

Johari windows useful in Epicurean philosophy? (thread started by Adrastus)

Post by "Adrastus" of July 4, 2025 at 1:39 AM

Admin Note: The following threads were moved over to its own topic on July 5, 2025.

I've been toying with the use of some personal interpretations of the [Johari Window](#) taught to me by one of my Goddess-like Beings 😊 ... err I mean, Spiritual-Needs Meeting Friend 😊 to speak frankly about simple lessons on the nature of mind and things like "enlightenment" in a non-spooky or mystical way; before explaining why Epicurean methods of reasoning are so unique, useful and important. I have deployed the lesson on my two grade school kids and my wife so far and will try it out with some other adults tomorrow to get their input.

We begin by drawing a classic four quadrant grid:

Things You Know About Yourself

	What They Know	What They Don't Know
What You Know	Negotiable	Secrets
What You Don't Know	Teaching Opportunities or Possibility for Manipulation	Mystery

I explain that Just and Pleasant relationships try to bring both "You" and "They" (the other person) in to the "Negotiable" quadrant, where both people are relatively aware of a situation and can speak honestly and openly about it, while the "Mystery" quadrant is often where a lot of people find themselves in and sometimes the most awful, because they neither know much about what they feel about themselves (or a situation); nor do they interact with caring and knowledgeable, or wise enough people to hopefully, teach or assist them.

Coming out of the "Mystery" quadrant honestly and with truly "**Knowing Thyself**" is best practiced through the Epicurean Canon of be **present** and **attuned** to the 3 parts of the Canon - Sensations, Emotions, and Prolepsis - to move from what is a Mystery to what is known about

yourself and therefore Negotiable in an inter-personal sense. Here I bring in Epicurean notions of Justice based on promises, contract and so forth as a way of how we interact with one another in the most Pleasant, Prudent, Honorable and Just way possible.

I usually spend a bit of time explaining my experiences within each quadrant and the often emotional distresses of being in the other 3 quadrants besides the "Negotiable" Quadrant; especially to my kids to deliver lessons about secrets, teachers, the treacherous as well as the more dastardly bottom-right of being relatively "asleep" to one's self. To adults, I usually give a little insight into competing philosophical or religious epistemologies and, invite them to tell a story about where they might end up by following these epistemologies.

Anyway, that's just a little tool I am exploring. Let me know if any of you have any thoughts with regards to this.

Post by “Kalosyni” of July 4, 2025 at 9:29 AM

This may potentially may have some overlap to Philodemus writing on the emotion of anger.

Here is what I gather are the 4 Johari categories:

1. behavior, feelings, and motivation about yourself that are both known by you and known by other people
2. behavior, feelings, and motivation about yourself that are known by you, but are unknown by other people
3. behavior, feelings, and motivation about yourself that are unknown by you, but are known by other people
4. behavior, feelings, and motivation about yourself that are both unknown by you and unknown by other people

[Adrastus](#) Is your main motivation in bringing this Johari window aimed mainly in the arena of self-improvement or helping others with self-improvement?

Post by “Adrastus” of July 4, 2025 at 10:28 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

This may potentially may have some overlap to Philodemus writing on the emotion of anger.

...

[Adrastus](#) Is your main motivation in bringing this Johari window aimed mainly in the arena of self-improvement or helping others with self-improvement?

Very cool about possible overlap to Philodemus. I have 'On Anger', but I feel like the sort of copy I have lends itself to needing an accompanying exposition of the context and ideas within it by a more learned scholar to really enjoy reading it and gleaning the insights from it.

I also think you have a very good understanding of what the 4 quadrants in this model represent.

I suppose my motivation for posting it here was that I saw the topic name of "Conveying Epicurean Philosophy: Study and Practical Applications" and rather than start a new thread, I thought maybe the thread was meant to gather up different tools to use to explain Epicurean philosophy to folks. I had just discovered this tool/framework, and thought it was neat and wanted to write this up to see if an account of it "tracks" with Epicurean philosophy as I, and the many Epicureans here who might read it, understand it. In terms of briefly explaining the more minutiae of motivation for explaining it to the people, I explained it to my kids to try a different way of using reasoning to parent them rather than just a simple but ineffective "because I said so" approaches. So, I used it to explain why teaching them things like listening to their emotions and senses is important and tied in forms of entertainment and diversion like video games and TV can lead to a form "self-forgetting" where they are less compelled to engage with other people and activities in ways that might help them learn about themselves.

For my wife, I brought it up because we have been exploring ideas of renegotiating our vows to one another, and I've lightly tied the notion of doing so to Epicurean thought, which she trusts is benevolent though she doesn't study it herself, and this sort of model was meant to picture what we would be getting up to, and how and why. For my friends, they also will likely never read Epicurus or study it deeply, but I like to share things with those among them who are interested to know more and easier ways of entry into understanding Epicurean epistemological methods. Also I think this sort of visual representation could illustrate why Epicurean Philosophy is more hopeful and has achievable goals, versus the more popular and recent "-isms" which I rightly or wrongly judge to be more in the category of a consolatory philosophical tradition; rather than therapeutic and ethical, and ultimately salvific or healing, traditions such as Epicurean Philosophy.

We can delete it all if it doesn't work for this forum, or if it's not right for the intended use of this thread. Also, this morning I had just perused the article you posted in the original post, and had intended to reply to it if I had anything useful to add to it; and didn't mean to entirely distract from anyone wanting to comment on the original post. 😊

Post by “Kalosyni” of July 4, 2025 at 2:22 PM

[Quote from Adrastus](#)

I suppose my motivation for posting it here was that I saw the topic name of "Conveying Epicurean Philosophy: Study and Practical Applications" and rather than start a new thread, I thought maybe the thread was meant to gather up different tools to use to explain Epicurean philosophy to folks.

Yes, we might eventually split off certain threads if the tools need more development. (I confess that I am not exactly clear about your use of Johari windows).

I am seeing that there is a need for teaching of both the "theory" and "practical applications".

Theory = what and why

Practical applications = how

We really need both.

And also another issue is that in some sense Epicurean philosophy is like an elephant in a room with three blind men, where each man says either: "it is soft and smooth" (like an elephant ear) or "it is like a big tree (the trunk of an elephant) or "it is like a rope" (an elephant tail). Everyone is cognizing the philosophy in a slightly different manner.

So your starting point and your theory will dictate your "how" to implement it.

Post by “Adrastus” of July 5, 2025 at 12:53 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Yes, we might eventually split off certain threads if the tools need more development. (I confess that I am not exactly clear about your use of Johari windows).

Sure, thank you for explaining that things are unclear and I need to take a step or two back in terms of what underlying assumptions am I using about EP, me, people, "being human" as to why some schema that is seemingly dealing with self-knowledge has to do with anything. I'll try to be as succinct as possible just for clarity's sake.

1. A story I have is that people often build wrong narratives of who they are or how they should act based purely on ideas we learn about or ideas that are generated for us, rather than basing them on reasoning from the 3 elements of the Canon in EP. Maybe in Epicurean terms, this would be explain more as simply unreasonable and unexamined fears, rather than some sort of psychological terms like "false selves."

2. Another story I have is that a lot of culture teaches us to not accept/believe/explore things like "emotional reasoning", or reasoning from other sensations that are non-verbal that I understand the Epicurean Canon is talking about. An Epicurean might say that culture teaches us that fears and unpleasant emotions are OK, or wise to feel given potentially oppressive supernatural entities or some narrative of essentially corrupt Humanity; where reasoning from emotions and using pleasure as a guide shows us that there is nothing about humanity that can't be set aright if we banish unreasonable fears and live pleasantly, prudently, honorably and justly realizing the teleology goal of a pleasant life is achieved in these things.

3. From there the Johari Window is just explaining that for many people, they may not realize there are things about themselves, such as supposedly unacceptable feelings, they really don't understand or allow themselves to consider and let be, or to reason about and adjust their outlook accordingly.

So in this way, radical experiences of self-discovery in many mystical or religious systems is more or less frankly explained as information about ourselves that we don't know about or likely refuse to acknowledge. This demystifies, to me at least, the human experience of coming to know one's self well that can be experienced in rather jarring "religious" or "spiritual" sort of ways. Haha, sorry this was long again...

Post by "Eikadistes" of July 6, 2025 at 11:06 AM

[Quote from Adrastus](#)

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4588-johari-windows-useful-in-epicurean-philosophy-thread-started-by-adrastus/>

I've been toying with the use of some personal interpretations of the [Johari Window](#)

That's interesting; I've never come across that idea *named* before.

Back in theatre school, they used to tell us (as regards auditions), "**You're basically three people...**"; I've heard this from so many, random acting coaches and casting agents: "**Who people see you as, who you think you are, and who you really are**". I wonder if they got it from Luft and Ingham?