

CHAPTER 5

Personality Blind Spots: Identifying and Overcoming Hidden Barriers

Darji Janvi Ghanshyambhai and Hardi Raval***

ABSTRACT

Personality has a very important role in determining people's thoughts, feelings, behaviour and their ways of interaction with the people around them. It shapes the way a person makes choices, communicates, experiences emotion and forms relationships in both personal and professional life. Many people are confident that they know their own personality well, yet certain habits, attitudes and behaviours remain hidden from them. Such neglected elements of personality are termed personality blind spots. Personality blind spots are undetected internal barriers that distance a person from others and, in doing so, damage relationships, academic achievement, workplace conduct, leadership capability and overall development. People who view every situation solely from their own perspective seldom appreciate how their actions affect those around them. Over time, this lack of awareness produces repeated mistakes, misunderstandings, interpersonal disputes and stalled personal growth. The purpose of this article is to provide an in-depth explanation of the concept of personality blind spots and to expand on the types of personality blind spots. The article will explain the causes of the personality blind spots and how they can impact a person's personal and professional life. The article will also provide effective methods for individuals to identify their own personality blind spots by looking at their own thoughts, looking at the opinions of others, and using psychological models, such as the Johari Window. Finally, the article concludes that developing self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and continuing to learn and develop are important factors for removing personality blind spots and developing personally and professionally over the long term.

Keywords: Personality blind spots; Self-awareness; Johari Window; Feedback; Managerial development.

1.0 Introduction

A person's individuality derives from personality, which is formed by the way one thinks, feels, behaves and handles life.

**Corresponding author; MBA Student, Indukaka Ipcowala Institute of Management, Charotar University of Science and Technology (CHARUSAT), Changa, Gujarat, India
(E-mail: 24mba019@charusat.edu.in)*

***Assistant Professor, Indukaka Ipcowala Institute of Management, Charotar University of Science and Technology (CHARUSAT), Changa, Gujarat, India (E-mail: hardiraval.mba@charusat.ac.in)*

Personality shapes how a person confronts problems, builds relationships, manages emotion and makes the decisions of everyday life. In business or employment settings, personality is a major factor in an individual's communications, leadership skills, working in teams and developing their careers. Many people believe they have a clear picture of themselves and regard their actions, their manner of communicating and their intentions as reasonable and correct. In reality, self-knowledge does not always correspond to the way others experience an individual, and it is this gap that produces personality blind spots.

A personality blind spot is an internal barrier that prevents a person from seeing the true effect of his or her own personality, and it can damage relationships, actions and decisions. Blind spots appear as ineffective communication, disproportionate emotional reactions, rigidity of thought or unhelpful behavioural patterns. Because the individual does not recognise these traits, the same behaviour is repeated again and again.

The primary reason that personality blind spots form is the human instinct to protect one's self-esteem; the process of accepting that one may have personal weaknesses will create discomfort and present a challenge in facing one's true self. Individuals who remain unaware of their tendency towards self-deception often discount negative feedback, rationalise their behaviour, make excuses for their actions or attribute them to other people or to circumstances. Ultimately, this creates a pattern of continued conflict, damaged relationships, and a lack of personal development.

Self-awareness is now regarded as one of the most important requirements for success in both academic and business life. Individuals and educational institutions alike increasingly recognise that development is held back when a person cannot accept and learn from criticism; yet few people actively work on this, and it is difficult to grow as a professional or as a leader while ignoring part of one's own personality. Anyone who wishes to develop as a person and to achieve lasting career success must therefore first examine his or her own behaviour and take deliberate steps to remove these blind spots.

2.0 Concept of Personality Blind Spots

Meaning of Personality Blind Spots: Personality blind spots are the characteristics, behaviours, or habits that a person is unaware of in himself but are very apparent to others. Such features may be reflected in the way a person talks, his emotional outbursts, his conduct in a team or his attitude to receiving feedback. Because blind spots operate at an unconscious level, people are unaware of their presence and of their influence. They therefore continue to behave in a particular way, believing it to be perfectly normal, while others are hurt by it.

Unconscious Nature of Blind Spots: Personality blind spots develop gradually and without a person's knowledge. Nobody creates them deliberately; they form through

repeated behavioural patterns, habitual emotional reactions and past experience. Because people grow accustomed to their own conduct, they rarely realise how it appears to others, and this makes blind spots very difficult to detect without feedback.

Role of Self-Image in Blind Spots: It is part of human nature for us to want to see ourselves as capable, responsible, and good. When feedback contradicts that self-image, we become emotionally uncomfortable. To escape the discomfort, people may ignore the criticism, reject it outright or explain it away rather than remaining open to it.

Psychological Defence Mechanisms: Psychological defence mechanisms do a great deal to keep blind spots intact.

- Denial: refusing to acknowledge negative feedback.
- Rationalisation: finding reasons to justify inappropriate behaviour.
- Avoidance: acting as though the feedback, or the people and situations that provide it, did not exist.

These mechanisms are intended to protect self-esteem, but at the same time they bring personal development to a halt.

2.1 Understanding personality blind spots

Personality blind spots are traits, behaviours or attitudes that a person is unaware of in themselves but that others can readily identify. Such blind spots chiefly affect the way people communicate, express their feelings and relate to others. They persist because people wish to see themselves in a positive light and dislike being criticised. Operating at a deep unconscious level, they are difficult to identify without feedback. Psychological defence mechanisms and cognitive biases lead people to ignore or explain away the negative feedback they receive, which renders their blind spots still more invisible; and where colleagues avoid giving one another honest feedback, individuals are prevented altogether from recognising their weaknesses. Personality blind spots create difficulties in personal relationships, within teams and in the exercise of leadership. Recognising them is therefore the key to greater self-awareness, to accepting feedback and to sustained personal and professional development.

2.2 Types of personality blind spots

Communication Blind Spots: Communication blind spots are patterns of speech and interaction whose effect on others goes unnoticed by the speaker. The most common are interrupting, listening poorly, adopting a harsh or domineering tone and failing to consider other points of view. A manager may believe that he or she is communicating perfectly clearly while the audience feels ignored or undervalued. Over time such patterns result in misunderstanding, conflict and damaged relationships.

Emotional Blind Spots: Emotional blind spots involve an inability to identify and regulate one's own feelings. People with such blind spots may react excessively to criticism, struggle to manage anger or stress and fail to recognise the emotional states of others. These difficulties are commonly associated with lower emotional intelligence, and they lead in turn to more frequent interpersonal conflict, reduced empathy and greater emotional instability.

Leadership Blind Spots: Leaders often have blind spots about their own conduct: they may micromanage, become overconfident, resist feedback or overlook the contributions of others. Frequently they do not realise that such behaviour leaves subordinates feeling confused, controlled or undervalued. The result is a loss of trust in the leader and a decline in employee motivation and performance.

2.3 Identifying personality blind spots

Accepting that personality blind spots exist is the first step; identifying what they actually are is equally important. People are frequently unable to see their own faults or their automatic, unconscious reactions. Discovering blind spots requires self-awareness, honest reflection and close attention to the feedback of others. Anyone who remains unaware of these hidden aspects will continue in a destructive cycle that harms personal growth, relationships and career performance.

Self-Reflection: Self-reflection is one of the simplest and most effective ways to identify personality blind spots. It involves observing one's own thoughts, emotions and behaviour across different situations, for example through journaling or structured self-questioning.

Feedback from Others: Feedback is a valuable instrument for identifying blind spots, because the people around us often see what we cannot. Sincere and constructive feedback, whether from friends, peers, teachers or supervisors, reveals how our behaviour actually affects others.

Using Psychological Models: Psychological models offer a systematic means of pinpointing blind spots. One of the most effective is the Johari Window, which divides personality awareness into four areas.

- Open area: characteristics known both to oneself and to others.
- Blind area: characteristics known to others but not to oneself; these are the principal blind spots.
- Hidden area: characteristics known to oneself but not disclosed to others.
- Unknown area: characteristics known neither to oneself nor to others.

Observation and Peer Comparison: Another way of identifying blind spots is to observe how others behave in comparable situations and to compare their responses with our own. For example:

- How do others respond to feedback, compared with the way you respond?
- Are your reactions more intense, less intense or simply different?
- Do certain behaviours recur in different situations?

Through self-observation and comparison of this kind, hidden behavioural patterns gradually come to light.

2.4 Overcoming personality blind spots

Correcting personality blind spots is slow and never-ending work. The first step is to recognise the flaw and to admit the weakness without becoming defensive; improvement begins only once feedback is accepted in a positive spirit.

Building self-awareness through mindful attention, emotional regulation and reflection on one's own actions helps a person understand his or her reactions and, over time, the patterns behind them. Actively seeking constructive criticism and listening to it attentively further supports this development.

Lasting behavioural change requires achievable objectives and the steady formation of new habits. Continued learning, whether from a mentor, a trainer or one's own studies, and the deliberate use of one's abilities at work, are considerable advantages in the process of growth and change.

Those who come to understand their own shortcomings and limitations, and who improve them steadily, become more capable, more adaptable, more confident and more effective in both personal and professional roles.

3.0 Conclusion

Personality blind spots are subtle but powerful barriers that influence behaviour, relationships and professional outcomes, usually without our knowledge. Most people assume they know themselves thoroughly, yet unconscious traits continue to limit their growth and effectiveness. This article has set out the concept of personality blind spots, the forms they take and the effect they have on personal and professional life. It has also described how they may be identified through self-reflection, through feedback and through psychological models such as the Johari Window.

Dealing with personality blind spots requires self-awareness, emotional intelligence and a willingness to learn and change. Recognising them is not an exercise in self-criticism but a mark of strength and emotional maturity. Once these hidden obstacles are overcome, a person is able to repair relationships, develop as a leader and enjoy personal and professional success that is both satisfying and sustained.

References

1. Argyris, C. (1991). Teaching smart people how to learn. *Harvard Business Review*, 69(3), 99–109.
2. Ashford, S. J., & Cummings, L. L. (1983). Feedback as an individual resource: Personal strategies of creating information. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26(2), 370–398.
3. Boyatzis, R. E. (2008). Competencies in the 21st century. *Journal of Management Development*, 27(1), 5–12.
4. Brown, B. (2012). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. Gotham Books.
5. Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (1998). *On the self-regulation of behavior*. Cambridge University Press.
6. London, M. (2003). *Job feedback: Giving, seeking, and using feedback for performance improvement* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
7. Luft, J., & Ingham, H. (1955). The Johari window: A graphic model of interpersonal awareness. In *Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development*. University of California, Los Angeles.
8. McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1999). A five-factor theory of personality. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 139–153). Guilford Press.
9. Northouse, P. G. (2021). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (9th ed.). Sage Publications.
10. Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2017). *Organizational behavior* (17th ed.). Pearson Education.