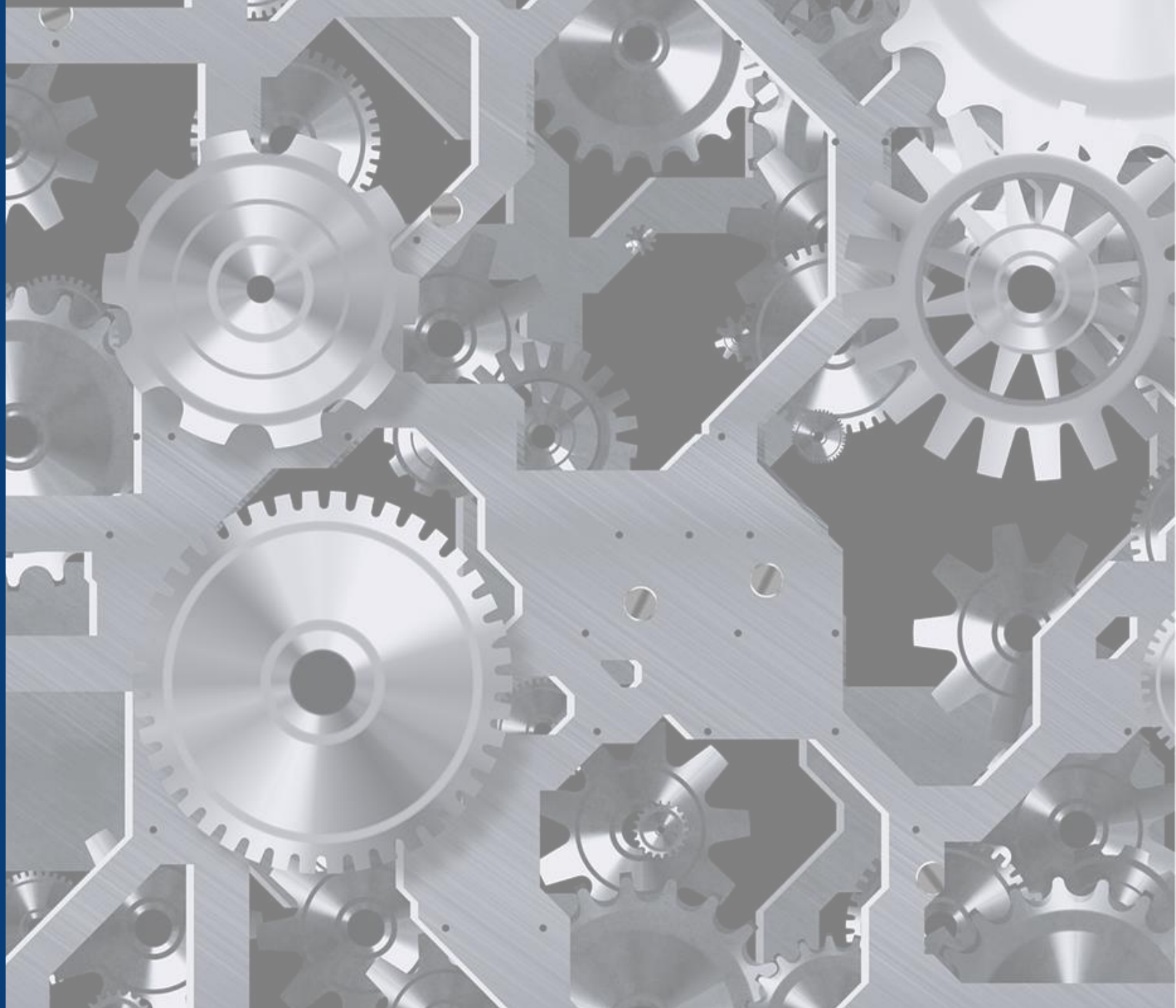


POLARITY MAP

**A guide to
understanding
dynamics and
balancing
perspectives**

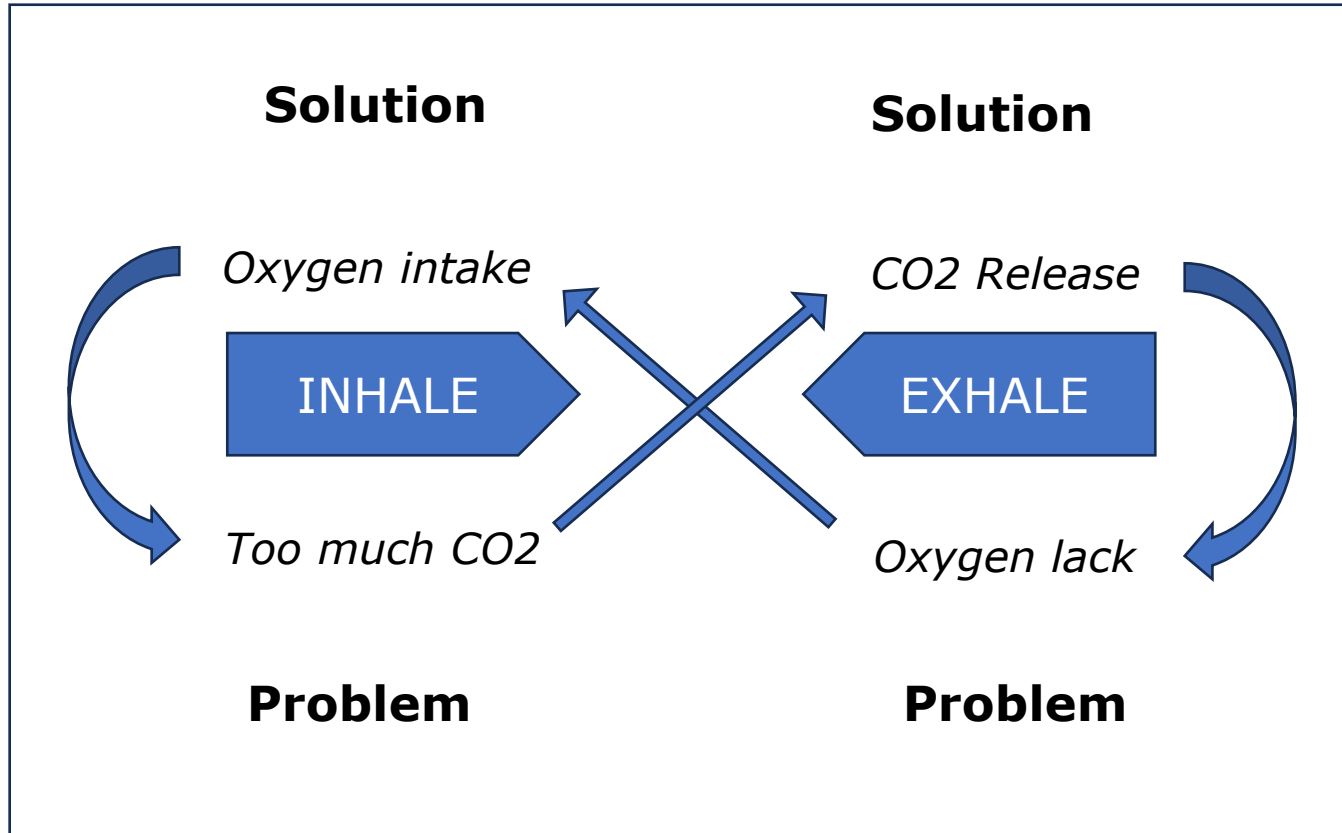
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Problem to solve or polarity to manage

Problem to solve	Polarity to manage
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is one right answer <u>or</u> there can be multiple alternative answers that are independent of each other, but one is more optimal than the others, depending on context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are <u>two</u> right answers that are <u>interdependent</u>• Both answers are not only right, they are dependent on each other's 'truth' over time
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once a problem is solved, it reaches an endpoint, but problems can re-emerge due to changing context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no endpoint• They are not solvable• You cannot pick one side and eliminate the other without consequence• Both alternatives must be leveraged together in order to optimize the situation over time
<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should we promote Jim?• Which product to launch?• Which project is priority?• How do we pay of this debt?• How do I resolve this software bug?	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activity and rest• Self and other• Task and relationship• Centralization and decentralization• Profit and purpose <p>Source: Gabriel Powell</p>

From fixing problems to managing polarity



- Tool to visualize and manage polarities
- Understand benefits and drawbacks
- Action steps and warning signs when overdoing
- Shift from *either/or* to *both/and*
- Towards balanced and more holistic understanding of complex issues

Definition and the why of polarity thinking

Definition of **polarity** ¹⁾

- Interdependent pairs: you cannot have one side without the other
- Both poles exist on a continuum, neither is inherently bad or good
- Ongoing and dynamic: unlike problems that can be solved and moved past

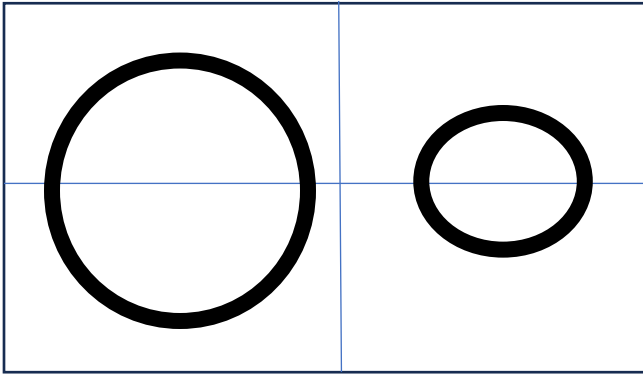
Why is this important? Recognition of polarities opens up new space:

- Address situations that seem unsolvable, no matter what
 - Ongoing management instead of straightforward solutions
 - Application of *growth mindset* as opposed to *fixed mindset*
- Do not approach a polarity as a problem to solve

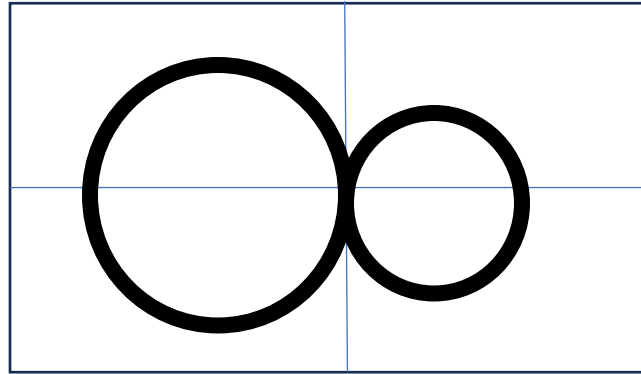
1) *Polarity management* by Barry Johnson, 1992, HRD Press

Maturity levels in polarity thinking

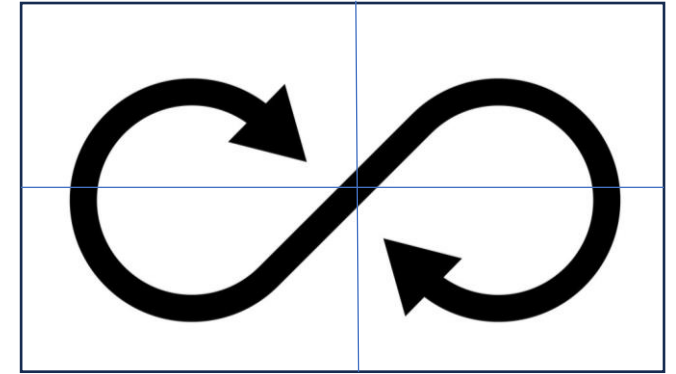
Unaware



Aware



Aware & competent



- ✓ Apply self knowledge to integrate and balance your polarities
- ✓ Become a more complete Leader and Human Being

Polarity Map – Overview

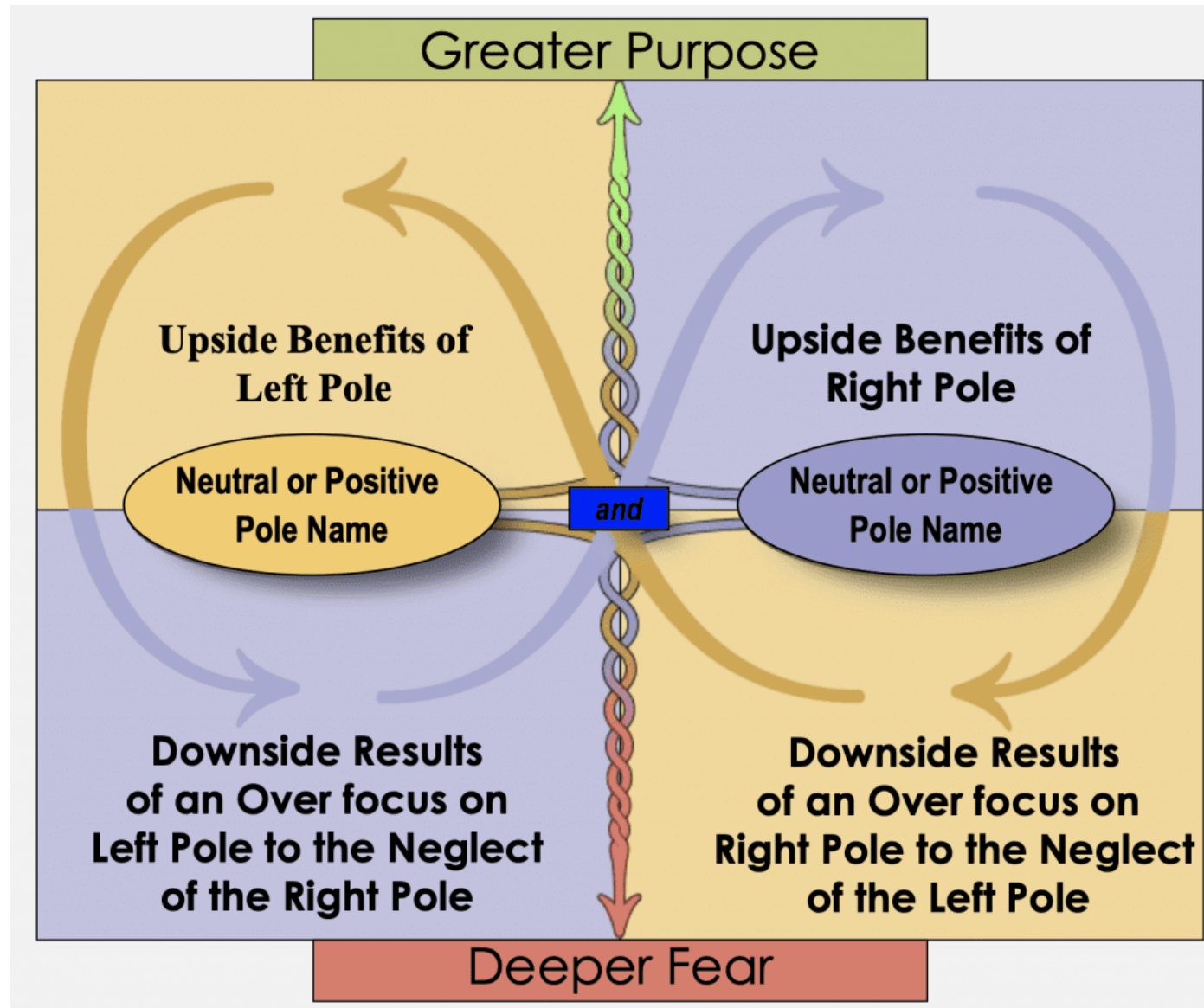
Action Steps

How will you gain or maintain the positive result from focussing on this left pole?

What? Who? By when? Measures?

Early Warnings

Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know you are getting the downside of this left pole.



Action Steps

How will you gain or maintain the positive result from focussing on this right pole?

What? Who? By when? Measures?

Early Warnings

Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know you are getting the downside of this right pole.

Polarity Map – Instruction (1/2)

Follow the flow – step 1 to step 4

1. Top-Left Quadrant - The Virtue Quadrant

This quadrant represents the positive attributes or values you are proud of, or which are desirable within a certain context. It's the strength or positive aspect of the polarity that is being encouraged or aimed for. It is essential, however, to recognize that even these positive traits have their limits.

2. Bottom-Left Quadrant - The Excess Quadrant

Directly connected to the top-left, this quadrant reflects the consequences of taking the top-left's strengths to an extreme. It highlights the potential drawbacks or negative outcomes that occur when a virtue is overemphasized or applied without balance. This serves as a cautionary area, reminding us that too much of a good thing can lead to unintended consequences.

3. Top-Right Quadrant - The Counterbalance Quadrant

Offering a contrasting view to the top-left, this quadrant represents an opposing or complementary perspective that provides balance. It's the necessary counterpoint that prevents the top-left's attributes from becoming excessive. This quadrant invites reflection and consideration of alternative views or actions that can mitigate the risks identified in the bottom-left.

4. Bottom-Right Quadrant - The Overcompensation Quadrant

This quadrant is connected to the top-right and illustrates the fears associated with overvaluing the balancing perspective. It shows what might happen if the counterbalance becomes too dominant, leading to its own form of excess. It's a reminder that the solution to an imbalance is not to swing too far in the opposite direction.

Polarity Map – Instruction (2/2)

Continue to follow the flow – step 5 to step 8

5. Synthesize the Information

After exploring each quadrant, synthesize the insights to understand the interplay and tension between different perspectives. This holistic view will illuminate the complexity of the issue and reveal insights into managing and integrating these polarities effectively.

6. Identify Deeper Fears and Higher Purposes

Extract the deeper fears by examining the bottom quadrants together, understanding the core anxieties that drive behavior. Conversely, by looking at the top quadrants together, articulate the higher purpose or the aspirational goals that guide actions and decisions.

7. Define Action Steps and Early Warnings

To complete your polarity map, determine actionable steps that can help navigate between the extremes. Discuss and explore strategies that leverage the strengths of each quadrant while avoiding pitfalls. Additionally, establish early warning signs that indicate when an imbalance is occurring, enabling timely adjustments before extremes are reached.

8. Regular Review and Adaptation

Polarity mapping is not a one-time activity; it requires ongoing attention and adjustment. Regularly review the map to ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to new challenges and information. Be prepared to evolve your approach as circumstances change, maintaining the balance and integrity of the system.

Polarity Map – Example questions

Greater Purpose: what's underneath the 2 top quadrants?

- What strength do I possess that I am most proud of?
- How has this positive trait contributed to my personal and business success in the past?
- In what situations have I observed this virtue to be most beneficial?
- How do my values align with this strength I'm showcasing in this quadrant?
- What do I feel and experience when playing this strength?
- How does this strengths help me in achieving my personal or professional goals?
- What positive outcomes have I experienced as a result of embracing this virtue?
- How do I or others recognize/celebrate this positive trait?
- In what ways does this strengths enhance my relationships with others?
- What's the impact on others when I'm using the strength?
- **What's the name for this quadrant?**

- What alternative perspective or quality could balance my primary strengths?
- When I find myself stuck in the excess of my virtue (bottom left quadrant), what counteracting behavior can I adopt?
- How do I identify the complementary traits that can mitigate the downsides of my strength?
- What actions can I take to encourage a more balanced approach to my positive attributes?
- How can I embrace opposite quality without losing sight of my core values?
- How have I successfully balanced this strengths in the past?
- Who do I admire that embodies the balance I seek, and what can I learn from them?
- How can opposing perspectives contribute to my growth and development?
- What do I and others feel/experience when coming from this alternative strength?
- **What's the name for this quadrant?**

- When have I taken this strengths to an extreme, and what were the consequences?
- How can I recognize when I am over-relying on this particular strength?
- What feedback have I received that suggests I might be overdoing the top-left behavior?
- Can I identify any negative patterns that emerge when I push my virtue too far?
- How do I feel when I realize that my strength have become a weakness?
- What are the signs that I should look for that indicate I'm approaching an excess of my positive trait?
- How have my relationships been affected when I exhibit too much of a good thing?
- How can I maintain awareness of the fine line between my strengths and potential excesses?
- **What's the name for this quadrant?**

- What's the underlying fear when I think about when I would overemphasize my opposing quality (top left quadrant)?
- How or where have I experienced negative outcomes from overcompensating?
- What's the worst that can or probably will happen when I overuse my counterbalancing quality?
- How do these overcompensations affect my interactions with others?
- How will I and others feel when I'm in this mode?
- What's my belief why overcompensating is not ok?
- How do my overcompensation tendencies conflict with my core values?
- What can I do to prevent myself from reaching an extreme in my counterbalance efforts?
- How can I ensure that my pursuit of balance doesn't become another form of excess?
- **What's the name for this quadrant?**

Deeper Fear: what's underneath the 2 bottom quadrants?

Polarity Map – Short example

Higher purpose

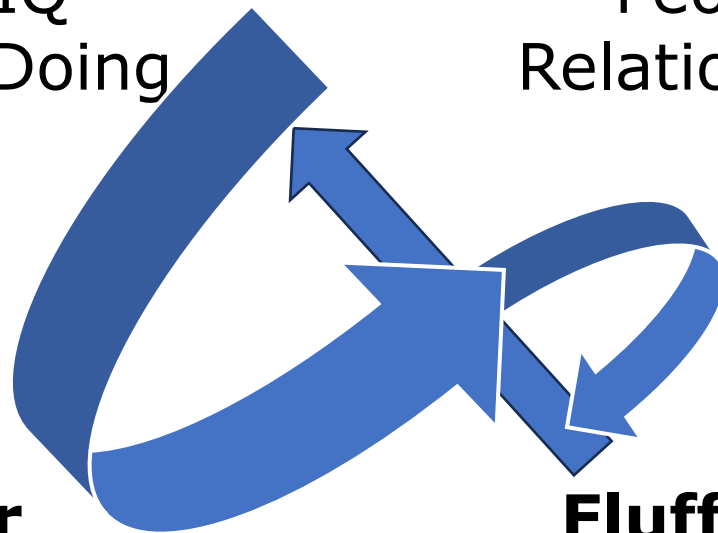
Workplaces combining business results with humanity

Strength

Human Doing
Results / IQ
Functional / Doing

Human Being
People / EQ
Relational / Being

Strength



Overdo

Dictator
Stress / Forceful
Fear / Demanding

Fluffy Nobody
Adrift / Yes-man
Alone / Good-for-nothing

Fear

Deeper fear:

I'm not good enough

Polarity examples

- Spontaneous ↔ Self disciplined
- Masculine ↔ Feminine
- Confident ↔ Adaptive
- Factual ↔ Visionary
- Questioning ↔ Constructive
- Candor ↔ Diplomacy
- Debate ↔ Unity
- Deep understanding ↔ Simplicity
- Self ↔ Organization
- Preserve core ↔ Stimulate change
- Evolutionary ↔ Revolutionary
- Intentional about results ↔ Open to events
- Hard mind ↔ Soft heart
- Contrary ↔ Conformity
- Work ↔ Life
- Intuition ↔ Facts
- Optimism ↔ Reality
- Caution ↔ Courage
- Self ↔ Other
- Structure ↔ Flexibility
- Distance ↔ Authenticity
- Control ↔ Empowerment
- Achieving ambitions ↔ Relating to people
- Autonomy ↔ Trust the team
- Conservative ↔ Innovative
- Protecting ↔ Authenticity
- Complying ↔ Achieving
- Belonging ↔ Autocratic
- Centralization ↔ Decentralization
- Profit ↔ Purpose
- Task ↔ Relation
- ...

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NEW EDITION

MARCO BUSCHMAN

THE CONNECTION QUOTIENT

HOW A CULTURE OF UNDERSTANDING
TRANSFORMS TEAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

