



Your Core Qualities





Core qualities are expressions of the Self that generate inspiration. They are not so much characteristics as possibilities that can be 'tuned in to'. Just as radio sound quality is partly determined by fine-tuning it to the right wavelength, so, too, does a person become more inspiring when he [or she] is tuned in to his [or her] own core qualities.

OFMAN, 2002

What's it all about?

A core quality is one of your specific strengths. Something you are particularly good at and which others would use to describe you positively, such as decisiveness, consideration, flexibility and so on. The core quadrants approach goes beyond simply identifying your strengths. It encourages you to think about what too much of a good thing might look like and what that means for your interactions with others. It also looks at what qualities you might be lacking and those qualities you find irritating in others and yourself.

What's it for?

The Core Quadrants Model was devised by Daniel Ofman (2002) as a way of identifying your key strengths. The tool encourages you to think about your core qualities from different perspectives. It looks at both the strengths and weaknesses of possessing a particular quality and is divided into four quadrants:

Core quality: an individual's specific strength, something that you are good at, and/or praised for by others. To the person who possesses the quality, it will seem like second nature, something that everyone possesses. It is an inherent quality that can be suppressed or developed

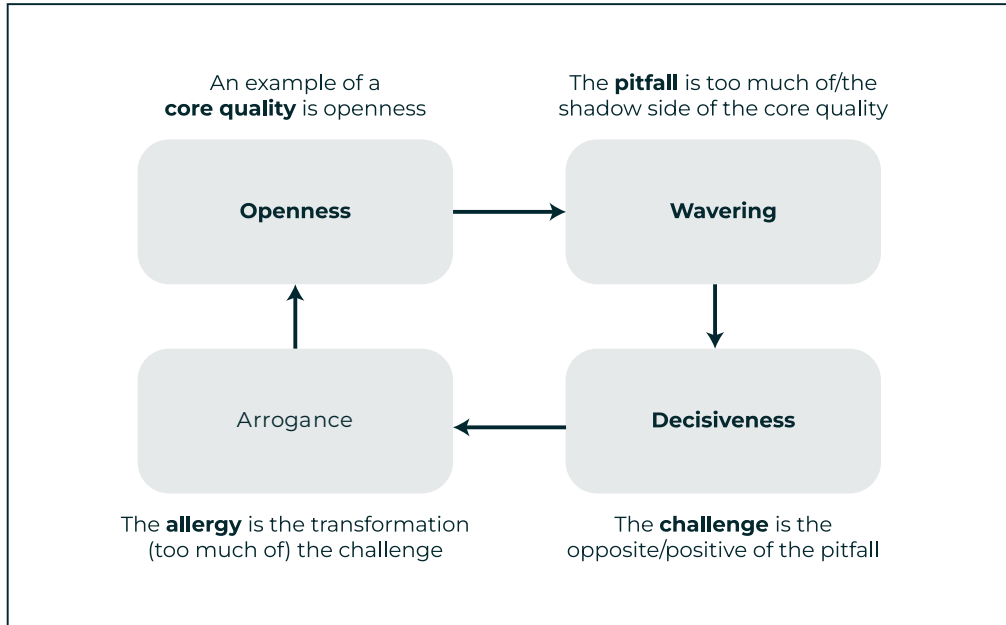
Pitfalls: these are the transformation of the core qualities. When your positive goes too far, you can have too much of a good thing and it becomes a weakness

Challenge: having identified the negative aspect of your core quality, your pitfall, you can then think about its positive side and what you need to do to achieve it

Allergy: the allergy comes into play in your interactions with other people and tends to be too much of a good thing of your challenge and the opposite of your core quality. Too much of your challenge in other people can lead to potential conflicts

Using the tool

In the following example, I have used one of my own core qualities – openness:



At any one time, the sizes of the relative quadrants may be different and the aim would be to try and balance your core quality and your challenge. In relation to your own development from identifying the core quadrants, you have several options:

- Doing nothing = a missed opportunity for improvement
- Fighting = fighting your pitfall, which is effectively wasted energy because you are fighting against yourself
- Balancing = observing yourself and becoming more aware and accepting

To explore the quadrants in more detail, Ofman suggests that there are a number of additional questions to ask, which then give you an in-depth ‘super quadrant’; this provides a depth of analysis that can be very revealing.

<p>Core quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you consider to be ‘normal’? • What do others appreciate in you? • What do you expect of others? 	<p>Pitfall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do others dislike about you? • What do you tend to justify • What are you willing to forgive in others?
<p>Allergy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you dislike in others? • What do you dislike in yourself? • What would others like you to be able to deal with? 	<p>Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you admire in others? • What do you lack? • What do others wish you were?

Using these more detailed questions can help you identify inconsistencies in how you view yourself. They can also help you prepare for meetings or interactions with others who might have opposing core qualities.

Using the template below, answer the following questions to determine your core qualities:

- Name a quality that irritates you in someone you know. Now write that in the **allergy** box
- Which positive quality fits with this irritating quality – what is its positive side? Write that in the **challenge** box
- What is the opposite of that quality? Write that in the **pitfall** box
- Which positive quality fits with this pitfall? Write that in the **core quality** box

<p>Core Quality</p>	<p>Pitfall</p>
<p>Allergy</p>	<p>Challenge</p>

What Next?

What do your core qualities mean for the way you run your business? What challenges do you need to work on?

Having thought about your core qualities, now think about others you work with. Complete a template for them or ask them to do it with you. What does it confirm about their qualities for you? Does it highlight something new about them, something you haven't thought about before?

Quick tips

- This is a self-assessment tool, and you may not be fully aware of your pitfalls or challenges. Work with someone who knows you well to test your responses
- Beware of 'over-classifying' yourself in terms of your core qualities – you are not a series of labels!
- Work either way around the model – you can work clockwise from a core quality or anti-clockwise from an allergy. Give both a try
- The core quality and challenge are complimentary and should sit in balance with each other

References

Ofman, D. (2002). Core Qualities: Gateway to Human Resources. New Haven, Netherlands: Scriptum Publishers.



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