

# ***The 12 Paradoxes***

## **Explanation of The 12 Paradoxes**

A Paradox (greek: para = against, dóxa = opinion, view) is a statement that seems to contradict itself or contradict common sense but which contains a truth.

The HA system contains 12 paradoxes, each providing a deep insight into a specific aspect of personality, work situations, and career success. The paradoxes are 12 pairs of complementary traits. Each trait fulfills and gives a deeper meaning to its complement. By contemplating the relationship between these complementary traits with regard to our own behavior, we can extend the range of our behavior, becoming happier and more successful.

There are many traits that can be beneficial, leading to greater happiness and success. However, no trait in and of itself brings happiness or success. Even the most positive trait is destructive when taken to excess. In order for a trait to be productive and supportive, it must have balancing forces (complementary traits) that keep the trait from becoming excessive.

A person with two traits that are complementary (paradoxical) has an extraordinary ability or versatility. For example, a person who is both frank and diplomatic can communicate effectively because he/she can get his/her point across without offending the other person. This condition is called balanced versatility.

On the other hand, if one complementary trait is much stronger than the other, an imbalance is created. This imbalance can interfere with a person's success (depending upon the job) and/or happiness.

Imbalances between complementary traits create a psychological rigidity. Where there is an imbalance, the person strongly identifies with one trait and strongly "disowns" its complementary trait. The person considers the identified trait to be "me" and the opposing complementary trait to be "not me". The "not me" trait can be said to be "disowned". The person tends to manifest the valued trait while avoiding the complementary trait. Even though the complementary trait is also a positive trait, the person tends to equate that trait with the negative extreme of that trait. For example, if the person values certainty and disowns openness and reflection, he/she will view open reflection as "wishy-washiness". If he/she values open reflection and disowns certainty, he/she will view certainty as dogmatism. This imbalanced viewpoint creates limitations on the person's behavior and rigidity in the person's attitude.

The more extreme the imbalance between the two complementary traits, the more rigid are a person's behavior and attitudes. When a trait is rigid or fixed, the individual tends to blindly focus on the positive manifestation of that trait. For example, a person who is very frank considers his/her frankness to be a virtue. However, he/she usually fails to notice that without the balancing forces of diplomacy, frankness becomes a vice. Furthermore, when it is not balanced, it indicates that the person automatically exhibits the same behavior pattern over and over, without actually having free choice over his/her behavior. Two strongly opposing forces in the psyche tend to be limiting and often destructive to one's life. In most cases the person is not even aware that these forces are conflicting. By becoming aware of an imbalance, the person can begin to adjust his/her behavior and improvement can begin to occur.

### **Extreme opposites and "flips"**

Any imbalanced trait indicates a fixed or rigid behavior pattern. In every case, the imbalanced trait has an equal and opposite internal psychological force. Usually this force is unconscious and exists in the form of a hidden potential to manifest the "extreme opposite". The person will often not admit to having the

disowned trait and will probably not notice it. However, under stress, the disowned trait will emerge in the person's behavior in its counterproductive form. This is called a "flip". For example, if a person tends to be very helpful and lack assertiveness, he/she will gradually begin to feel that he/she is not getting what he/she needs and that others are unfairly taking advantage. The normal self-sacrificing behavior may flip to the extreme opposite and the person becomes dominating and self-centered.

**There are two types of imbalances:**

- 1) Aggressive imbalances (where the dynamic trait is stronger than the gentle complement), and
- 2) passive imbalances (where the gentle trait is stronger than the dynamic trait).

**Passive imbalances** tend to have a build up and then the person will flip to the extreme opposite. For example, a person with a great deal of diplomacy who also lacks frankness will generally manifest a tactful or even evasive behavior even when direct or frank communication is necessary to resolve a conflict. After a period of withholding frank communications, he/she will suddenly become quite blunt.

In general, **aggressive imbalances** operate slightly differently. The disowned aspect of the aggressive imbalance tends to be an "unconscious constant". It is an unconscious force that tends to operate more continuously rather than occasionally bursting forward. It operates in the background, usually without the person realizing it. For example, a person who is very analytical and lacking in intuition presents a very logical or rational personality. However, there will be an underlying irrational or illogical force. The person may be very superstitious or have an aspect of his/her behavior that defies logic.

Paradox Theory provides a means of understanding complex personality traits without the use of typecasting. By mapping behavioral patterns as mentioned above, insights into the uniqueness of an individual are overreaching assumptions. The relative strengths of various complementary traits are identified and viewed as an entire system rather than as independently operating factors. It is the overall pattern that provides the deepest insight into the individual. The Paradox principles are applied to the pattern formation in order to provide a clear and concise understanding of the patterns.

The following sections describe the paradoxes in detail.

## Paradox #1: Truth Exploring (Opinions)

The Truth Explorer achieves a balance between being Certain and Open/Reflective. He/she is confident in his/her opinions, yet continues to explore different viewpoints and adjust his/her opinions when appropriate. Because the Truth Explorer is Open/Reflective, his/her Certainty does not reach the extreme of being Dogmatic. Because he/she is at least moderately Certain, being Open/Reflective does not reach the extreme of being Inconclusive or “wishy-washy”. The Truth Explorer is completely opposite to Uncertain Disinterest which is neither Certain nor Open/Reflective. These interrelationships are shown in figure 1.

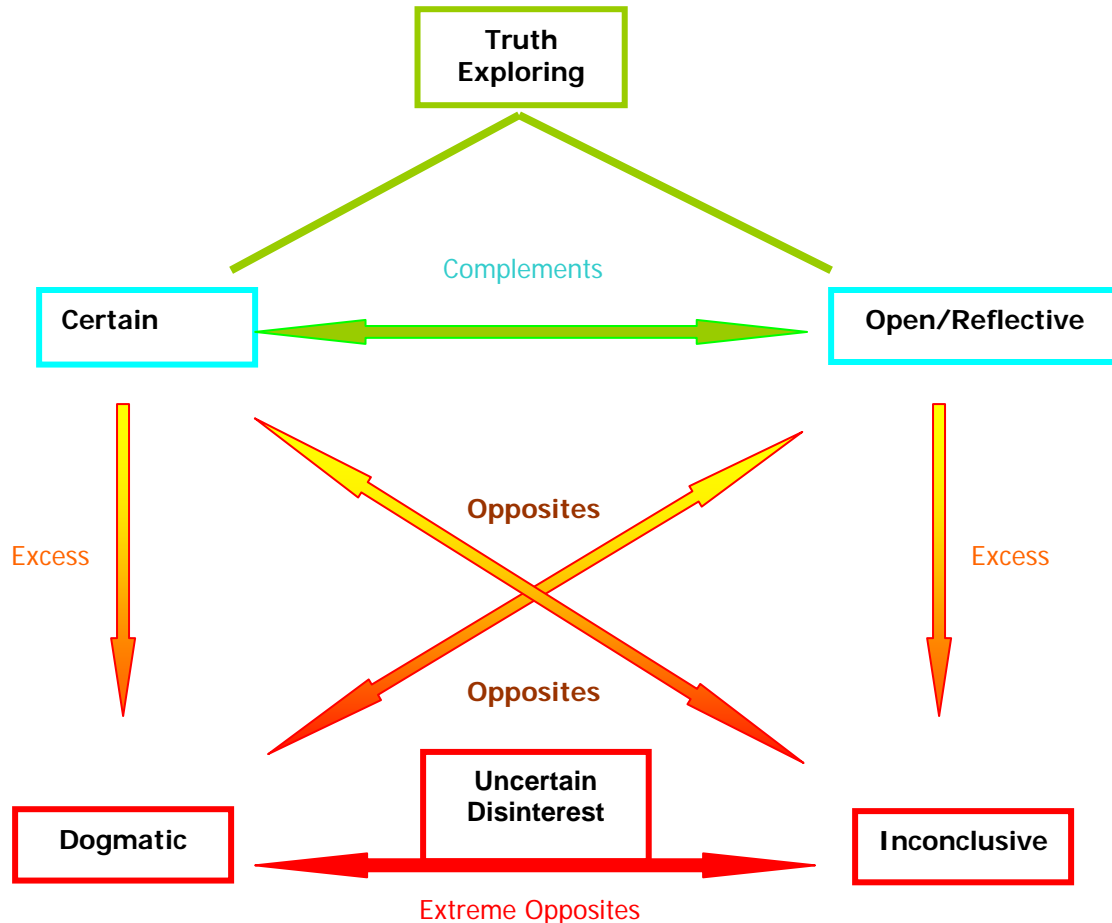
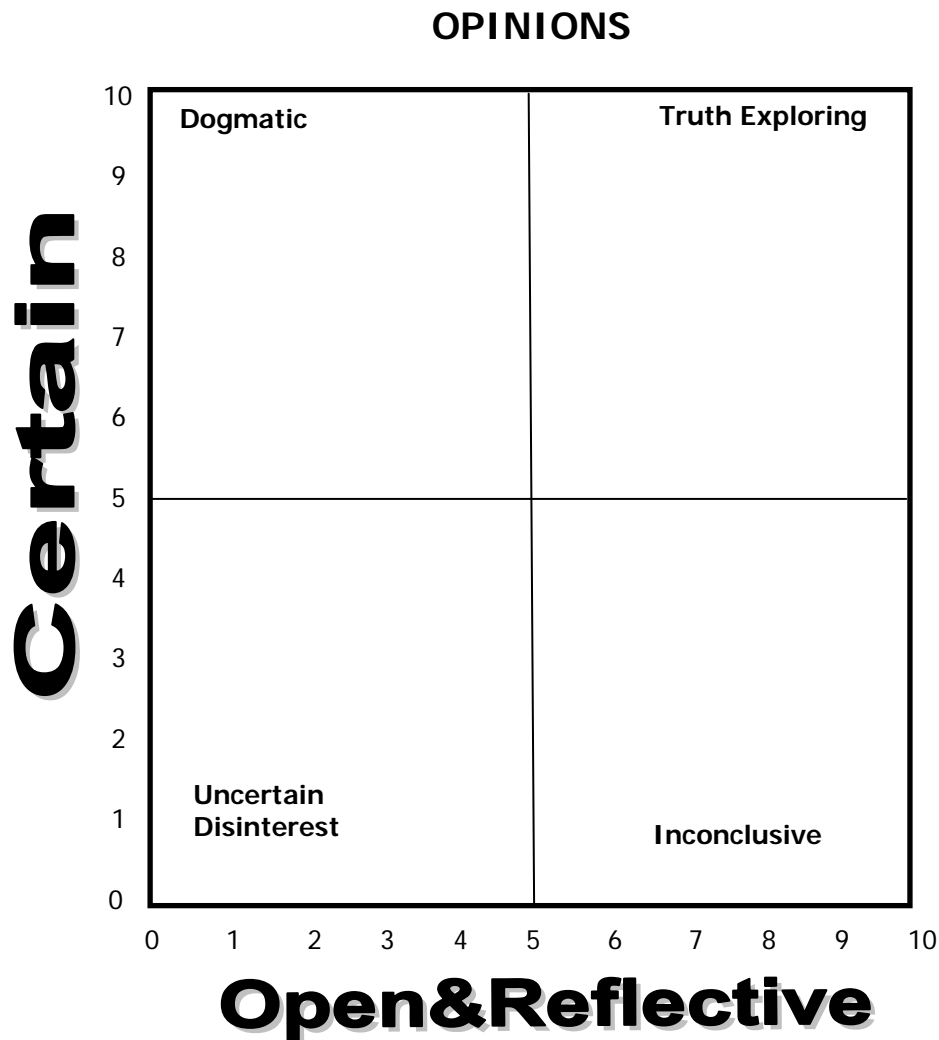


Figure 1 : The paradox “Opinion”.

The proverbs for Truth Exploring are:

“Question everything but be steadfast in following a true principle”.

“Greater knowledge can only be obtained by allowing what you already know to sit in the background while relentlessly pursuing a fresh new way of seeing the issue and being willing to be “wrong” about one’s previous knowledge.”



**CERTAIN:** The tendency to feel confident in one's opinions

**OPEN/REFLECTIVE:** The tendency to reflect on many different viewpoints

*Truth Exploring* (**Balanced Versatility**) -The tendency to explore different viewpoints and formulate conclusions without becoming fixed in one's opinions (High Certain and High Open/Reflective).

*Inconclusive* (**Passive Imbalance**) -The tendency to lack certainty in one's opinions while at the same time being very open to the ideas of others (Low Certain and High Open/reflective).

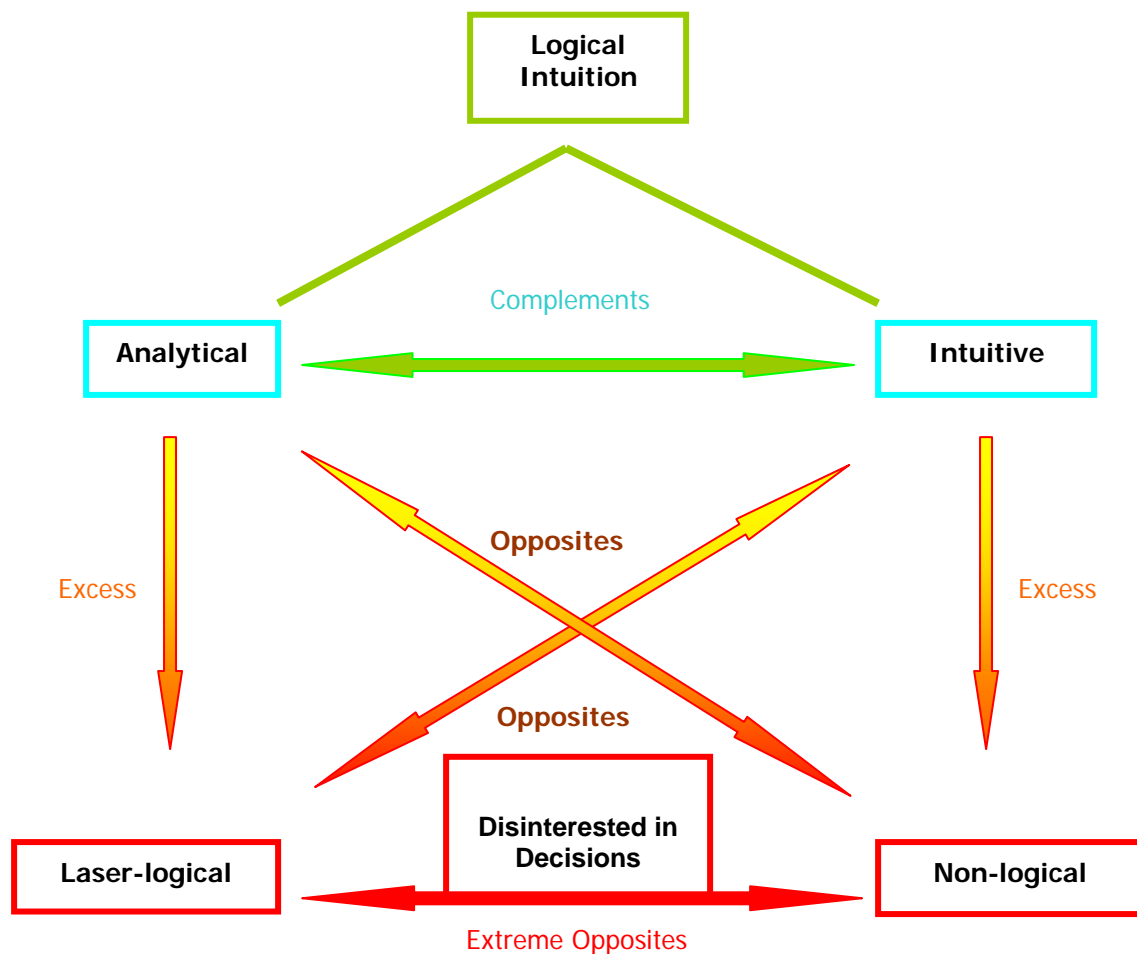
*Dogmatic* (**Aggressive Imbalance**) -The tendency to be certain of one's own opinions while at the same time not open to different ideas (High Certain and Low Open/Reflective).

*Uncertain Disinterest* (**Balanced Deficiency**) - The tendency to lack confidence in one's own opinions while at the same time not reflecting on different ideas and opinions (Low Certain and Low Open/Reflective).

## Paradox #2: Logical Intuition (Decision Approach)

The Logical Intuitive simultaneously makes use of both sides of his/her brain by being both Analytical and Intuitive. He/she avoids the limitations of being narrowly logical (Laser Logic) by learning to explore his/her hunches. He/she also avoids the pitfalls of being Non-logical by using his/her rational mind to evaluate, verify, and explain his/her hunches. Thus, the Logical Intuitive incorporates both the capacities of analysis and intuition in order to make effective decisions. Contrasting the Logical Intuitive is a disinterested decision-maker who is neither Analytical nor Intuitive. The disinterested decision-maker fails to sufficiently investigate issues before making decisions.

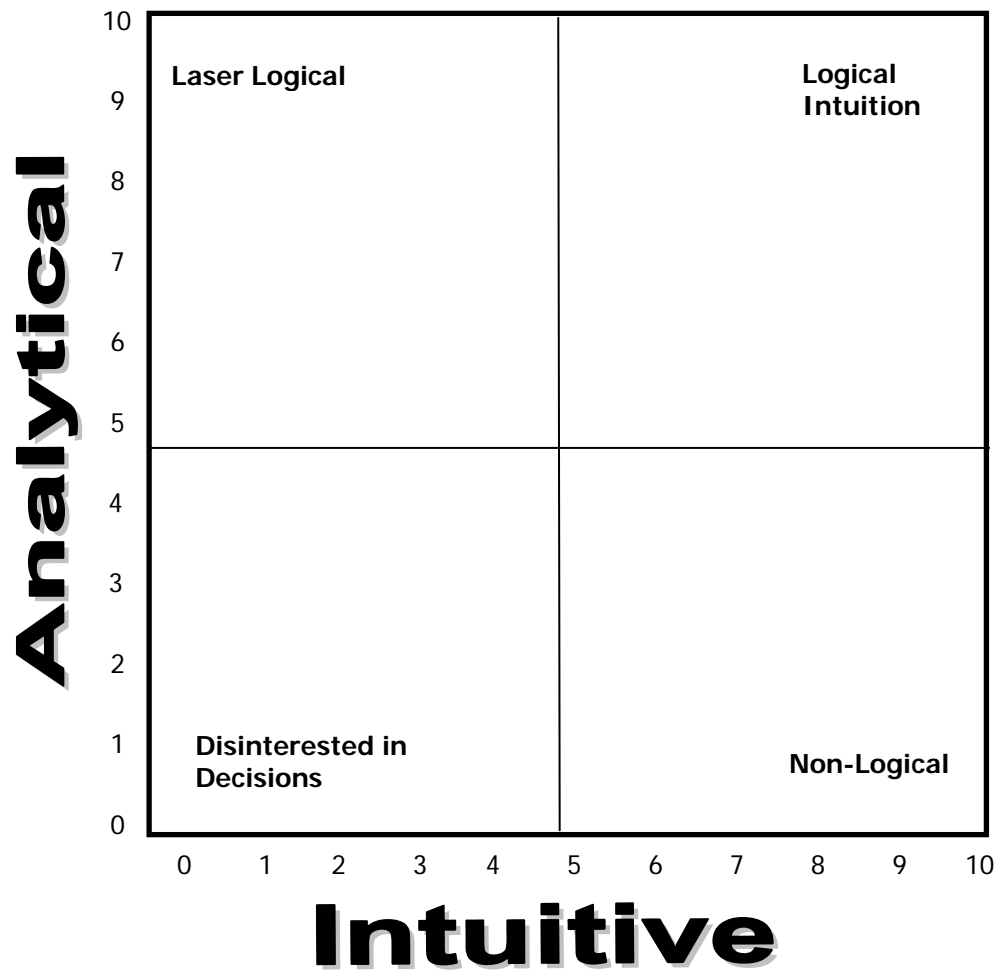
Analysis and Intuition are actually mental powers used to gain understanding and insight. They are not mutually exclusive. The analytical processes use the left half of the brain and the intuitive processes use the right half the brain. Analytical thinking is beneficial for complex problems when logic is required. However, some situations have many unknown (or unknowable) variables and therefore require intuitive decisions. These interrelationships are shown in figure 2.



**Figure 2 : The paradox "Decision Approach".**

The proverb for Logical Intuition is: "Use your logical mind to work out your day to day issues, but use you inner vision to guide your direction."

## DECISION APPROACH



ANALYTICAL: The tendency to logically examine facts and problems (not necessarily analytical ability)

INTUITIVE: The tendency to use "hunches" to help make decisions (not necessarily intuitive capabilities)

*Logical Intuition (Balanced Versatility)* - The tendency to use analysis combined with intuition to solve problems (High Analytical and High Intuitive).

*Non-logical (Passive Imbalance)* - The tendency to rely on intuition without sufficiently analyzing a plan or problem (Low Analytical and High Intuitive).

*Laser Logical (Aggressive Imbalance)* - The tendency to be very analytical while at the same time mistrusting intuition (High Analytical and Low Intuitive).

*Disinterested In Decisions (Balanced Deficiency)* - The tendency to avoid analyzing problems and decisions while at the same time mistrusting one's own intuition (Low Analytical and Low Intuitive).

### Paradox #3: Mindful Courage (Strategic)

Being Mindfully Courageous, one can become a successful entrepreneur. By achieving a balance between Risking and Analyzes Pitfalls, one can successfully manage risks. Mindful Courageous requires calculated risks, and does not over extend the risks by becoming Impulsive. Such balance also prevents one from becoming Cautious by frequently analyzing the pitfalls while being very cautious about risks. Contrary to Mindful Courage is Cautious Inattention, which is neither mindful of pitfalls nor willing to risk.

These interrelationships are shown in figure 3.

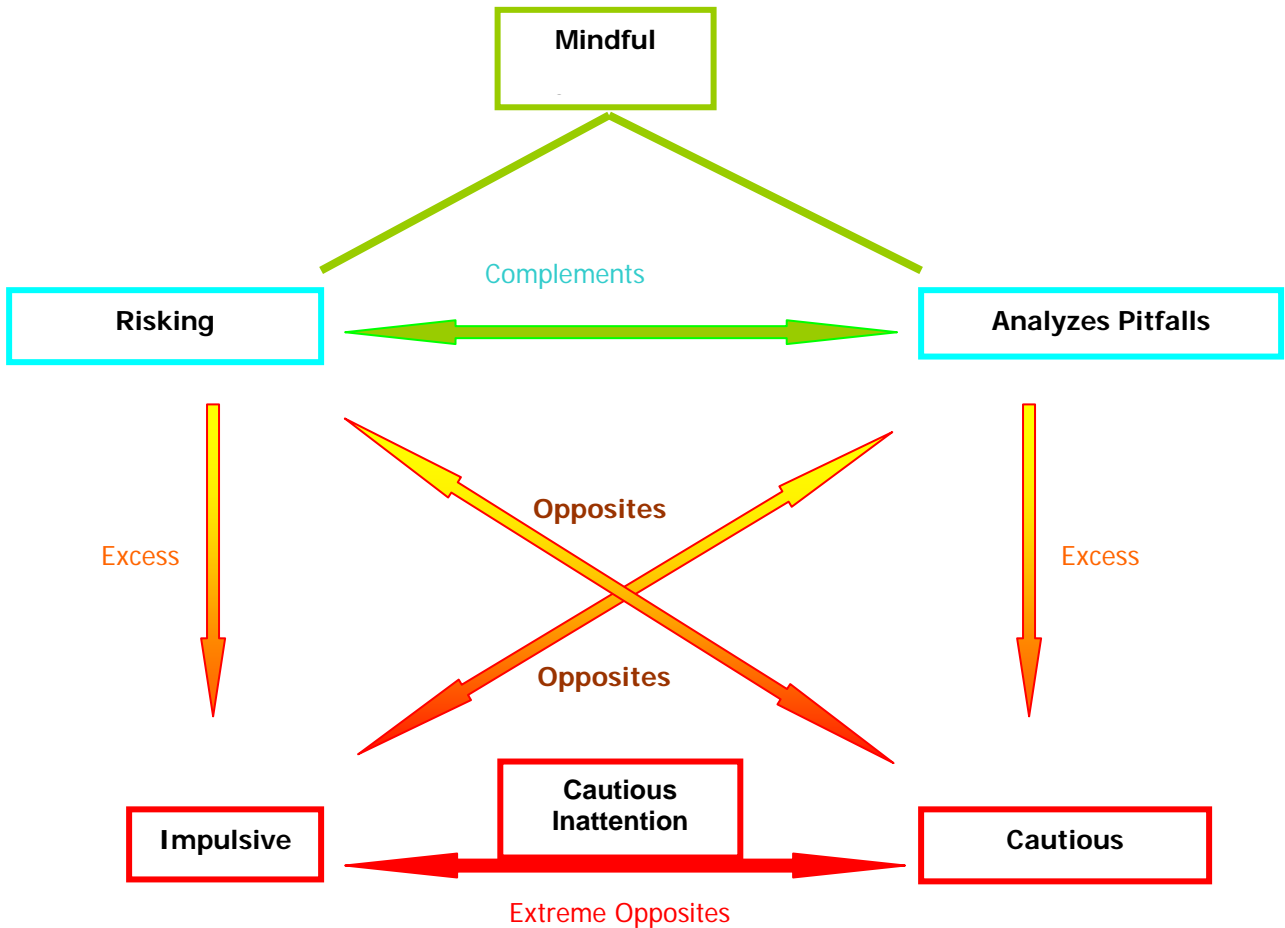
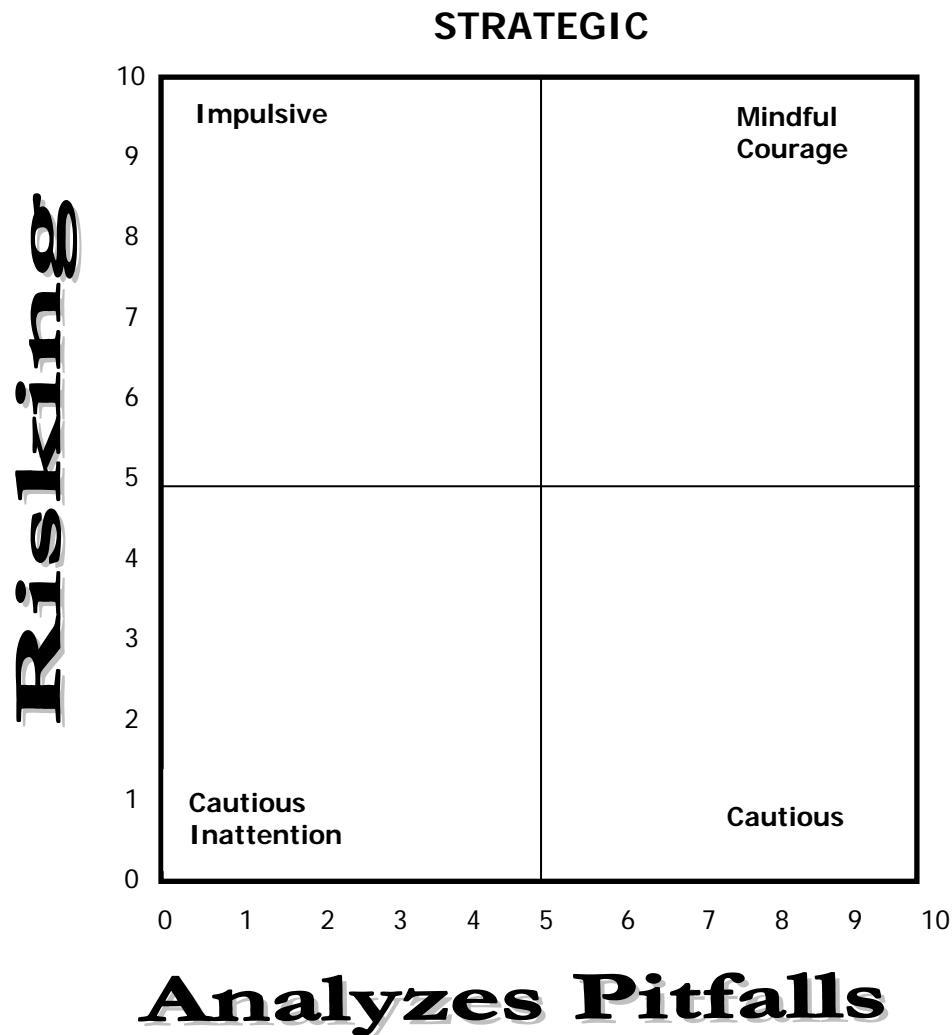


Figure 3 : The paradox "Strategic".

The proverb for Mindful Courage is: "Have the courage to pursue success, but understand and manage your risks."



**RISKING:** The tendency to feel comfortable with business ventures that involve uncertainty

**ANALYZES PITFALLS:** The tendency to scrutinize potential difficulties related to a plan or strategy

*Mindful Courage* (**Balanced Versatility**) - The tendency to take risks while at the same time sufficiently analyzing the potential pitfalls of the plan or strategy (High Risking and High Analyzes Pitfalls).

*Cautious* (**Passive Imbalance**) - The tendency to focus on potential pitfalls of a plan or strategy while being very careful about risks (Low Risking and High Analyzes Pitfalls).

*Impulsive* (**Aggressive Imbalance**) - The tendency to take risks without sufficient analysis of the potential difficulties (High Risking and Low Analyzes Pitfalls).

*Cautious Inattention* (**Balanced Deficiency**) - The tendency to be cautious about risks while at the same time paying little attention to the potential pitfalls of a plan or strategy (Low Risking and Low Analyzes Pitfalls).

### Paradox #4: Accepting Improvement (Self)

The person who has Healthy Self-Esteem values him/herself without becoming arrogant and strives to improve without being self-critical. He/She recognizes that self-improvement is the most important goal, because it is the means of achieving all goals. By valuing self-improvement, his/her self-acceptance does not become arrogant or Defensive. By accepting him/herself, the need to improve does not become Self-Critical. This combination is the mark of genuine self-esteem. Through honest self-examination, he/she understands and acknowledges his/her weaknesses as well as strengths. Through deeply understanding and accepting him/herself, he/she is able to understand and value others. In contrast, the Internally Conflicted person neither accepts him/herself nor tries to improve himself/herself. These interrelationships are shown in figure 4.

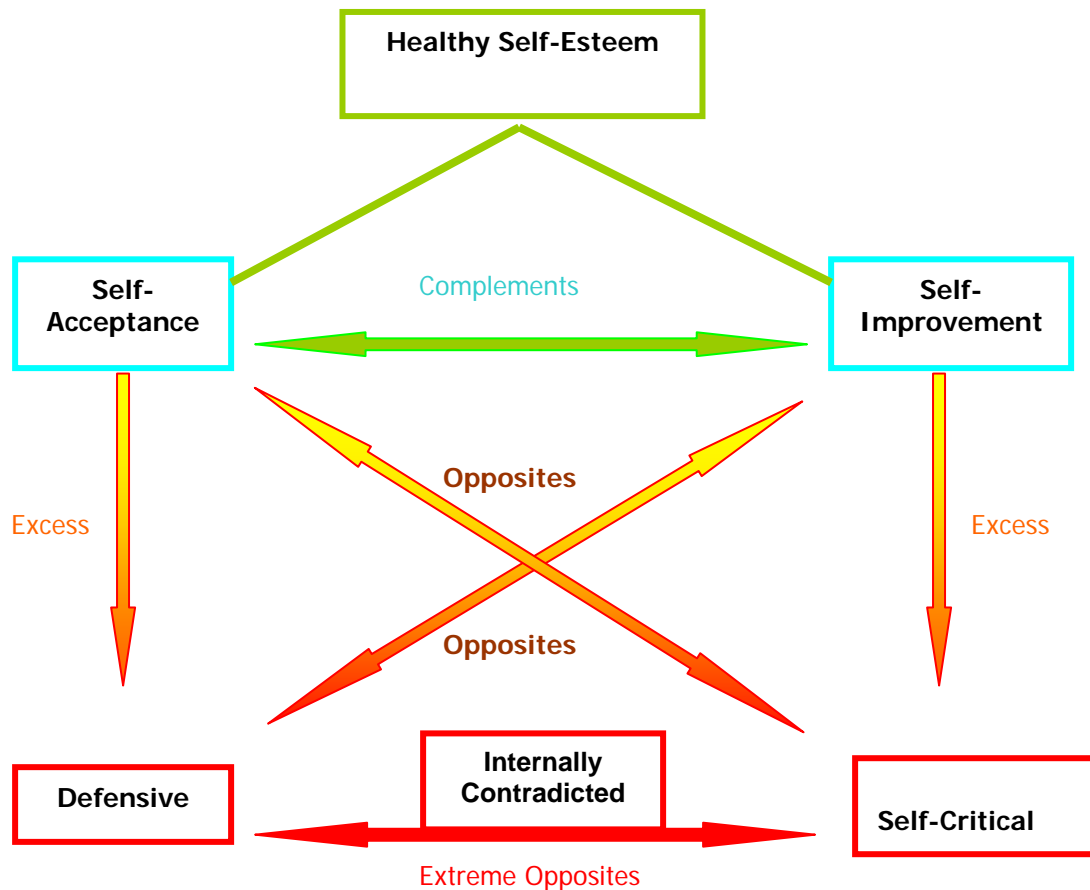


Figure 4 : The paradox "Self"

The proverbs for Healthy Self – Esteem are:

"Although I have many good qualities, my life and relationships need continuous improvement."

"True character is developed through self-inquiry which ultimately leads to discovering the full impact of one's weaknesses and faults as well as the revelation of one's grandeur."

"A person of self-dignity listens carefully to his/her critics and adjusts him/herself to allow his/her splendor to shine forth even more brightly."



SELF-ACCEPTANCE: The tendency to like oneself ("I'm O.K. the way I am")

SELF-IMPROVEMENT: The tendency to attempt to develop or better oneself

*Healthy Self-Esteem (Balanced Versatility)* - The tendency to accept oneself while at the same time trying to improve oneself (High Self-Acceptance and High Self-Improvement).

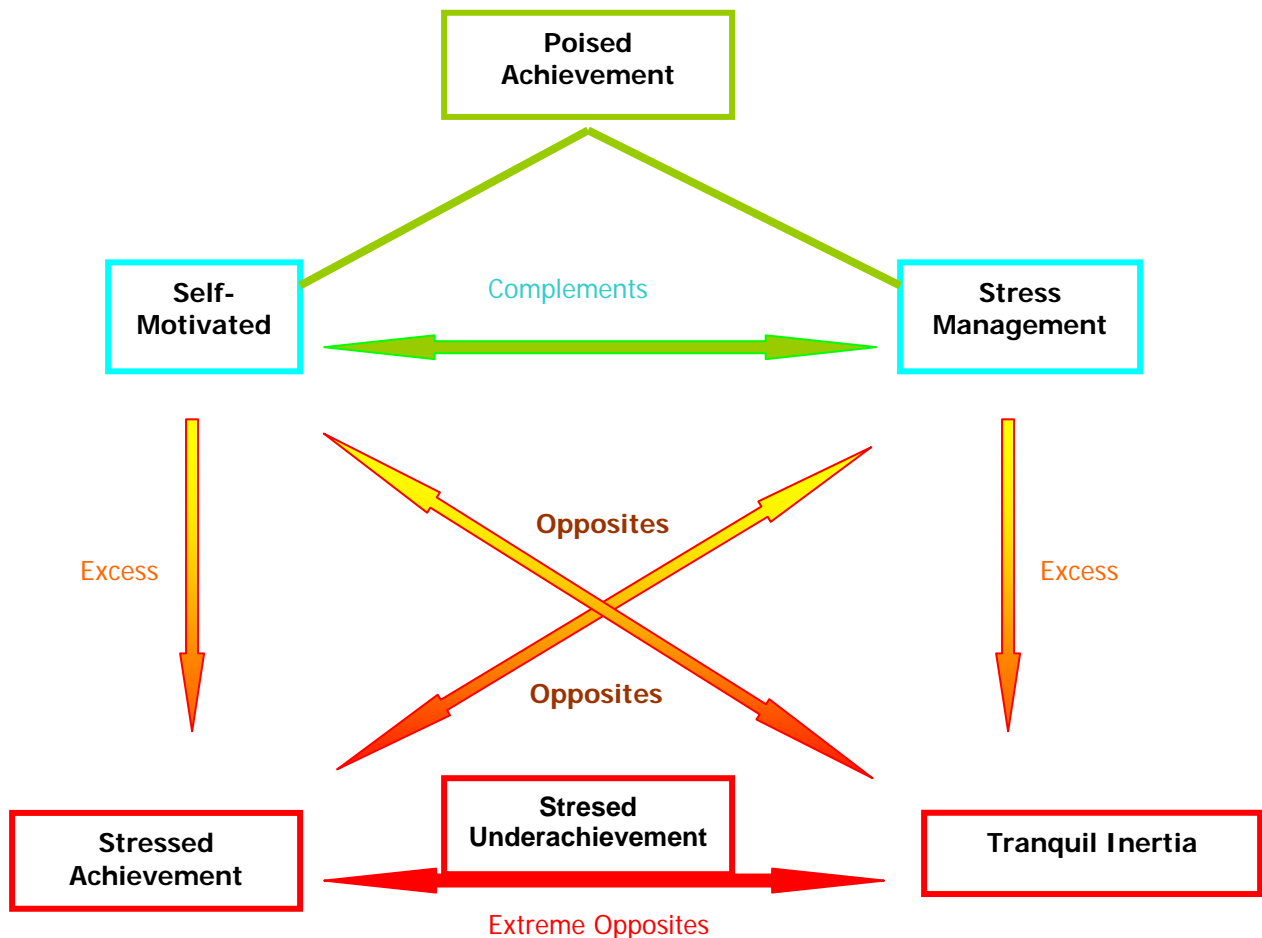
*Self-Critical (Passive Imbalance)* - Disliking oneself in the context of self-improvement (Low Self-Acceptance and High Self-Improvement).

*Defensive (Aggressive Imbalance)* - The tendency to focus on self-acceptance while avoiding self-improvement (The attitude "I'm O.K. and I don't need to improve") - (High Self-Acceptance and Low Self-Improvement).

*Internally Contradicted (Balanced Deficiency)* - The tendency to lack self-acceptance while at the same time lacking desire to improve oneself (Low Self-Acceptance and Low Self-Improvement).

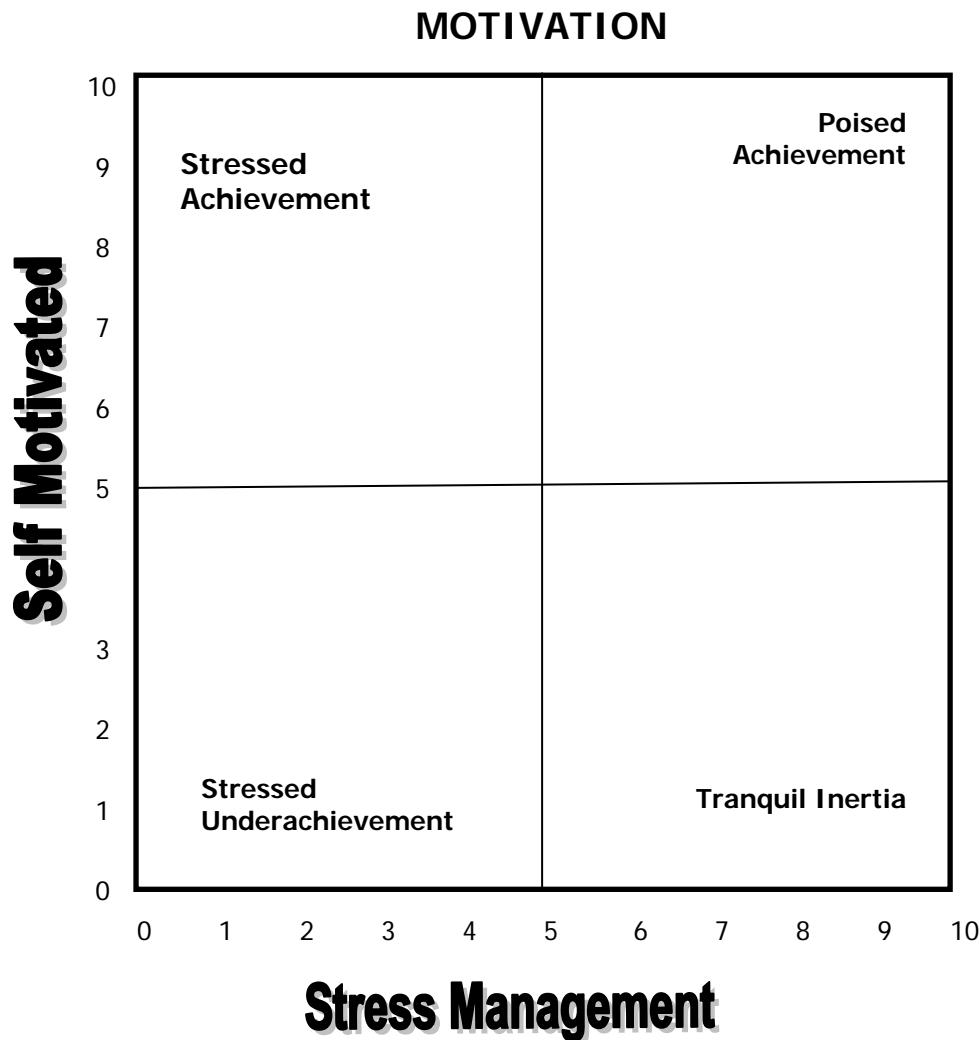
## Paradox #5: Poised Achievement (Motivation)

The Poised Achiever does not settle for superficial success. He/she knows that in order to enjoy success he/she must have quality of life. He/she knows the art of Stress Management and consequently enjoys the process of reaching the goal as much as attainment of the goal itself. Unlike the Stressed Achiever, the Poised Achiever does not become overly stressed, neglect his/her family, or sacrifice a balanced life in order to grasp for material success. The Poised Achiever knows that without such balance, happiness and true quality of life cannot be achieved. On the other hand, the Poised Achiever also knows that doing something useful gives him/her a sense of purpose and fulfillment and that accomplishment is fulfilling. Unlike Tranquil Inertia which is stressed and unmotivated, the Poised Achiever accepts challenges and is enthusiastic about meaningful goals. In sharp contrast to Poised Achievement, Tranquil Inertia does not lead to productivity or happiness. These interrelationships are shown in figure 5.



**Figure 5 : The paradox "Motivation".**

The proverb for Poised Achievement is: "Diligent work benefits your life and your character provided you do not sacrifice your health and well being."



**SELF-MOTIVATED:** The drive to achieve including taking initiative, wanting challenge, and being enthusiastic about goals

**STRESS MANAGEMENT:** The tendency to be relaxed and manage stress well when it occurs

*Poised Achievement* (**Balanced Versatility**) - The tendency to be highly self-motivated without becoming tense or easily stressed (High Self-Motivated and High Stress Management).

*Tranquil Inertia* (**Passive Imbalance**) - The tendency to be relaxed and easy-going while at the same time lacking in self-motivation (Low Self-Motivated and High Stress Management).

*Stressed Achievement* (**Aggressive Imbalance**) - The tendency to be very achievement oriented while at the same time being tense and/or having difficulty managing stress (High Self-Motivated and Low Stress Management).

*Stressed Underachievement* (**Balanced Deficiency**) - The tendency to lack achievement orientation while at the same time being tense and/or having difficulty dealing with stress (Low Self-Motivated and Low Stress Management).

## Paradox #6: Compassionate Enforcing (Driving)

The Compassionate Enforcer is able to be strict with others while at the same time keeping an open heart. As a result of such warmth, others are more comfortable complying with the rules. Being willing to enforce the rules and at the same time having Warmth and Empathy, the Compassionate Enforcer is an excellent coach. The Compassionate Enforcer avoids being Harsh (Enforcing without Warmth/Empathy) and consequently can enforce necessary rules while maintaining good working relationships. Contrary to the Permissive person (Warmth/Empathy without Enforcing), the Compassionate Enforcer is willing to enforce rules even when other people don't like it. The Compassionate Enforcer is opposite to Cold Permissiveness (neither Warm nor Enforcing). These interrelationships are shown in figure 6.

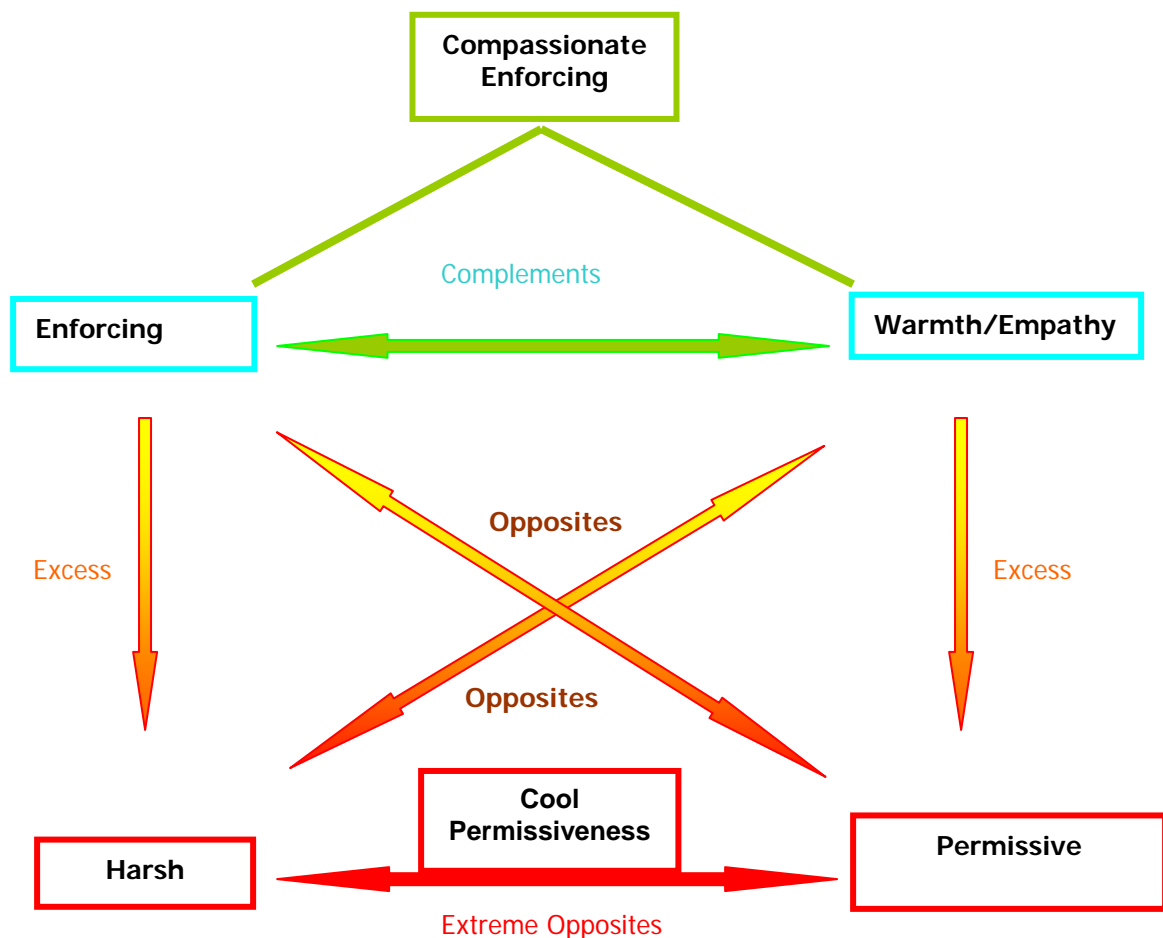
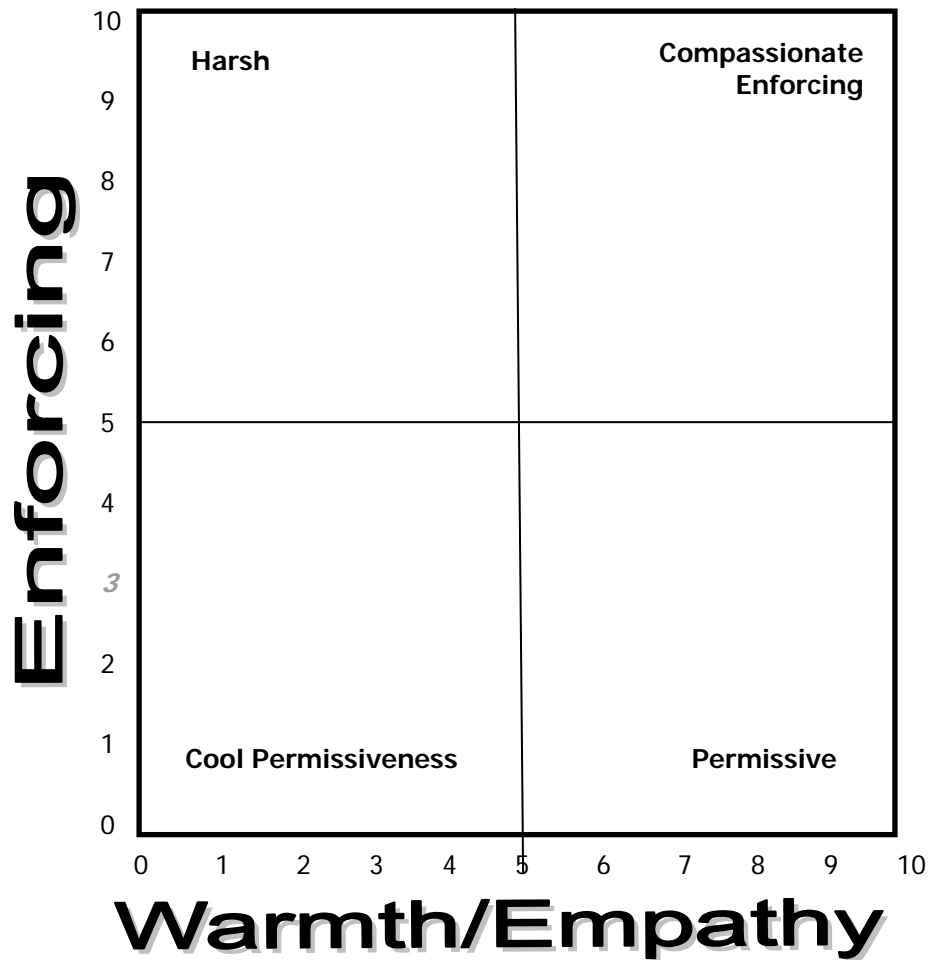


Figure 6 : The paradox "Driving".

The proverb for Compassionate Enforcing is: "Only a person with a kind heart can administer discipline that is beneficial to others."

## DRIVING



**ENFORCING:** The tendency to insist upon necessary rules being followed

**WARMTH/EMPATHY:** The tendency to express positive feelings and affinity

*Compassionate Enforcing (Balanced Versatility)* - The tendency to enforce necessary rules with compassion (High Enforcing and High Warmth/Empathy).

*Permissive (Passive Imbalance)* – The tendency to be overly empathetic, failing to enforce necessary rules or make necessary corrections to subordinates' behavior (Low Enforcing and High Warmth/Empathy).

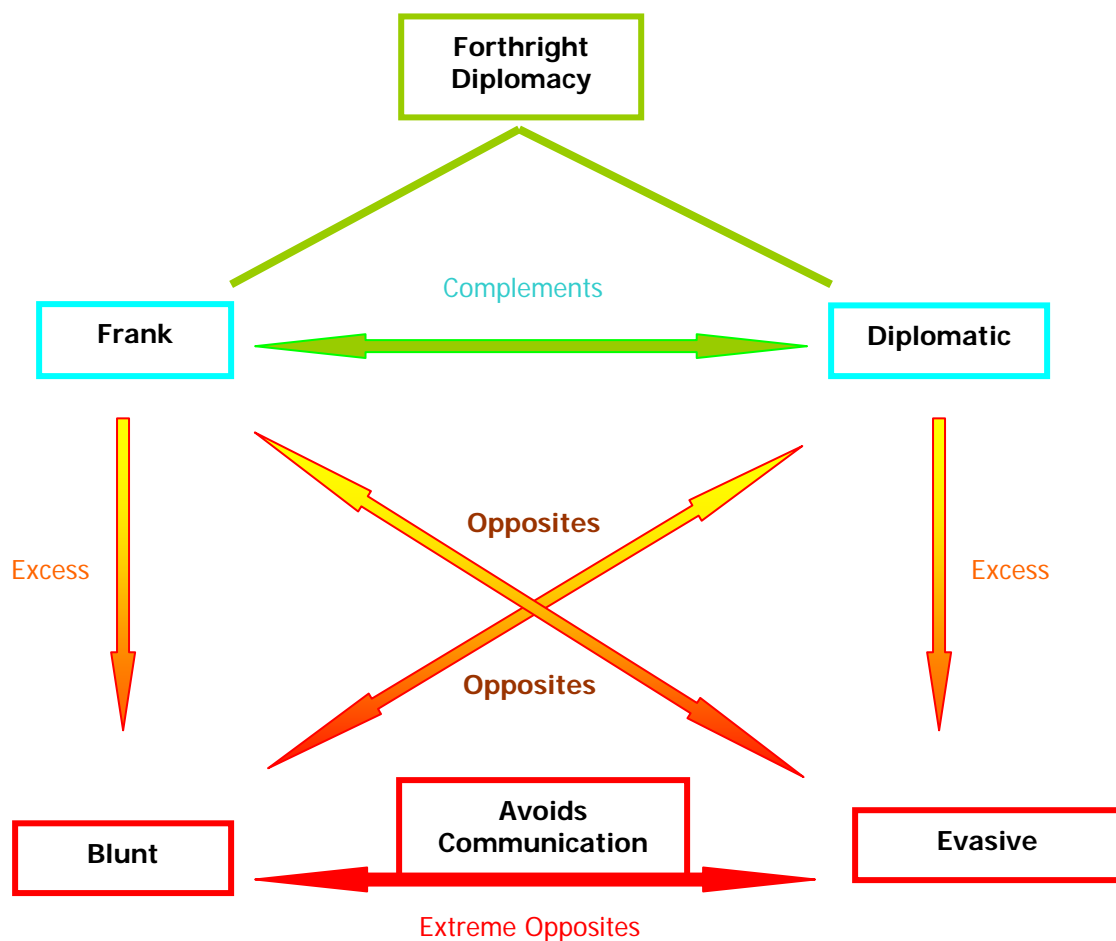
*Harsh (Aggressive Imbalance)* – The tendency to be overly strict or punitive when enforcing rules and procedures (High Enforcing and Low Warmth/Empathy).

*Cool Permissiveness (Balanced Deficiency)* - The tendency to lack warmth while at the same time avoiding enforcing necessary rules (Low Enforcing and Low Warmth/Empathy).

## Paradox #7: Forthright Diplomacy (Communication)

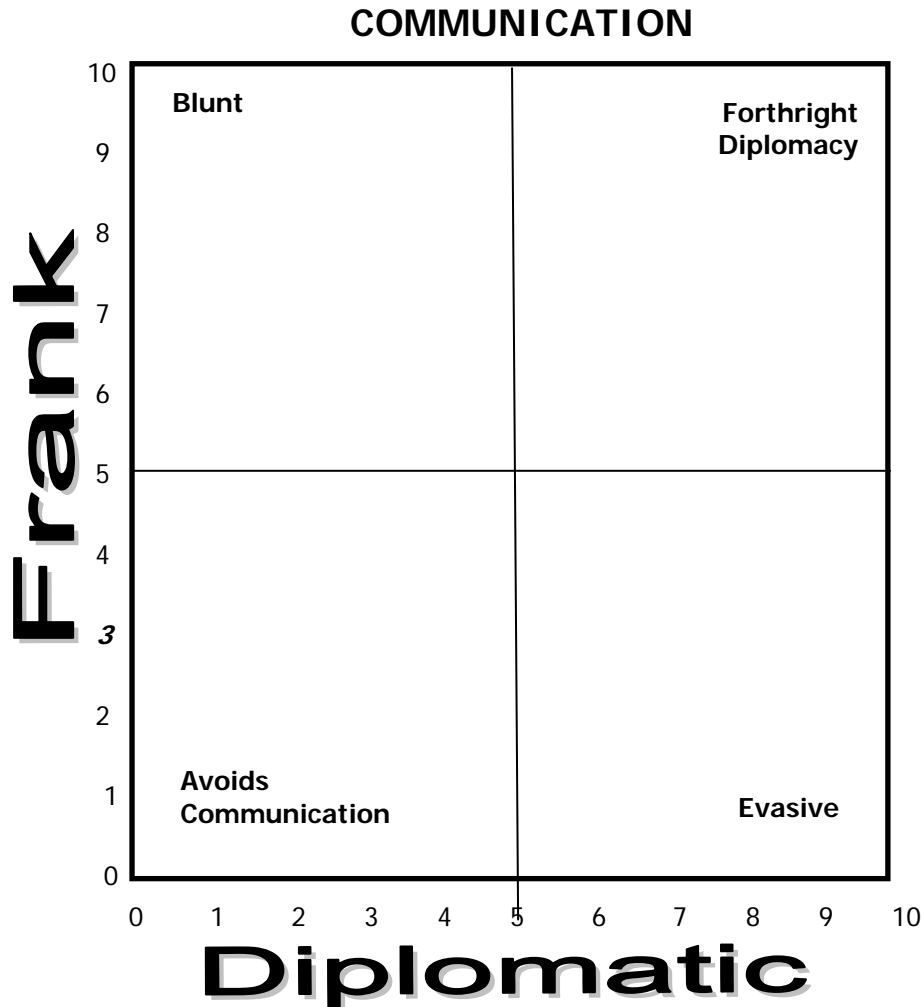
The Forthright Diplomat has the special ability to be direct and straightforward while at the same time being tactful. By being both Frank and Diplomatic, he/she can develop good communication with colleagues. Particularly in everyday working relationships, the Forthright Diplomat is more able to maintain a positive and productive interaction. This ability helps to keep a clear working relationship, free from built-up misunderstandings and resentments. The Forthright Diplomat does not create problems like the Blunt person who says what he/she thinks without sufficient consideration about how others feel. On the other hand, the Forthright Diplomat also does not become like the Evasive person who is tactful to the point that others don't receive the point.

An Ineffective Communicator lacks both diplomacy and frankness. Such a person creates many misunderstandings with others by lacking the necessary communication skills to establish and maintain positive relationships. These interrelationships are shown in figure 7.



**Figure 7 : The paradox "Communication".**

The proverb for Forthright Diplomacy is: "To build cooperative relationships with others, be respectful of others' self esteem yet authentic in your communications."



**FRANK:** The tendency to be straightforward, direct, to the point and forthright

**DIPLOMATIC:** The tendency to state things in a tactful manner

*Forthright Diplomacy* (**Balanced Versatility**) – The tendency to be forthright and respectful at the same time (High Frank and High Diplomatic).

*Evasive* (**Passive Imbalance**) – The tendency to be tactful without being sufficiently direct (Low Frank and High Diplomatic).

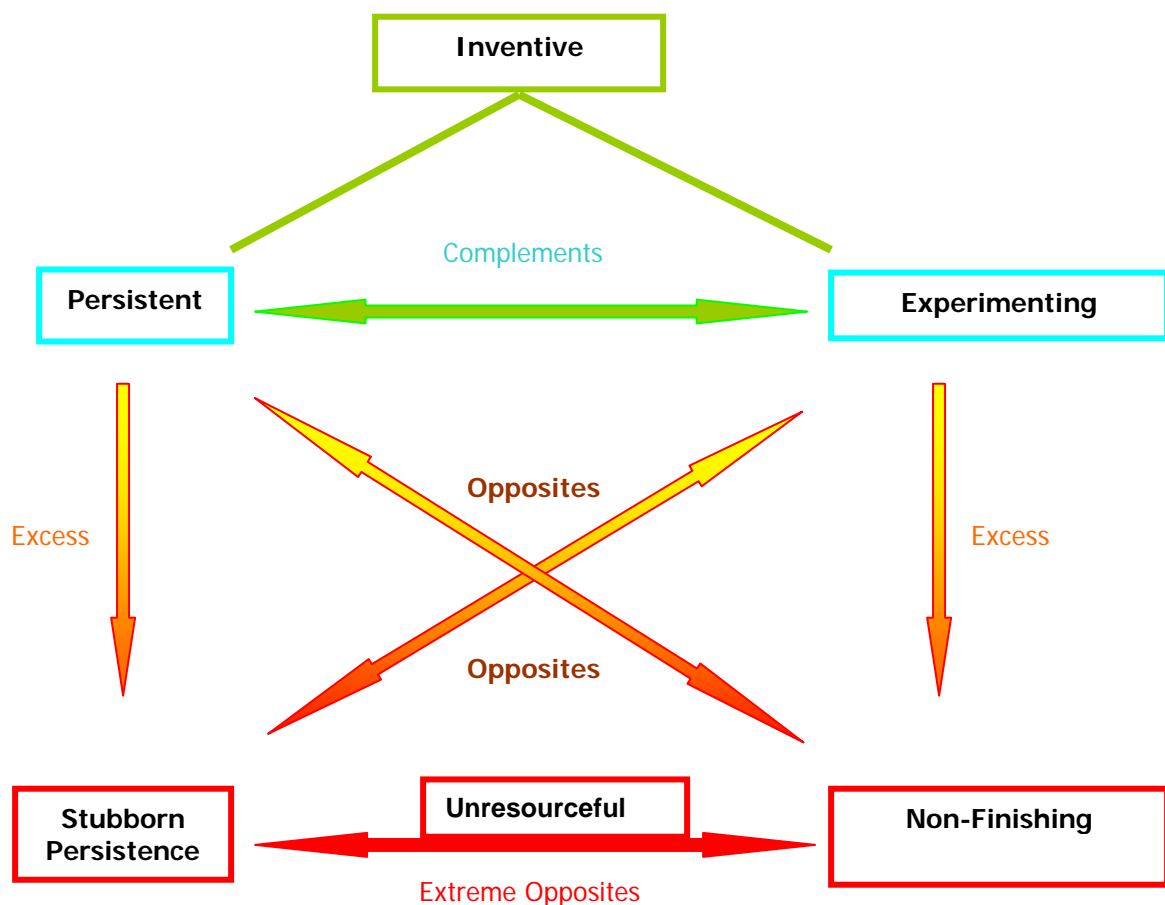
*Blunt* (**Aggressive Imbalance**) – The tendency to be frank or direct while lacking in diplomacy or tact (High Frank and Low Diplomatic).

*Avoids Communication* (**Balanced Deficiency**) – The tendency to lack frankness as well as diplomacy (Low Frank and Low Diplomatic).

## Paradox #8: Inventive (Innovation)

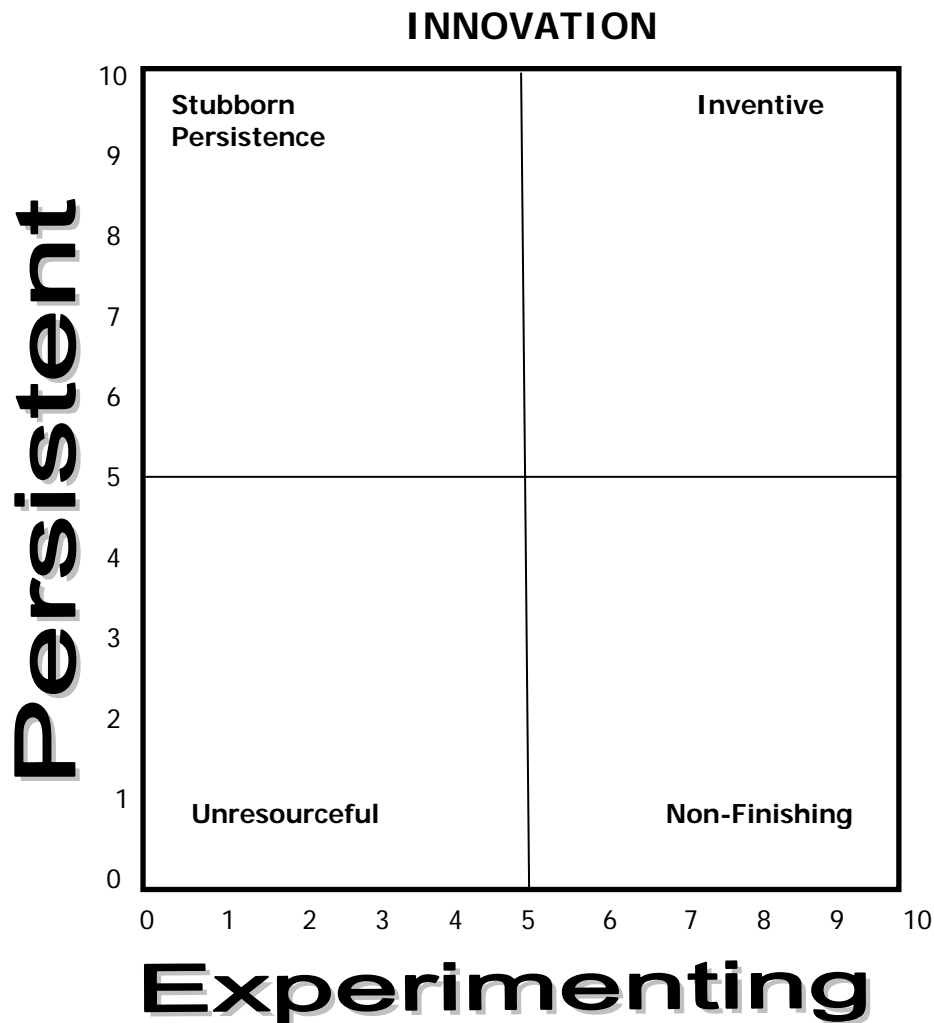
The Inventive person has two important traits that fulfill progress. He/she is always thinking of new ways to do things while at the same time persevering when faced with obstacles. Since most innovations take Experimentation as well a great deal of Persistence, the Inventive person is likely to produce original ideas and/or inventions. The combination of determined focus on a particular goal and the willingness to experiment with many different ideas enables the Inventive person to innovate more effectively than others who do not share these combined traits. Unlike the person with Stubborn Persistence, the Inventive person does not obstinately persist with an unworkable solution. Rather, the Innovator searches for a different way to accomplish the same goal. The Inventive person also differs from the Non-finisher who lacks persistence and changes to a different goal when running into obstacles. The Non-finisher has many ideas but little follow through to complete those ideas. In stark contrast to the Inventive person, the person who lacks Persistence as well as lacks Experimenting is Unresourceful.

These interrelationships are shown in figure 7.



**Figure 8 : The paradox "Innovation".**

The proverb for Innovation is: "The key to invention is to have focused determination while letting the imagination run wild".



**PERSISTENT:** The tendency to be tenacious despite encountering significant obstacles

**EXPERIMENTING:** The tendency to try new things and new ways of doing things

***Inventive (Balanced Versatility)*** – The tendency to experiment with different ways of doing something while at the same time maintaining focus on the desired objective or result (High Persistent and High Experimenting).

***Non-finishing (Passive Imbalance)*** - The tendency to experiment with many different things without persisting in a single direction (Low Persistent and High Experimenting).

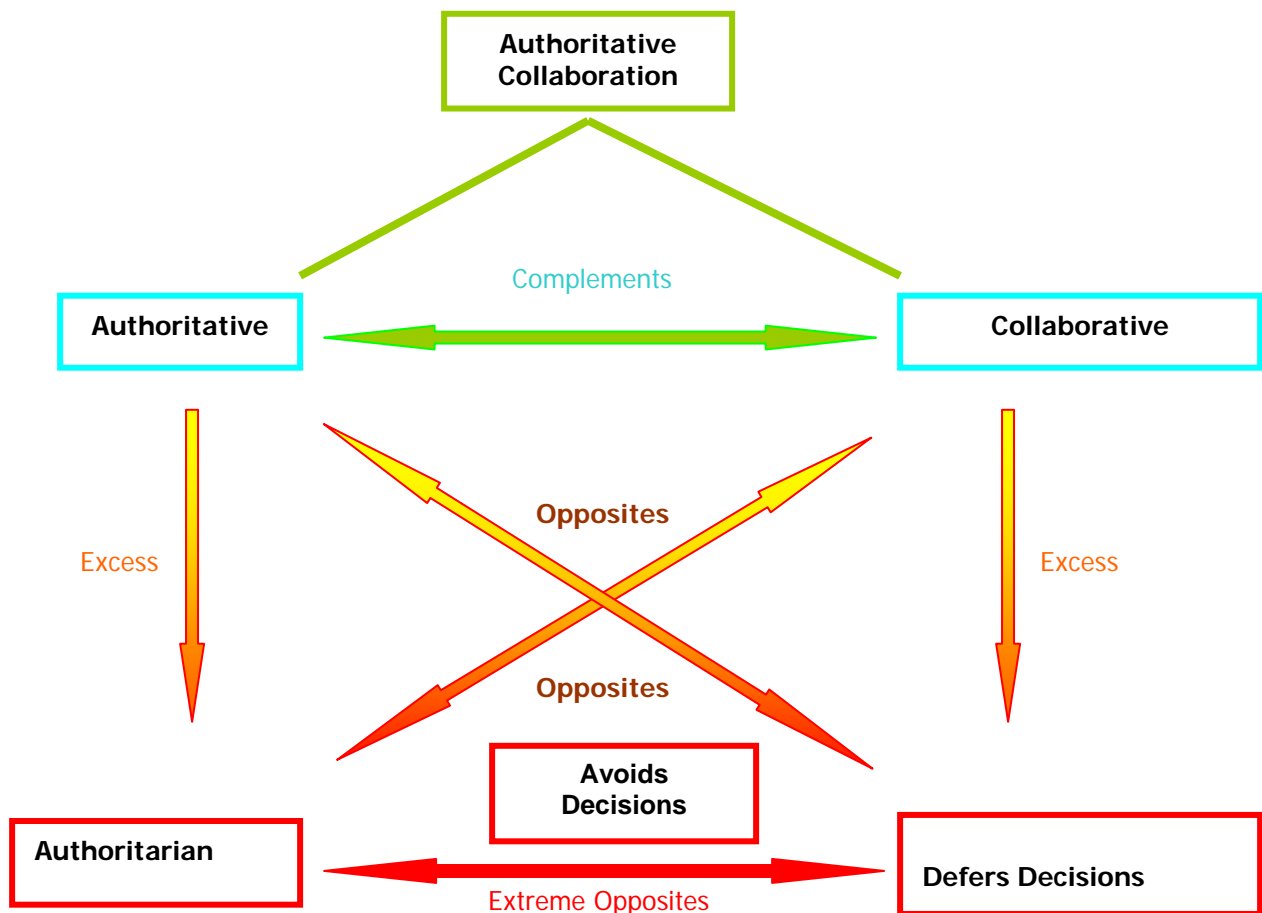
***Stubborn Persistence (Aggressive Imbalance)*** – The tendency to tenaciously pursue the same course of action without experimenting with different ways of accomplishing the objective. (Low Persistent and High Experimenting).

***Unresourceful (Balanced Deficiency)*** - The tendency to lack persistence as well as a desire for trying new things (Low Persistent and Low Experimenting).

## Paradox #9: Authoritative Collaboration (Delegation)

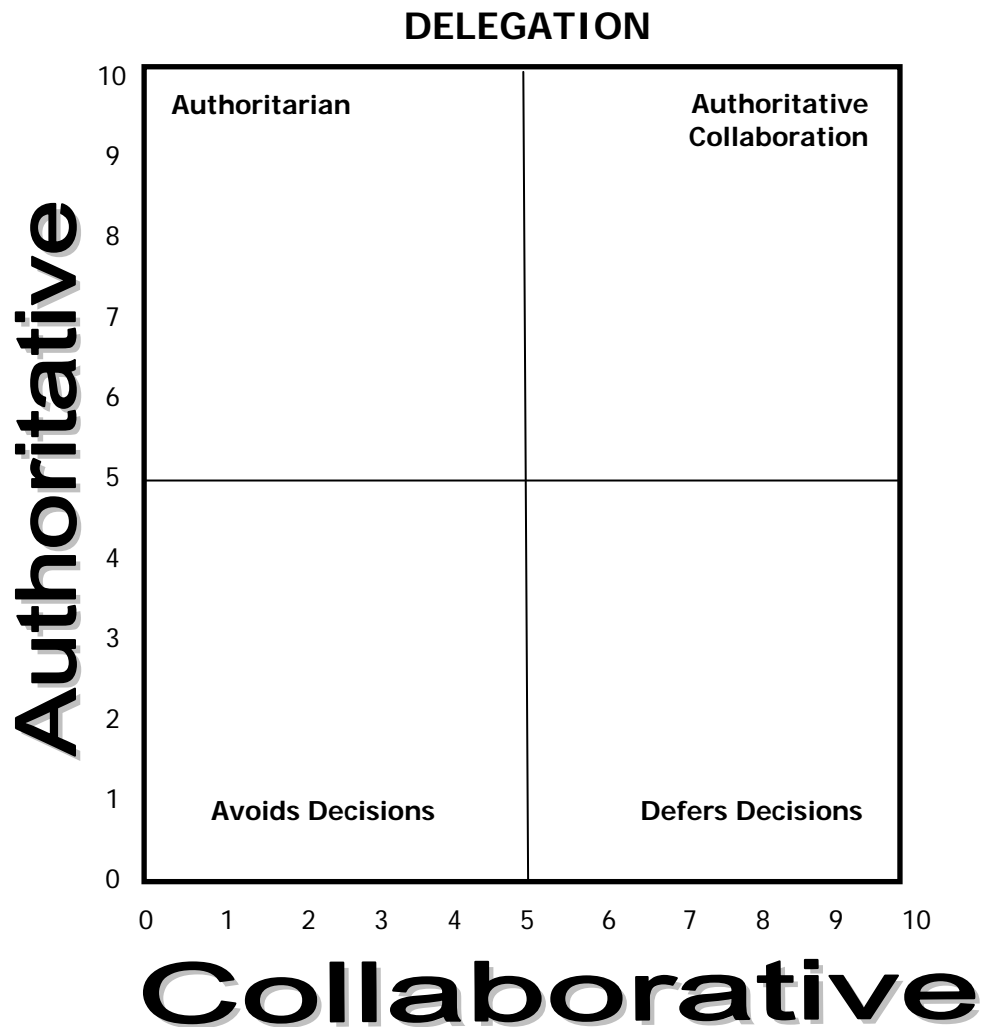
The Authoritative Collaborator allows others to participate in decisions, yet is willing to take full responsibility for decisions. Even though the Authoritative Collaborator takes responsibility for decisions, he/she values the input and participation from others. Such involvement nearly always generates better decisions. In addition, after the decision is made, others are more motivated to implement the decisions. The Authoritative Collaborator avoids the ego trap of being Authoritarian (over-controlling) insisting on sole control of decisions. On the other hand, the Authoritative Collaborator is also unlike the person who worries about being blamed for the outcome of decisions and thus Defers Decisions.

The Authoritative Collaborator is a natural when it comes to delegation. His/her participative style enables him/her to gently guide the direction of subordinates while maintaining responsibility. This natural tendency creates a greater involvement from everyone. When a task is begun, people feel it is their own idea. When the task is complete they feel it was their project. In direct contrast to the Authoritative Collaborator, the person who Avoids Decisions neither takes responsibility for decisions, nor consults with others when making decisions. These interrelationships are shown in figure 9.



**Figure 9 : The paradox "Delegation".**

The proverb for Authoritative Collaboration is: "Never hesitate to take counsel from appropriate people, but always take full responsibility for your own decisions".



**AUTHORITATIVE:** The desire for decision-making authority and the willingness to accept decision-making responsibility

**COLLABORATIVE:** The tendency to collaborate with others when making decisions

*Authoritative Collaboration* (**Balanced Versatility**) – The tendency to take responsibility for decisions while at the same time allowing others to genuinely participate in the decision-making process (High Authoritative and High Collaborative).

*Defers Decisions* (**Passive Imbalance**) – The tendency to avoid making decisions by referring them to others (Low Authoritative and High Collaborative).

*Authoritarian* (**Aggressive Imbalance**) – The tendency to make decisions without collaborating with others (High Authoritative and Low Collaborative).

*Avoids Decisions* (**Balanced Deficiency**) – The tendency to avoid decision-making authority while at the same time avoiding making decisions jointly with others (Low Authoritative and Low Collaborative).

## Paradox #10: Mutual Help (Power)

Mutual Help requires fairness and sincerity and creates win-win situations with others. By expressing one's own needs while at the same time seeking to understand and respond to the needs of others, Mutual Help can develop positive and enduring relationships. By being Helpful, he/she avoids the trap of being overly assertive and thus becoming Dominating or self-centered. By being Assertive with one's own needs, he/she avoids being excessively Helpful or Self-Sacrificing. The Mutual Help is completely different from the Needs Avoidance, which neither responds to other's needs nor expresses one's own.

These interrelationships are shown in figure 10.

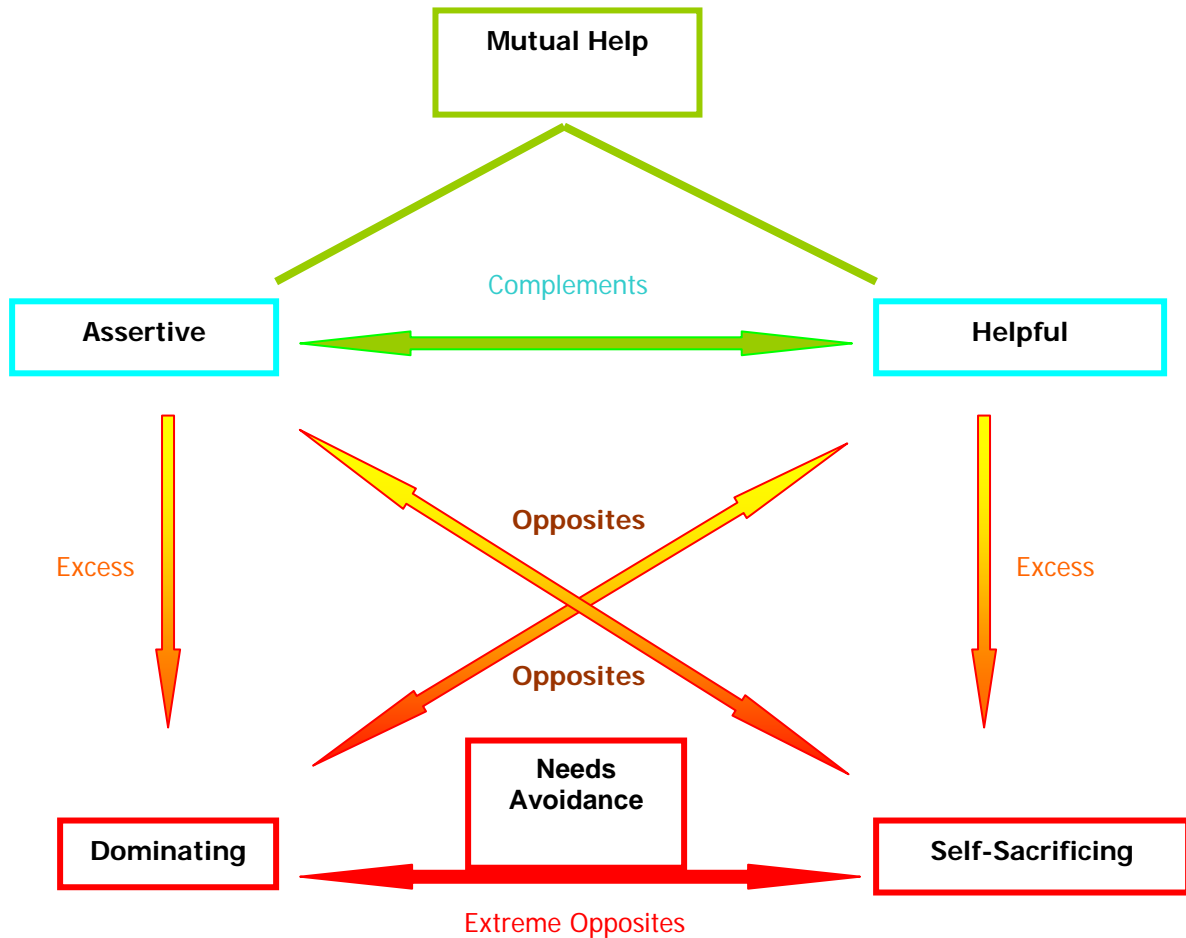
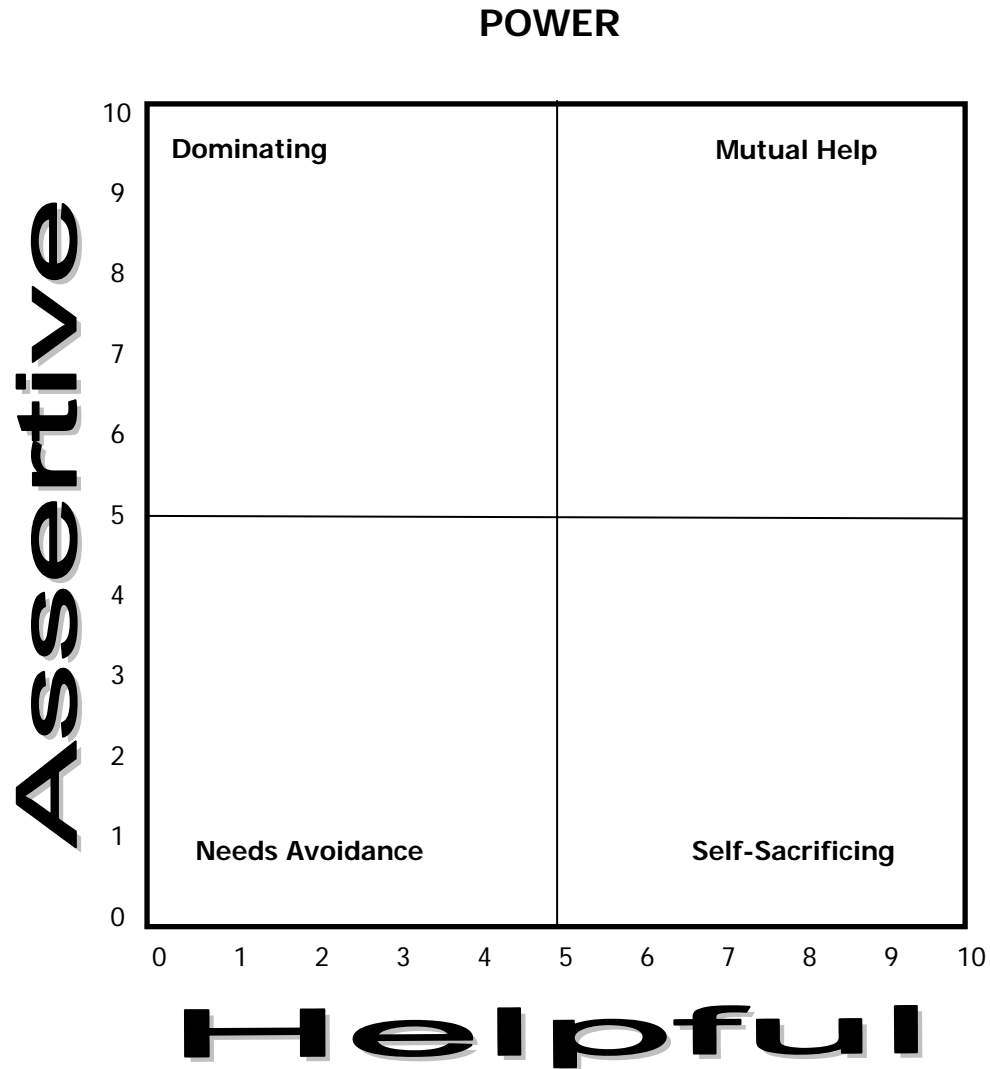


Figure 10 : The paradox "Power".

The proverb for Mutual Help is: "Enduring and positive relationships are a result of meeting mutual needs."



**ASSERTIVE:** The tendency to put forward personal wants and needs

**HELPFUL:** The tendency to respond to others' needs and assist or support others to achieve their goals

*Mutual Help* (**Balanced Versatility**) – The tendency to pursue solutions that are beneficial to all parties concerned (High Assertive and High Helpful).

*Self-Sacrificing* (**Passive Imbalance**) – The tendency to respond to others' needs at the expense of one's own needs (Low Assertive and High Helpful).

*Dominating* (**Aggressive Imbalance**) – The tendency to be assertive with one's own needs while failing to respond to other people's needs (High Assertive and Low Helpful).

*Needs Avoidance* (**Balanced Deficiency**) – The tendency to lack assertiveness as well as helpfulness (Low Assertive and Low Helpful).

## Paradox #11: Flexible Organizing (Organization)

The Flexible Organizer creates order yet is easily adaptable to change. When circumstances change, the Flexible Organizer adjusts to meet the new requirements by creating a different order. As a result, he/she is able to achieve efficiency due to a balance of structure and flexibility. By creating just the right kind of structure and the right amount of structure the Flexible Organizer is effective. Such fluid orderliness enables others to work efficiently without feeling confined or restricted. By remaining flexible, the Flexible Organizer avoids overemphasizing orderliness and thus becoming Rigidly Organized or compulsive about being organized. By keeping organized, the Flexible Organizer avoids being so flexible that he/she becomes Scattered. In direct contrast to the Flexible Organizer, the person who is Rigidly Disorganized is neither organized nor adaptive to change.

These interrelationships are shown in figure 11.

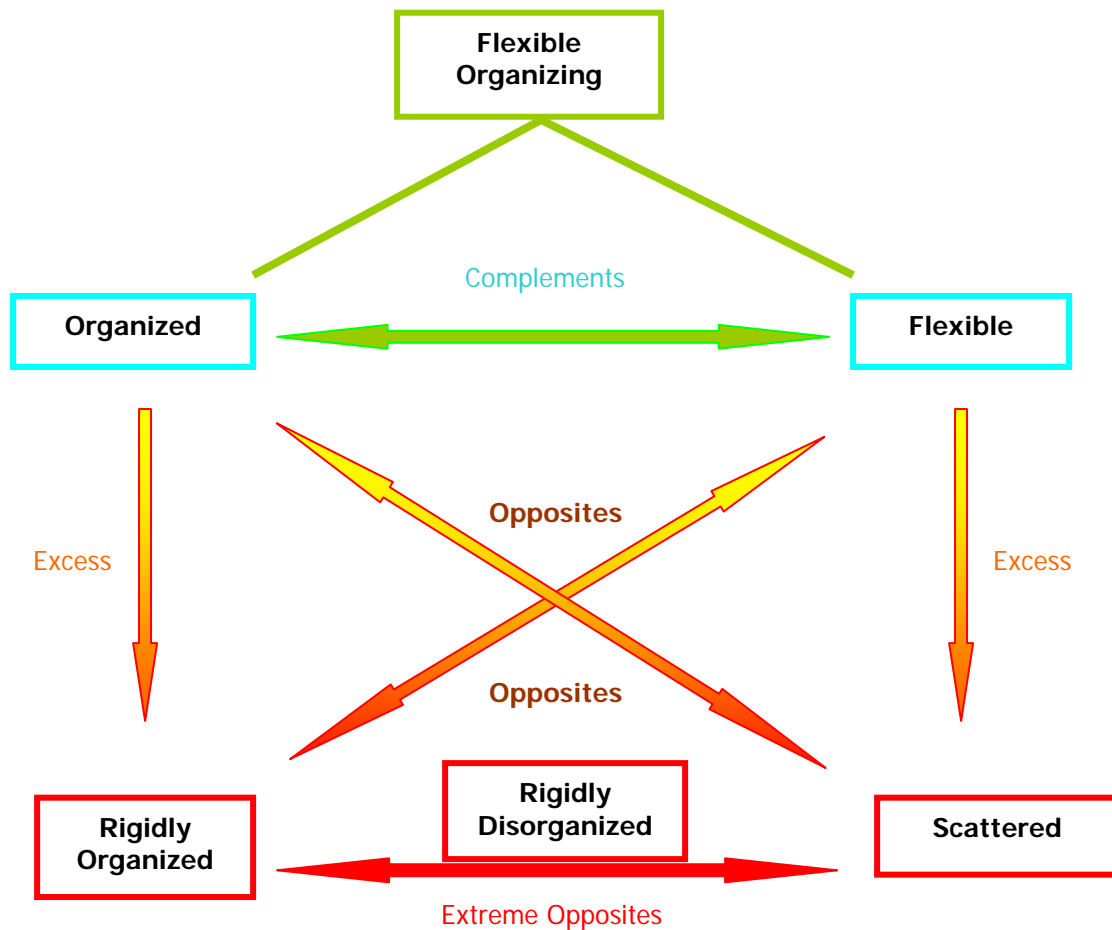
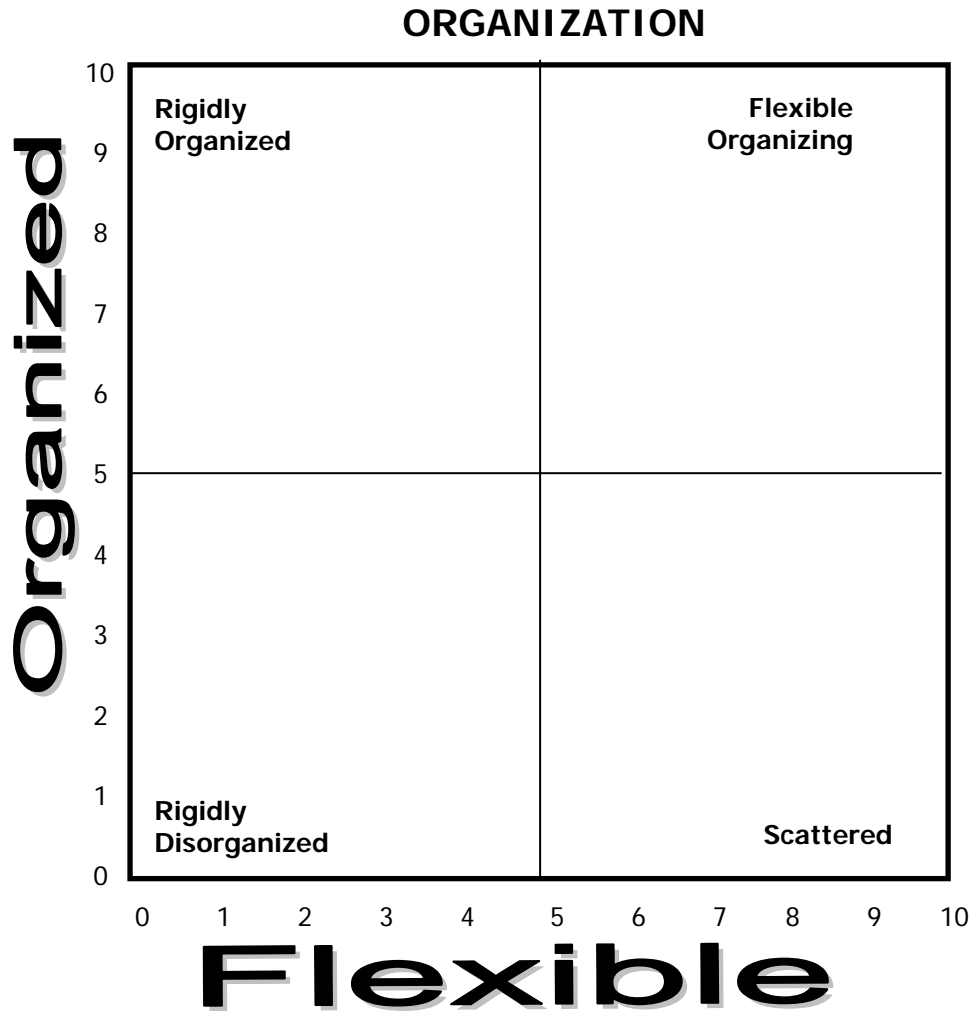


Figure 11 : The paradox "Organizat...."

The proverbs for Organization are:

"Orderliness creates efficiency, but being adaptive supports longevity".

"Nature is the perfect example of orderliness in the context of constant change"



**ORGANIZED:** The tendency to place and maintain order in an environment

**FLEXIBLE:** The tendency to easily adapt to change

*Flexible Organizing* (**Balanced Versatility**) - The tendency to organize things while at the same time maintaining flexibility (High Organized and High Flexible).

*Scattered* (**Passive Imbalance**) – The tendency to be disorganized while at the same time enjoying and pursuing change (Low Organized and High Flexible).

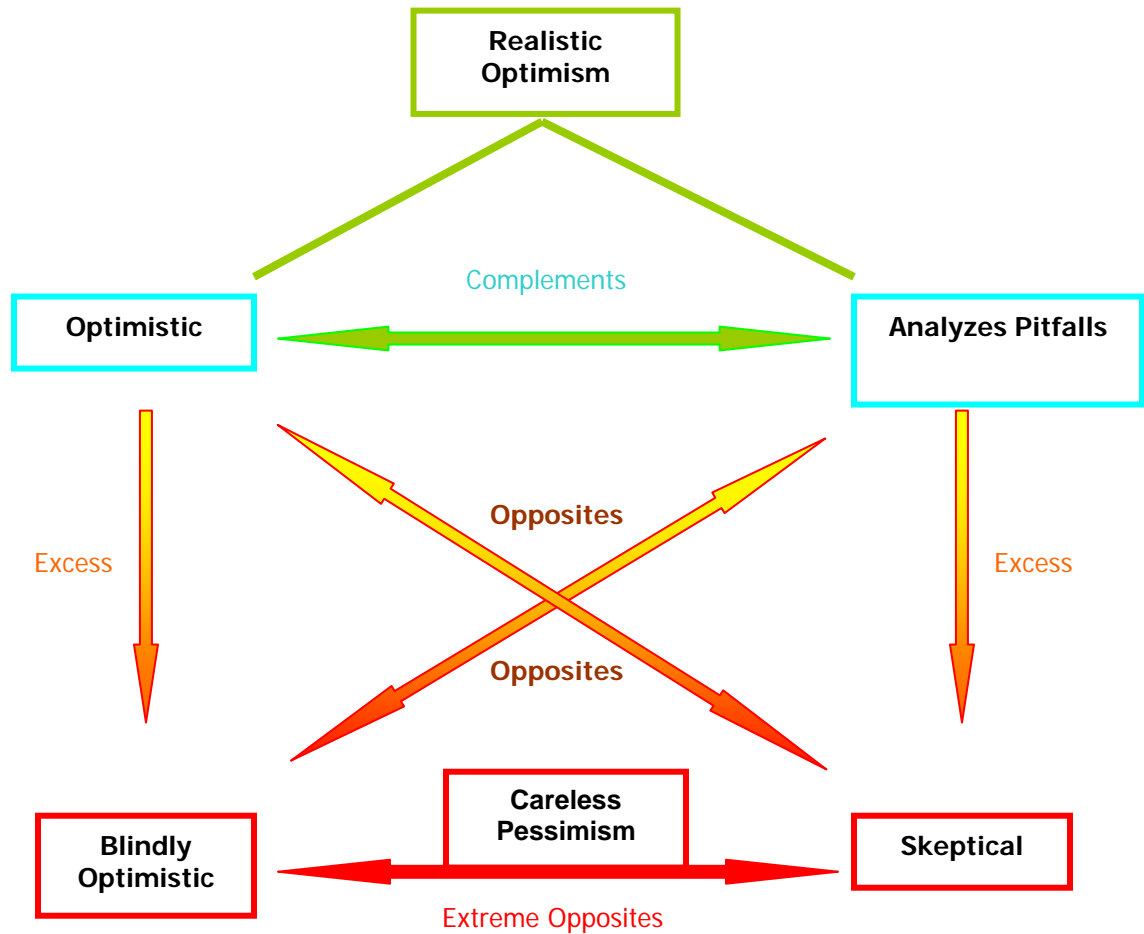
*Rigidly Organized* (**Aggressive Imbalance**) – The tendency to focus so strongly on being orderly that one tends to have difficulty adapting to changes (High Organized and Low Flexible).

*Rigidly Disorganized* (**Balanced Deficiency**) – The tendency to lack organization as well as adaptability (Low Organized and Low Flexible).

## Paradox #12: Realistic Optimism (Strategic Acumen)

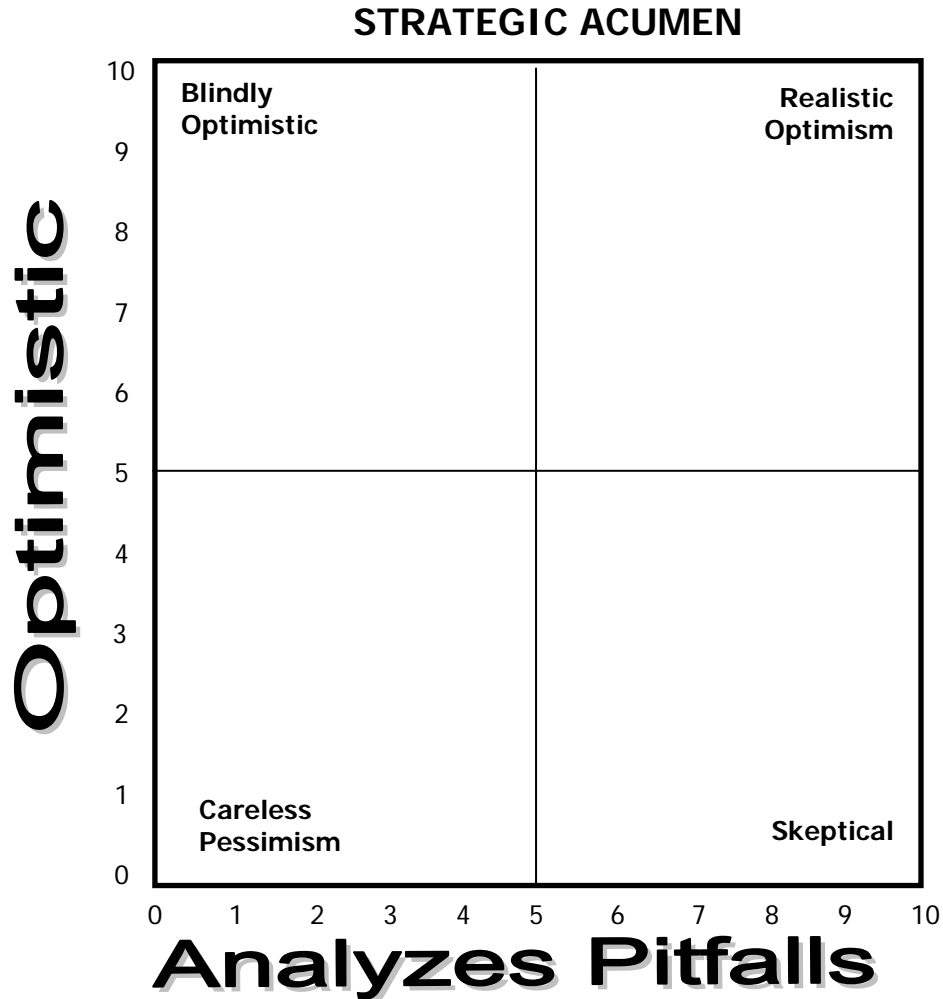
By embracing both Optimism and Analyzing Pitfalls, the Realistic Optimist creates a positive future. Positive outlook combined with realism enables the Realistic Optimist to visualize a positive future while being mindful of obstacles. The Realistic Optimist avoids the trap of being Blindly Optimistic (being Optimistic without Analyzing Pitfalls) and also avoids the trap of being Skeptical (Analyzing Pitfalls without Optimism). Blindly Optimistic and Skeptical are extreme opposites of each other. In sharp contrast to the Realistic Optimist is a Careless Pessimist, who lacks both Optimism and Analyzing Pitfalls.

These interrelationships are shown in figure 12.



**Figure 12 : The paradox "Strategic Acumen".**

The proverb for the Realistic Optimist is: "Keep a positive attitude about the future, but be mindful of difficulties when they are small."



**OPTIMISTIC:** The tendency to believe the future will be positive

**ANALYZES PITFALLS:** The tendency to scrutinize potential difficulties related to a plan or strategy

*Realistic Optimism (Balanced Versatility)* - The tendency to analyze the potential pitfalls of a plan or strategy while maintaining a positive view of the future and the potential benefits of the plan or strategy (High Optimistic and High Analyzes Pitfalls).

*Skeptical (Passive Imbalance)* – The tendency to overly emphasize the potential difficulties of a plan or strategy without giving sufficient emphasis to the potential benefits (Low Optimistic and High Analyzes Pitfalls).

*Blindly Optimistic (Aggressive Imbalance)* – The tendency to focus on the possible benefits of a plan or strategy, while failing to adequately see the potential difficulties (High Optimistic and Low Analyzes Pitfalls).

*Careless Pessimism (Balanced Deficiency)* – The tendency to take risks while at the same time believing that the future is bleak (Low Optimistic and Low Analyzes Pitfalls).

## Overview of Traits Derived from the Paradox Graphs

### Paradox Traits – Balanced Versatility

(Traits **not** shown on 12 main paradoxes are in *ITALICS*)

*AMBITIOUS BENEVOLENCE* - The desire to help society through developing and using one's own financial strength

AUTHORITATIVE COLLABORATION - The tendency to take responsibility for decisions while at the same time allowing others to genuinely participate in the decision-making process

COMPASSIONATE ENFORCING – The tendency to enforce necessary rules with compassion.

FLEXIBLE ORGANIZING – The tendency to organize things while at the same time maintaining flexibility.

FORTHRIGHT DIPLOMACY – The tendency to be forthright and respectful at the same time.

HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM – The tendency to accept oneself while at the same time trying to improve oneself.

INVENTIVE – The tendency to experiment with different ways of doing something while at the same time maintaining focus on the desired objective or result.

LOGICAL INTUITION – The tendency to use analysis combined with intuition to solve problems.

MINDFUL COURAGE – The tendency to take risks while at the same time sufficiently analyzing the potential pitfalls of the plan or strategy.

MUTUAL HELP – The tendency to pursue solutions that are beneficial to all parties concerned.

POISED ACHIEVEMENT – The tendency to be highly self-motivated without becoming tense or easily stressed.

*PROLIFIC QUALITY* – The tendency to be productive, however, paying sufficient attention to detail.

REALISTIC OPTIMISM – The tendency to analyze the potential pitfalls of a plan or strategy while maintaining a positive view of the future and the potential benefits of the plan or strategy.

TRUTH EXPLORING – The tendency to explore different viewpoints and formulate conclusions without becoming fixed in one's opinions.

### Paradox Traits – Passive Imbalances

(Traits **not** shown on 12 main paradoxes are in *ITALICS*)

*BENEVOLENT SACRIFICE* – The tendency to have significantly stronger motivation to help society than motivation to pursue one's own financial needs.

CAUTIOUS – The tendency to focus on potential pitfalls of a plan or strategy while being very careful about risks.

DEFERS DECISIONS – The tendency to avoid making decisions by referring them to others.

*EGO SELF CRITICAL* – The tendency to be overly severe in finding fault with oneself and at the same time feeling dependent on recognition from others to try to maintain a sense of self-esteem.

EVASIVE – The tendency to be tactful without being sufficiently direct.

INCONCLUSIVE – The tendency to lack certainty in one's opinions while at the same time being very open to the ideas of others.

NON-FINISHING – The tendency to experiment with many different things without persisting in a

single direction.

NON-LOGICAL – The tendency to rely on intuition without sufficiently analyzing a plan or problem.

PERMISSIVE – The tendency to be overly empathetic, failing to enforce necessary rules or make necessary corrections to subordinates' behavior.

*PRECISE BUT SLOW* – The tendency to be exact, however, paying insufficient attention to productivity.

SCATTERED – The tendency to be disorganized while at the same time enjoying and pursuing change.

SELF-CRITICAL – The tendency to dislike oneself and at the same time desire oneself to be different.

SELF-SACRIFICING – The tendency to respond to others' needs at the expense of one's own needs.

SKEPTICAL – The tendency to overly emphasize the potential difficulties of a plan or strategy without giving sufficient emphasis to the potential benefits.

TRANQUIL INERTIA – The tendency to be relaxed and easy-going while at the same time lacking in self-motivation.

## **Paradox Traits – Aggressive Imbalances**

(Traits **not** shown on 12 main paradoxes are in *ITALICS*)

AUTHORITARIAN – The tendency to make decisions without collaborating with others.

BLINDLY OPTIMISTIC – The tendency to focus on the possible benefits of a plan or strategy, while failing to see the potential difficulties.

BLUNT – The tendency to be frank or direct while lacking in diplomacy or tact.

DEFENSIVE – The tendency to focus on self-acceptance while avoiding self-improvement. (The attitude "I'm O.K. and I don't need to improve")

DOGMATIC – The tendency to be certain of one's own opinions while at the same time not open to different ideas.

DOMINATING – The tendency to be assertive with one's own needs while failing to respond to other people's needs.

*EGO DEFENSIVE* – The tendency to be overly self-accepting, lacking sufficient interest in self-improvement and at the same time wanting a great deal of recognition from others.

*FAST BUT IMPRECISE* – The tendency to be productive, however, paying insufficient attention to detail.

*FORCEFUL ENFORCING* – The tendency to try to make others follow rules or procedures without sufficient attempts to enlist their cooperation.

HARSH – The tendency to be overly strict or punitive when enforcing rules and procedures.

IMPULSIVE – The tendency to take risks without sufficient analysis of the potential difficulties.

*INSENSITIVE* – The tendency to be assertive with one's own needs while lacking sufficient warmth for others.

LASER LOGICAL – The tendency to be very analytical while at the same time mistrusting intuition.

*PAY MINUS MOTIVATION* – The tendency to have a strong desire for money while lacking the personal drive necessary to earn it.

*REBELLIOUS AUTONOMY* – The tendency to attempt to gain freedom from authority without taking sufficient and appropriate initiative.

*RIGIDLY METICULOUS* – The tendency to focus so strongly on details that one tends to have difficulty adapting to changes.

RIGIDLY ORGANIZED – The tendency to focus so strongly on being orderly that one tends to have difficulty adapting to changes.

STRESSED ACHIEVEMENT – The tendency to be very achievement oriented while at the same time being tense and/or having difficulty managing stress.

STUBBORN PERSISTENCE – The tendency to tenaciously pursue the same course of action without experimenting with different ways of accomplishing the objective.

## **Paradox Traits – Balanced Deficiency**

(Traits **not** shown on 12 main paradoxes are in *ITALICS*)

AVOIDS COMMUNICATION – The tendency to lack frankness as well as diplomacy.

AVOIDS DECISIONS – The tendency to avoid decision-making authority while at the same time avoiding making decisions jointly with others.

CARELESS PESSIMISM – The tendency to take risks while at the same time believing that the future is bleak.

CAUTIOUS IN ATTENTION – The tendency to be cautious about risks while at the same time paying little attention to the potential pitfalls of a plan or strategy.

COOL PERMISSIVENESS – The tendency to lack warmth while at the same time avoiding enforcing necessary rules.

DISINTERESTED IN DECISIONS – The tendency to avoid analyzing problems and decisions while at the same time mistrusting one's own intuition.

INTERNALLY CONTRADICTED – The tendency to lack self-acceptance while at the same time lack desire to improve oneself.

*NARROWLY UNAMBITIOUS* – The tendency to lack of motivation to help society while at the same time lack motivation for financial gain.

NEEDS AVOIDANCE – The tendency to lack assertiveness as well as helpfulness.

RIGIDLY DISORGANIZED – The tendency to lack organization as well as adaptability.

*SLOW AND IMPRECISE* – The tendency to lack productivity as well as attention to detail.

*STRESSED PESSIMISM* – The tendency to be tense or stressed while at the same time believing that the future is bleak.

STRESSED UNDERACHIEVEMENT – The tendency to lack achievement orientation while at the same time being tense and/or having difficulty dealing with stress.

UNCERTAIN DISINTEREST – The tendency to lack confidence in one's own opinions while at the same time not reflecting of different ideas and opinions.

UNRESOURCEFUL – The tendency to lack persistence as well as experimentation.