

## Chapter 3

### How To Get Into The Area Of Enlightenment

There is no getting around the evidence that human beings are extremely complex characters. When we get into conflict with others or undergo dilemmas within ourselves, confusion complicates what is already multi-faceted. This is a point of utmost importance. People are not mono-dimensional; they are *multi-dimensional*. Everything we do and say, every aspect of our personality, is an amalgam of our physical bodies combined with individual experiences.

When in a disagreement, it would help immensely if time could be taken to examine the underlying basis of the argument. Arguments, by definition imply that agreement about a fact or conjecture is not possible, which generally means we are unconsciously arguing about more than one thing, especially when the argument seems intractable. In fact, there is a good chance that any two people locked in an argument will not even agree on the true basis of their argument. If the attributes of the disagreement are linear, meaning they proceed from black to white in a straight line—then options remain limited. All solutions have to lie on that one line. In almost every intractable scenario however, some attributes of an argument are independent of each other. When attributes are represented by separate axes placed at right angles to each other, they produce four quadrants, all of which contain possible outcomes to the argument. The four quadrants will illuminate many more options than those apparent using just one straight line.

Learning to extricate appropriate attributes from a muddled conflict will avoid the trap of superimposing independent attributes over each other. Identifying appropriate attributes will

radically increase access to potential solutions.

The first step in gaining insight into a situation using the Area of Enlightenment technique is to select appropriate independent axes. This may prove to be the most elusive part of the task, but once the attributes are identified, the problem-solving becomes clear.

Begin by identifying the important factors of the problem, dilemma, or argument that needs to be resolved, or product, strategy or structure that needs to be designed. Lists will help. Brainstorm alone or with the others involved and try to pinpoint the goals, benefits, downside, areas of friction and discord, emotional considerations, political considerations, financial cost, time commitments, deadlines, dependence on others, fears, restrictions, irritations, hostilities—all in a free-form outpouring of every issue connected to the problem. Be prepared for emotional reactions to some of the items. It is easy to reject another's suggestion due to preconceived bias, but at this stage try to be receptive to all options.

Write down obvious and marginal choices and all considerations coloring those choices. Be open to ideas that seem peripheral; these might actually contain the germ of a solution.

Notice if any items pair up. For example, if one item on the list is *the situation requires too much money*, and another item is *I don't have enough money*, it is apparent that those two factors are related and are, in fact, the same issue.

When there is nothing more to add to the list, combine and group obvious connections to reduce the number of separate components. This culling will illuminate the most significant attributes and the major issues will become more apparent.

The basis of most conflicts includes some aspects of science, emotions, finances and goals, and often these facets will fit into a nature versus nurture clash. Even starting a business or design of an instrument panel for instance, contains elements of nature and nurture. An instrument panel that addresses physical properties, such as velocity or acceleration, will still need to be human-engineered to ensure the operators can use the panel, which is dependent on identifying the customers—are they college-educated people, trade school students, drop outs? The best method for helping a failing child learn to read is dependent on that child's linguistic ability and social readiness. The first is a genetic influence; the second depends on environmental imprinting. Has the child been exposed to reading education? (Nurture.) Is the child visually-oriented or aurally-oriented? (Nature.) A family dilemma could concern the decision of sending a youth to college. The nature aspect would be IQ; the nurture aspect would

be money. The outcome might be that college is a good idea, but the amount of available money would determine where the student attends—community college, state university or Harvard. Many Area of Enlightenment graphs will work best when they contain one nature and one nurture axis, although this does not have to always be the case.

The second stage in determining the independent axes of a conflict is prioritization. Several significant attributes will generally rise to the surface, but usually a few items will stand out as the most relevant. It may take some experimentation, but the appropriate attributes will become evident as the exercise continues. If this process is done with others, there is a possibility that through discussion and the ensuing negotiation, a solution could present itself immediately. If no consensus on attributes can be reached, then the proponents of the conflicting positions can develop their own axes and those results can be compared. If the parties persevere, the Area of Enlightenment method of analysis will continue to help illuminate the true issues behind the problem.

The remainder of this book will present a range of conflicts, disputes, and arguments as drill to illustrate the use of the Area of Enlightenment. Solutions, or at least a broader understanding of the issues, will be examined. For simplicity, only two attributes will be used to illustrate each figure because two dimensions are fairly easy to visualize on a flat page. A third attribute could be represented by a third axis coming through the page, but that would result in perspective drawings that could be ambiguous or difficult to interpret. When multiple dimensions are being examined, the problem will be divided into two (or more) separate figures.

The following chapters will demonstrate how unstated co-linear assumptions led people astray, and where the Area of Enlightenment can illuminate a truer picture. When the Area of Enlightenment is applied to industrial, social, family, and personal situations, the results are often a surprise. Some people will be pleased, some will be disturbed, but all participants will be better informed.

Terminology used so far is defined below. A broader list can be found in the Glossary at the end of the book. The American Heritage Dictionary and Microsoft Bookshelf are the sources

for most of the definitions.

**Argument:** ordinarily a discussion concerning a disagreement. Also, as used in mathematics and in this book, the value of a parameter to be plotted on an axis.

**Attribute:** an inherent characteristic or quality of a person or thing.

**Axis (axes, plural):** a straight line typically referred to as an “X” axis (horizontal) or a “Y” axis (vertical). The axes form scales, which allows plotting the corresponding values of the attributes on the X and Y axes, defining a point in the plane formed by the two axes.

**Co-linear** implies being on the same line. A "co-linear argument" is an argument about one topic with two opposing positions. The truth lies somewhere along that line. If the argument is not co-linear, it could be on irrelevant questions (parallel lines).

**Dimension:** a measure in one direction to determine space or time; one element or factor when making up a complete personality or entity.

**Expert:** one who has special skill or knowledge; a specialist skillful as the result of training or experience. When written in quotes, “expert” refers to an expert out of their field, or an “Ivory Tower” type who is disconnected from reality due to academic narrowness, doctrinaire restrictions, or politically-correct blindness.

**Eugenics:** the study of hereditary improvement of the human race by controlled selective breeding. Eugenics was about nationalizing that decision to make people breed not for themselves but for the state. Rather than be an example of science getting out of control, it is much more an example of the danger of letting government get out of control.

**Linear:** of, relating to, or resembling a straight line and having only one dimension. Parallel lines are linear but they do not intersect. Non-parallel lines are linear and intersect once.

**Mono-dimensional:** having only one dimension.

**Multi-dimensional:** having more than one dimension.

**Nature:** the genetics of an organism; heredity.

**Nurture:** the sum of environmental influences and conditions acting on an organism. To nourish, feed, educate; train. To help grow or develop, cultivate. To promote and sustain the growth and development.

**Orthogonal:** at right angles.

**Politically Correct:** of, relating to, or supporting a program of broad social, political, and

educational change, especially to redress historical injustices in matters such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Being or perceived as being over-concerned with this program, often to the exclusion of other matters. (*The second definition is most relevant in this book, often abbreviated as “PC”*).

**Stereotype:** a conventional or hackneyed expression, custom, mental image. A person possessing characteristics that typify a particular group.

**Quadrant:** one of four sections when two axes lying in the same plane are intersected at right angles.

Section II concerns topics relating to genetics and imprinting. I will present the case that genetics (or hereditary) and imprinting (usually a result of nurturing which includes environment, parents and peers) determines how people behave. Liberals stereotypically believe that nurturing in the womb and early home life has the most persuasive impact on childhood development. Conservatives stereotypically believe that heredity is the most important factor in determining personality and aptitudes. This provides the classic situation of pitting liberal against conservative, which is such fun. Of course, not all liberals exclude the effects of heredity, and not all conservatives disregard nurturing; however using the Area of Enlightenment will clarify how the two interact.

