



Seeing Beyond Myself: A Self-Assessment

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Introduction

This tool is based on my July 19th 2022 LinkedIn Newsletter article, [Living with an Outward Mindset: Seeing Beyond Ourselves](#). In that article, I provided an overview of the Arbinger Institute's Outward Mindset model.

As I said in the article, when things go wrong in a relationship, the fundamental question I ask myself is "How am I a problem for others?" By asking that question, I'm forced to consider my impact on others and their needs and objectives. In Arbinger terms, I turn Outward and, in doing so, I see them as people whose needs, objectives, and results matter the same as mine.

Conflicts are inevitable in relationships, whether at work or in our personal lives. But notice how often two or more parties start out with a common desired objective but, over time, become 'accidental adversaries', with both acting in ways that guarantee failure, but each blaming the other.

How This Self-Assessment Works

The only way out of this kind of 'doom loop' is to ask the fundamental question described above. This assessment offers an expanded list of questions designed to help you honestly explore any conflict in which you're engaged in any area of your life and work, and especially those where resolving the conflict matters a lot, and your efforts to date seem only to have made things worse.

The Process

The process is simple. You'll start by identifying one or two personal conflicts you feel are very important to resolve. Next, you'll focus on one of those and work through the questions and prompts to identify a first step that invite you and the other party to begin the process of resolution.

When you're ready to complete the assessment, check out the next page...

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- 1) Make a list of your most important work and personal relationships.
- 2) Circle the names of one person from each category with whom you are currently in conflict, and where you feel the other person is primarily at fault.
- 3) For each conflict situation, ask yourself:
 - a. Why is it important to resolve this conflict in this relationship? What are the costs, and likely longer-term consequences, of failing to do so?
 - b. What would be the benefits of resolving this conflict, both now and in the future?
 - c. In what ways have I mistreated the other person, adding to their challenges, or causing hurt. How have I neglected them by failing to do more to help?
 - d. What's it like for them having to deal with my mistreatment?
- 4) Now, begin to turn Outward by asking yourself:
 - a. How might I see and treat them differently if I saw them as a person whose needs, objectives, and challenges were as important to me as my own?
 - b. Seeing them as a person I want to work with to resolve this conflict, what's the simplest, most constructive, first step I can take to begin the process of resolution?
 - c. When will I take this step?
- 5) For further reflection, ask yourself:
 - a. As I explore these two conflicts – and others later – do I see any patterns in the people and/or situations that are most likely to lead to conflict?
 - b. Is there a pattern in how I see myself? ... and in how I see others?
 - c. Are there 'warning signs' that might alert me to the need to break the pattern.

Insights & Improvement Plans: