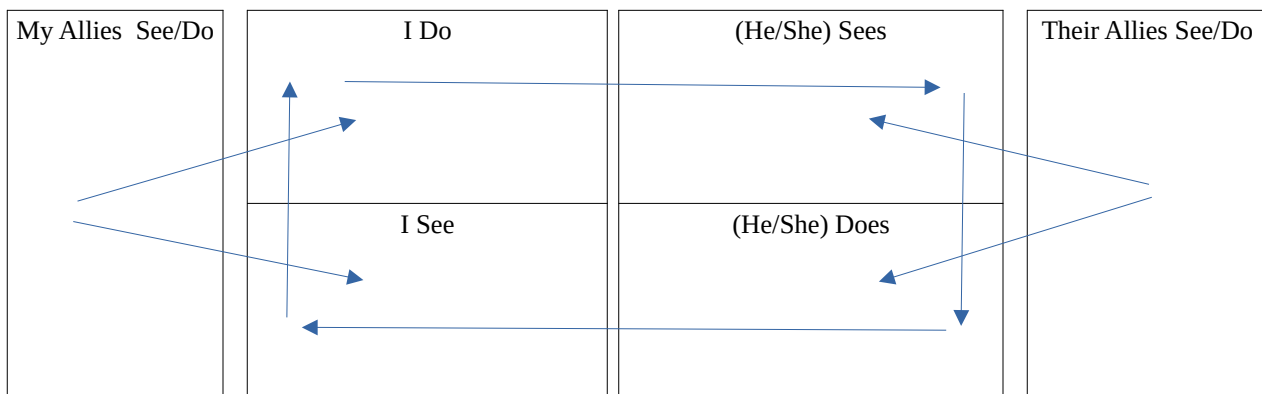


Becoming an Escape Artist: Getting Out of the Box and Defeating Deception

- ❑ Self Betrayal = thinking or acting contrary to our innate sense and desire to do good, or act kindly. It is a betrayal of, and resistance to, what some call our “conscience”, or “still small voice”.
- ❑ Self Deception = our ignorance of, and unwillingness to consider, our role (if any) in conflicts we encounter. It also involves attempting to change our view of others in a way that justifies us in seeing them as objects, rather than seeing them as people.
- ❑ We see things, not as they are, but as WE are.
- ❑ A Heart at War = Seeing others as Objects and Obstacles – as Problems To Be Solved.
- ❑ A Heart at Peace = Seeing others as Fellow Human Beings; – as People to Be Loved.
- ❑ Having a Heart at War involves Self Betrayal and leads to Self Deception. We feel a dichotomy in our hearts and minds.
- ❑ Having a Heart at Peace is not being “dispassionately objective”. It is seeing and feeling others’ humanity and individuality.
 - ❑ When we have Hearts at Peace, we see clearly. Even if we sense ways we are at fault, we do not betray or deceive ourselves, so we feel no reflexive compulsion to otherize and reject the humanity of the people we love and work with.
- ❑ When we engage in Self Betrayal, we follow patterns of Self Deception. To “protect ourselves”, we get into **“The Box”**.
 - ❑ This is a metaphor for the thoughts and actions we engage in, to shift blame and feel justified in having a Heart at War.
 - ❑ To protect ourselves from the discomfort of internal inconsistency, we reflexively engage in self-justifying thinking/etc.
- ❑ When we are in the Box, our Way of Being toward others invites them to get into Boxes of their **own**.
- ❑ Individuals with warring boxes typically find themselves engaged in Collusion with allies who validate their views.
 - ❑ This is illustrated by the following diagram:
 - My perceptions fuel my self-justifying reactions toward another person, who retaliates based on their self-justifying perception of my actions; with both of us seeking for allies who tell us our self-deceptions are correct



- ❑ With Hearts “At War”, we constantly seek for reasons to horrify others, question their motives, and exaggerate their flaws.
 - ❑ We want strife and contention more than we want peace; because, in order for us to continue being “right” inside our boxes, others must continually be seen as “wrong” outside them.
 - ❑ We blame our lack of compassion on the very people we deprive of it.
- ❑ On the other hand, when our Hearts are at Peace, we have no self-betrays to rationalize, and no defensive compulsion to criticize. We are more likely to praise than persecute.
 - ❑ We will still have disagreements and differences of opinion. We may even need to do battle from time to time, but we can do so with a Heart at Peace, and without treating the “other side” as objects or obstacles.
- ❑ This “Way of Being” invites harmony and growth. It encourages collaboration and compromise – or at least respectful disagreement if there is no Middle Way to follow.
- ❑ Some Boxes are so common they can be said to have names. These are patterns of thinking that are very easy to slip into. For example: it’s normal to want others to think well of us, and to seek a positive self-image. This can be done with a Heart at Peace. But when we seek to project strength (or weakness) because we “Must Be Seen As”, we are prone to self deception.

THE BETTER-THAN BOX		THE I-DESERVE BOX	
View of Myself Superior Important Virtuous/Right	View of Others Inferior Incapable/Irrelevant False/Wrong	View of Myself Meritorious Mistreated/Victim Unappreciated	View of Others Mistaken Mistreating Ungrateful
Feelings Impatient Disdainful Indifferent	View of World Competitive Troubled Needs me	Feelings Entitled Deprived Resentful	View of World Unfair Unjust Owes me
THE MUST-BE-SEEN-AS BOX		THE WORSE-THAN BOX	
View of Myself Need to be well thought of Fake	View of Others Judgmental Threatening My audience	View of Myself Not as good Broken/Deficient Fated	View of Others Advantaged Privileged Blessed
Feelings Anxious/Afraid Needy/Stressed Overwhelmed	View of World Dangerous Watching Judging me	Feelings Helpless Jealous/Bitter Depressed	View of World Hard/Difficult Against me Ignoring me

- ❑ We get into the Box when we **choose** to go contrary to our innate sense of the right thing to do, and “Otherize” people.
- ❑ We can get out of the Box by **choosing** to see people as PEOPLE, and engaging with them from that perspective.
- ❑ When we feel a sense to do right, or are prompted to act in ways that can improve conditions, but don't honor that sense, it sets up a conflict within us: “Am I a good person?” “Am I justified in not acting?” The walls of the box begin to grow.
- ❑ This brings us to an important point: What if I have a Heart at Peace, and feel a desire help, but genuinely lack the means or opportunity to do so? Is that still a Self-betrayal?
 - ❑ Remember, a betrayal is **a failure to honor the sense to act**. Even if we can't help, we can honor the desire to do so, and be ready next time. We don't have to tear down or objectify the other person to excuse and justify ourselves.
- ❑ When others are in the Box towards us, or their Way of Being is confrontational, we can effectively engage with them from an “Out of the Box” position. Without Hearts at War, we can redirect the energy, anger, or objectifying of others toward us – much like a Judoka “helping” a Judo opponent to the mat in a manner that respects and does not injure them.
- ❑ With a Heart at Peace, we are better prepared to invite change in others, instead of demanding it at the point of a consequence (Yelling “CALM DOWN, OR ELSE!!” never works.)
- ❑ If that person (not object) does not make a change, we can disengage, move on, wish them well, and let it go as much as is safely possible. (Some behaviors or refusals to change are dangers not to be tolerated.)
- ❑ **In conflict, we typically focus on reactively fixing what goes wrong, instead of proactively helping things to go right.**
 - ❑ On this Pyramid of Change, the solutions to problems at one level are found at the levels below the problem.
 - ❑ Note, also, that CORRECTION is at the top of the pyramid, and is the LAST step – After the fundamental stages below.

THE PYRAMID OF CHANGE

