self-Disclosure and Communication

- Openly sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences—**self-disclosure**—is a key component of effective communication in maintaining relationships. It fosters intimacy, trust, and mutual understanding, helping partners stay emotionally connected and aligned in their relationship goals.

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Self-Disclosure

- **Sidney Jourard** was one of the first to study self-disclosure. He observed that keeping our deepest thoughts, feelings, and attitudes hidden can create significant gaps between ourselves and others.
Restricting self-disclosure can lead to serious negative emotional and physical consequences for relationships.



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Self-Disclosure

According to the **Social Penetration Theory** (Irwin Altman & Dalmas Taylor, 1973),

a relationship is a process that begins with initiation and self-disclosure, gradually moving toward greater depth as the relationship develops.

The theory proposes two dimensions of self-disclosure:

- 1. Towards openness** – moving away from closedness.
- 2. Towards privacy** – moving away from openness into more private areas of life.

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1. Towards openness:

- The person begins to **share information, feelings, and thoughts** about themselves with the other person.
- In other words, moving away from being closed or distant toward being **more open and transparent**.
- Example: Sharing your interests or basic thoughts with someone you have just met.

2. Towards privacy:

- The person **withholds certain personal information** and sets boundaries.
- This means moving away from complete openness and **protecting privacy and personal space**.
- Example: Sharing your private life or deepest feelings only with someone very close to you.

WHAT ABOUT CULTURE???




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- According to the theory, relationships can be thought of as an **ONION MODEL**. That is, people initially share **superficial information**, and as the relationship develops, they begin to reveal **deeper, more personal, and private information**.


Key Assumptions:

- **Relationships deepen gradually:** As people get to know each other, they share more and increasingly deeper personal information.
 - **Communication starts with superficial information:** In the early stages, people talk about safe, general topics (e.g., the weather or hobbies).
 - **Reciprocal self-disclosure is necessary:** When one person discloses personal information, the other must respond similarly for the relationship to deepen.
 - **There is a balance of risk and reward in relationships:** Sharing more personal information can foster deeper bonds but also increases vulnerability.
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Self-Disclosure in Interpersonal Relationships and Communication

- **Situations Where Self-Disclosure Can Be Risky:**
 - When self-disclosure becomes **excessively exhibitionist**.
 - When the openness shown is **not reciprocated**.
 - When self-disclosure is **not met with appropriate intimacy or openness**.
 - When self-disclosure **does not contribute to healthy communication**.
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Nonverbal Communication

- Body language
 - Facial expressions
 - Eye contact
 - Gestures and movements
 - Paralanguage (tone of voice, pitch, and volume)
 - Posture
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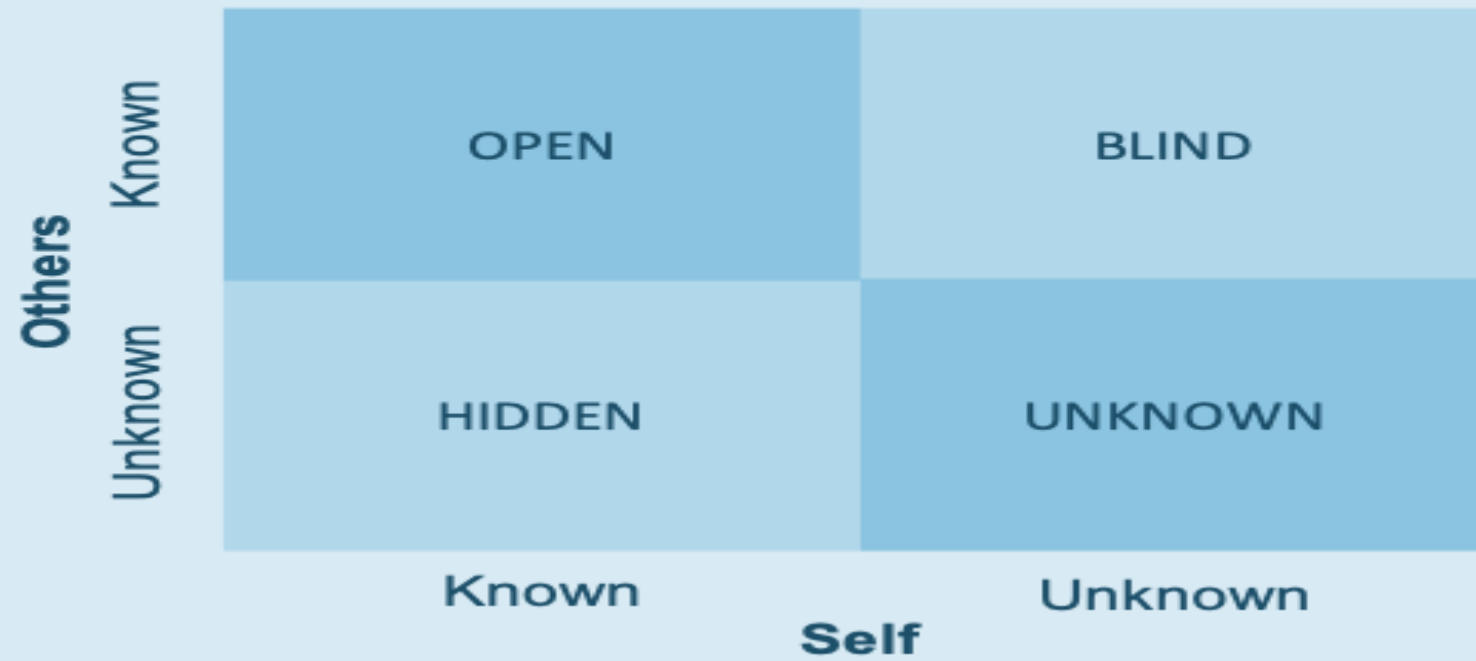
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The Johari Window is a model that helps individuals better understand themselves and their interactions with others. It was developed by **Joseph Luft** and **Harrington Ingham**, and is named “Johari.”

It is divided into four areas:

- **Open Area (Arena Window):** Traits known both to the person and to others.
 - Example: Both you and those around you know that you are outgoing.
- **Hidden Area (Hidden Window):** Traits known to the person but unknown to others.
 - Example: You may have a fear or a special talent that others are unaware of.
- **Blind Area (Blind Window):** Traits known to others but not recognized by the person.
 - Example: You may not realize that your tone of voice comes across as harsh.
- **Unknown Area (Unknown Window):** Traits unknown to both the person and others, yet to be discovered.
 - Example: Not knowing how you will react in a crisis situation.

The Johari Window



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- Johari Penceresi, bireylerin kendini ve başkalarıyla olan etkileşimlerini daha iyi anlamalarına yardımcı olan bir modeldir. Joseph Luft ve Harrington Ingham tarafından geliştirilmiştir ve "Johari" olarak adlandırılmıştır.
- Dört alana ayrılmaktadır:
 1. **Arena Penceresi (Open Area):** Hem kişinin kendisinin hem de başkalarının bildiği özelliklerdir. (Örneğin, dışa dönük olduğunuzu hem siz hem de çevreniz bilir.)
 2. **Saklı Alan Penceresi (Hidden Area):** Kişinin bildiği ancak başkalarının bilmediği yönleridir. (Örneğin, bir korkunuz ya da özel bir yeteneğiniz olabilir.)
 3. **Kör Nokta Penceresi (Blind Area):** Başkalarının bildiği ancak kişinin kendisinin farkında olmadığı yönleridir. (Örneğin, ses tonunuzun sert algılandığını fark etmiyor olabilirsiniz.)
 4. **Bilinmeyen Penceresi (Unknown Area):** Ne kişinin kendisinin ne de başkalarının bildiği, keşfedilmemiş yönlerdir. (Örneğin, kriz anlarında nasıl tepki vereceğinizi bilmemek.)

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Johari Penceresi

