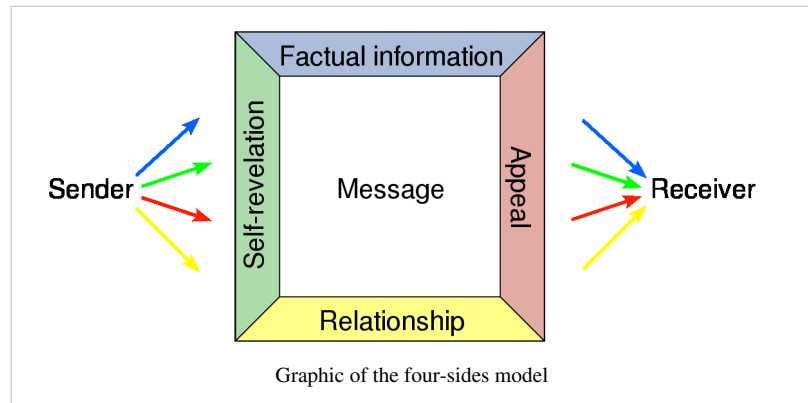


Four-sides model

The **four-sides model** (also known as **communication square** or **four-ears model**) is a communication model by Friedemann Schulz von Thun. According to this model every news has four messages. The four sides of the news are fact, self-revealing, relationship, and appeal.



Relationship

The communication square describes the multi-layered structure of human utterance. It combines the postulate (second axiom) of Paul Watzlawick, that every communication has a content and a relationship aspect, with the three sides of the Organon model by Karl Bühler, that every information contains something about the matter, the sender and the receiver. Such models are familiar in the linguistic as models of the speech act.

The four sides of communication

- The *matter layer* contains statements which are matter of fact like data and facts, which are part of the news.
- In the *self-revealing* or self-disclosure the speaker - conscious or not intended - tells something about himself, his motives, values, emotions etc.
- In the *Relationship-layer* is expressed resp. received, how the sender gets along with the receiver and what he thinks of him.
- The *Appeal* contains the desire, advice, instruction and effects that the speaker is seeking for.

Every layer can be misunderstood individually. The classic example of Schulz von Thun is the front-seat passenger which tells the driver: "You, the traffic lights are green". The driver will understand something different regarding to the ear with which he will hear and will react differently. (on the matter layer he will understand the "**fact**" "*the traffic lights are green*", he could also understand it as "*Come on, drive!*" -"**command**", or on the "**relationship**" could hear a help like "*I want to help you* or if you hear behind it: *I am in a hurry* it reveals part of yourself "**self-revelatory**".) The emphasis on the four layers can be meant differently and also be understood differently. So the sender can stress the appeal of the statement and the receiver can mainly receive the relationship part of the message. This is one of the main reasons for misunderstandings.

The matter layer

What I inform about:

On the **matter layer** the sender of the news gives data, fact and statements. It is the task of the sender to send this information clearly and understandably.

The receiver proves with the **Matter ear**, whether the matter message fulfills the criteria of truth (true/untrue) or relevance (relevant/irrelevant) and the completeness (satisfying/ something has to be added).

In a long-term team the matter layer is clear and needs only a few words.

The self-revealing

What I reveal about myself:

In every news there are information about the sender. On the layer of the **self-revealing** or self-disclosure the sender reveals himself. This message consists of conscious intended self-expression as well as unintended self-revealing, which is not conscious to the sender(see also Johari window). Thus every news becomes information about the personality of the sender.

The **self-revealing ear** of the receiver perceives, which information about the sender are hidden in the message.

The relationship layer

What I think about you (You-Statement) and how we get along (We-Statement):

The **relationship layer** expresses how the sender gets along with the receiver and what he thinks about him. Depending on how he talks to him (way of formulation, body language, intonation ...) he expresses esteem, respect, friendliness, disinterest, contempt or something else.

Depending which message the receiver hears with **relationship ear** he feels either depressed accepted or patronized. A good communication is distinguished by communication from mutual appreciation.“

The appeal

What I want to make you do:

Who states something, will also effect something. This **appeal-message** should make the receiver do something or leave something undone. The try to influence someone can be less or more open (Advice) or hidden (manipulation).

On the **Appeal ear** the receiver asks himself: "What body part should I feel now?"

citation: " Mothers are very appeal-influenced by children." Mum! The shoes Yes! I am right there and put them on for you.

Example

A man (first sender of the news) and a woman (first receiver of the message) are eating a homecooked meal together.

The man says: "There is something green in the soup."

Sender

Matter layer: *There is something green.*

Self-revealing layer: *I don't know what it is.*

Relationship layer: *You should know what it is.*

Appeal layer: *Tell me what it is!*

Receiver

- Matter layer: *There is something green.*
- Self-revealing layer: *You do not know what the green item is, and that makes you feel uncomfortable.*
- Relationship layer: *You think my cooking is questionable.*
- Appeal layer: *I should only cook what you know in the future!*

The woman answers: "If you don't like the taste, you can cook it yourself."

Publications

- Friedemann Schulz von Thun: *Miteinander reden: Störungen und Klärungen. Psychologie der zwischenmenschlichen Kommunikation*. Rowohlt, Reinbek 1981. ISBN 3499174898

External links

- Beschreibung des Vier-Seiten-Modells auf der Website von Friedemann Schulz von Thun ^[1]

References

- [1] <http://www.schulz-von-thun.de/mod-komquad.html>

Article Sources and Contributors

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