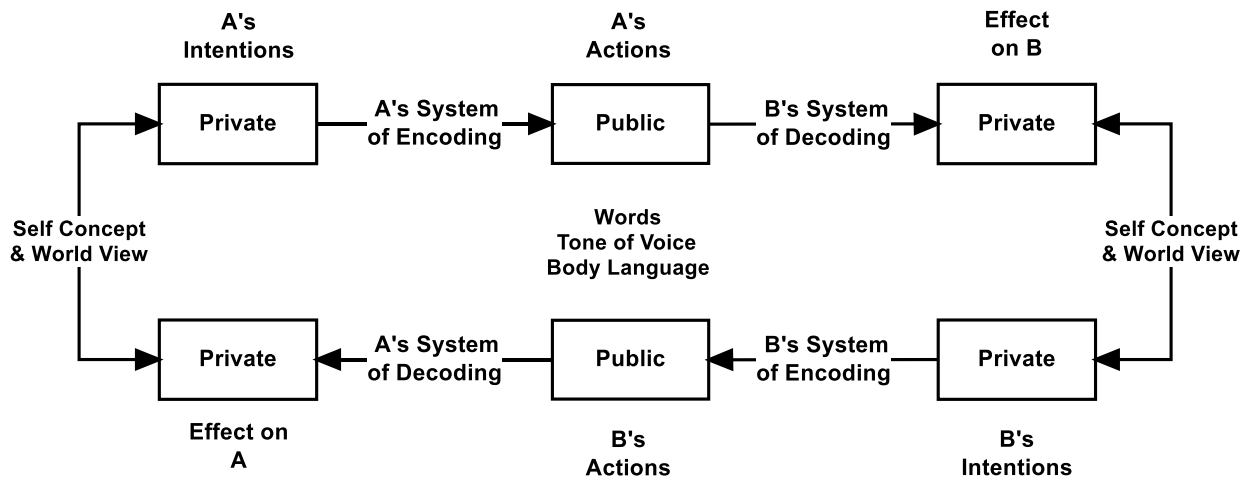


Tools for Knowledge Workers

The Wallen Loop



John Wallen is credited with drawing attention to and dealing with what he called the “interpersonal gap.” That gap occurs when the effects of Person A’s behavior on Person B are inconsistent with Person A’s intentions.

As the diagram above illustrates, Person A and Person B both have their ways of encoding their own behaviors and decoding the behaviors of others. (Wallen’s writings made use of only the top section of the loop depicted above; however, he clearly viewed the interactions as transactional. The loop diagram is my creation. My thanks to V. Kartikeyan (“Kartik”) of [Vistas Consulting](#) for suggesting the inclusion of Self-Concept and World View.)

Wallen posited four strategies for dealing with interpersonal gaps: (1) Paraphrasing what the other person says, (b) Describing the other person’s observable behaviors, (3) Expressing one’s own feelings, and (4) Sharing your perceptions of the other person’s state, feelings or intentions.

Robert Crosby, founder of Crosby Associates, worked with Wallen and his son Gil Crosby continues working in that vein. They are both well-known OD practitioners. The Crosby web site can be accessed at www.crosbyod.com.

