



From Local Self To
Whole Self -
Understanding
All The Players

Putting It to Work: Local Self to Whole Self

What challenging opportunity do you face? You can apply this flip to situations big and little, from growing your business to improving an important work dynamic. To make this flip utterly practical, start by thinking of an utterly practical goal to which you'd like to apply it. It may be a goal that supports the vision you want to attract. It may be a goal around how you can add even greater value, or deal with a current problem. Pick a goal you'd like to put to this flip.

State your goal. Start with the words, "How to" and state what it is you're trying to accomplish or bring about. Write down your current "local self" answer to this question. What are you doing now with respect to this goal?

If you've picked a broad goal such as "How to grow my business," your answers might be elements of your current strategy, such as: (a) deepen current customer relationships, (b) advertise more, and (c) create strategic partnerships.

If you've picked a specific goal such as "How to coach Sally around improving her performance," your current local self answer might be steps you've taken, such as: (a) monthly meetings, (b) on-the-spot feedback and (c) showing her how to do things right.

You don't have to be exhaustive; a few answers are enough. You just want to capture your current answers or approach enough to see how it might change from a wider point of view.

Widen your net. Draw a picture of 4 concentric circles, as in Figure 9-1. At the center (Circle 1) is your local self, "me." In the first circle out (Circle 2), identify the players who are directly connected to your goal. These can be individuals or groups; people whom you consider to be in your "inner circle" related to this goal.

In the next circle out (Circle 3), identify a few other players who are related to your goal, but less directly. They might be future customers, or people who might block or support you; generally those you would consider in your "outer circle" related to this goal.

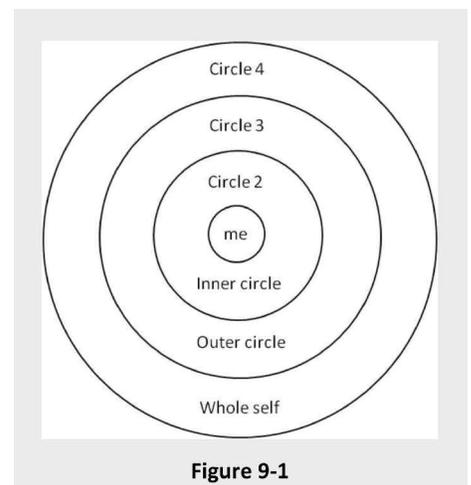


Figure 9-1

In the outermost circle (Circle 4), write “whole self” or “all of life.”

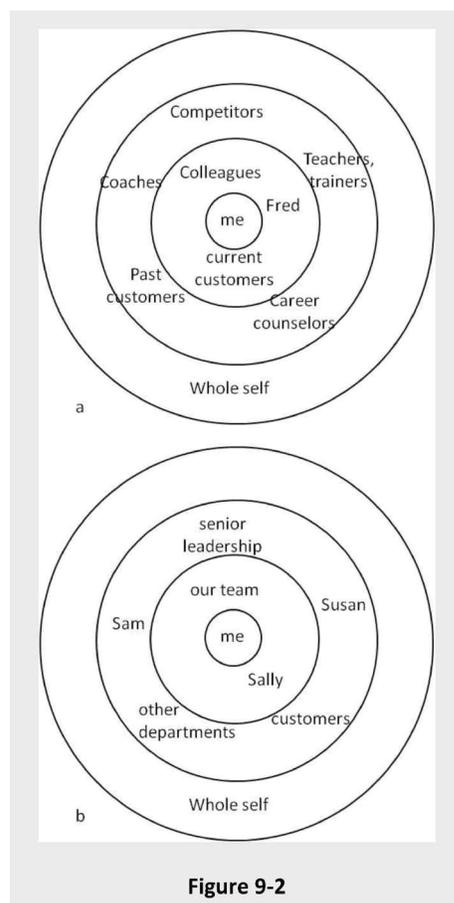
Figure 9-2 offers examples of what these circles might look like for a goal around “How to grow my business” (Figure 9-2a), or a more specific goal like improving Sally’s performance (Figure 9-2b).

Imagine what if... Using your pen as an arrow, land on one of the names in Circle 2 or 3 and, speaking in the voice of this person or group, complete the following:

“Speaking as [name the person or group you are speaking as], one of my main issues is [fill in a need of this person/group].

This goal could be in my interest if [fill in how this goal could serve].

My best advice right now would be [fill in best advice for pursuing this goal].”



In the example of how to grow my business, I might land on “current customers,” imagine myself as my own customer, and say:

“Speaking as your current customer, one of my main issues is how to grow my own business in a tough economy. This goal could be in my interest if your growth helped me grow. My best advice right now would be to spread the wealth and help people learn about me through you.”

In the example of Sally’s performance, I might land my pen on Sally, and say: “Speaking as Sally, one of my main issues is I don’t learn the way you do, and I don’t think I can succeed by your standards. This goal could be in my interest if you could help me learn my way and be more flexible about what good performance looks like. My best advice right now would be let’s focus on what you need me to do and let me do it my way.”

Pick up your pen and land on a different name in either the inner or outer circle, and repeat in this new voice: a key need, how this goal could serve, and what would be your best piece of advice right now. Jot down your answers. Repeat several more

times and notice how the responses change or reinforce certain themes as you move to different groups or between the inner and outer circle. None of these answers are necessarily more “right” than where you started with your local self, but if you get into the spirit of this exercise, you’ll certainly notice they’re different, and may broaden your perspective. Moreover, the advice doesn’t have to be for all time. You could repeat this exercise a few months from now and get a different set of perfectly worthy answers.

Finally, land your pen in the outermost Circle 4 and answer in the voice of life itself:

“Speaking as the whole picture one of the needs in this situation is [fill in from a bird’s eye view]

This goal could make the world a better place if [fill in how this goal could serve].
My best advice right now is [fill in best advice for pursuing this goal].”

Returning to the “Grow my business” example, speaking as life you might say, “Speaking as the whole picture, one of the needs in this situation is to show how your product helps your customers be successful. This goal could make the world a better place if more people knew how you could help them. My best advice right now is showcase people benefiting from your product.

To coach Sally around improving her performance, your whole self might have this to say.

“Speaking as the whole picture, one of the needs in this situation is to meet Sally where she’s at. This goal could make the world a better place if you help bring out Sally’s greatness without trying to make her in your image. My best advice right now is to give Sally a chance to be great at something.

If you compare your answers from the beginning and end of the exercise, you may notice a subtle, even striking shift. Even in the real examples I worked out, you can see how the local self answers tend to be more tactical (e.g., “advertise more,” “monthly meetings”) while the whole self answers tend to be more inspirational or strategic (e.g., “showcase benefits to others,” “let Sally be great at something.”) The whole self answers don’t necessarily contradict those of the local self, so much as add new dimensions, or broaden the approach. They may even reveal a better way to state the goal, or an overarching issue that has to be dealt with first.

This exercise is an act of imagination. But in daily life, you have countless opportunities to engage people around your goal and land on the dot of hearing their perspectives. This exercise has changed the way I listen, especially to feedback or perspectives that my local self doesn't particularly want to hear. For now I know that they represent a dot in the field of possibility somewhere between local "me" and my whole self. The more I understand perspectives I never would have imagined on my own, the more realistic my imagination becomes. And that is the kind of imagination most likely to see, as Einstein would say, life's coming attractions.