

Barry Johnson

And

Volume One: Chapter 23

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*Making a Difference
by Leveraging
Polarity, Paradox or Dilemma
Volume One: Foundations*

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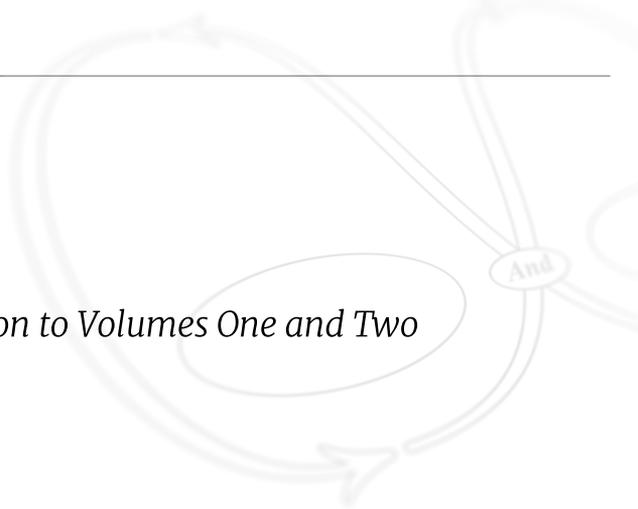
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Introduction to Volumes One and Two

I am in Brazil being warmly welcomed by a representative of Natura outside the front entrance to their main building. They know that I have written about polarities so they smile as they translate the Portuguese words carved deep and large into the wall: “Being Well *And*¹ Well Being.” They explain that “Being Well” means that we must take care of Natura as a company. It must be financially sound and healthy. “Well Being” means that it is equally important to take care of those who work at Natura, the community, and the environment. (*from Chapter 6*)

This Book is the First of a Two-Volume Set.

Volume One – Foundations

Volume One is a resource for people who want to make a positive difference. How? By overcoming two obstacles: resistance to change and polarization. From a problem-solving perspective, either of these challenges could be overwhelming. From a Polarity Thinking™ perspective, both can be addressed by replacing *Or* with *And* when *And* is required.

For example, the question, “Am I going to hold on to my values *Or* accept the change proposed?” is likely to create resistance to the change. That resistance could be significantly reduced by replacing *Or* with *And*. “How am I going to hold on to my values *And* gain the benefits of the change proposed?” We can save the baby *And* throw out the bathwater. (*Section Three*)

The question, “Am I going to support the group that wants to decentralize *Or* the group that wants to centralize?” is likely to create polarization. That polarization could be significantly reduced by replacing *Or* with *And*. “How do we get the benefits of decentralization *And* the benefits of centralization?” Effective decentralization requires effective centralization. (*Chapter 5*)

“Am I going to support ‘Black Lives Matter’ *Or* ‘All Lives Matter?’” This false choice is less polarizing if *Or* is replaced with *And*: “Black Lives Matter” *And* “All

¹ When the word “and” is used to connect two poles of a polarity, it will be capitalized and in italics: *And*. When the word “or” is used, incorrectly, to connect two poles of a polarity, it will also be capitalized and italic: *Or*.

Lives Matter.” It is precisely because all lives matter that disproportionate attacks on and incarceration of black people matters. (*Chapter 7*)

Regardless of the size of the system that you want to change, this book guides you through a clear process:

1. **Seeing:** Is this an issue where *And* is required?
2. **Mapping:** How can I see a more complete picture and respect alternative views?
3. **Assessing:** How are we doing with this polarity?
4. **Learning:** What can we learn from our assessment results?
5. **Leveraging:** What action steps will we take to make a positive difference?

Reading this book will help you address resistance to your efforts to make a difference. Also, it will help you address chronic conflicts that become vicious cycles as both sides become more polarized.

You will learn when and how to bring *And* into your efforts to make a positive difference. When done well, supplementing *Or*-thinking with *And*-thinking will help you convert the wisdom of those resisting change into a resource to support a more effective change. *And*-thinking will help you join polarized groups and convert a vicious cycle into a benefit for all. The results will benefit both groups and the larger system of which they are a part.

Volume Two – Applications

Volume One is from my perspective with a lot of input and help from others. What is missing are important other voices. When considering groups with power and privilege which have dominance in the United States and those groups that have been marginalized by the dominant group, I am a member of the dominant group in every category. I am white, cis male², financially secure, college educated, raised in a hetero-normative all-white family, from a Christian tradition, without physical or mental disabilities. Having the power and privilege that comes by being in these groups does not make me a good person or a bad person. But membership in the dominant group does come with responsibility to learn from those who are marginalized. It also includes sharing power with them and interrupting the practices and policies of the dominant group that contribute to their marginalization. This marginalization is oppressive and dehumanizing for both the dominant and the marginalized groups. Some marginalized groups include Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BI-POC), women, LGBTQI+³ people, the poor, those from religious traditions other than Christian, and those with physical or mental disabilities.

Volume Two includes the voices of people from marginalized groups. Each author provides an example of how they have applied Polarity Thinking to make a difference in their life and work. The authors come from a variety of disciplines. They have worked inside organizations as founders and leaders. They have also worked

² Cis men are men assigned “male” at birth and feel that “man” and “male” accurately describe who they are.

³ LGBTQI+ = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, plus other identities.

as external resources to organizations as coaches, trainers, organizers for justice and equity, consultants, and teachers. At least one author in each chapter has completed a Two-Year Polarity Mastery Program.

Their stories can be used and adapted to your unique situation. The variety of examples will expand your possibilities and help you avoid common pitfalls as you apply Polarity Thinking. These diverse examples demonstrate how you can succeed in making a difference by combining your life experience with Polarity Thinking and the Polarity Map®.

Start with the Chapter That Interests You Most.

Though Volume One is written in a logical sequence, I encourage you to find the chapter that seems most relevant to you and read it first. Which chapter connects to where you want to make a difference?

All Are Loved *And* Accountable – All Are Connected *And* Each is Unique.

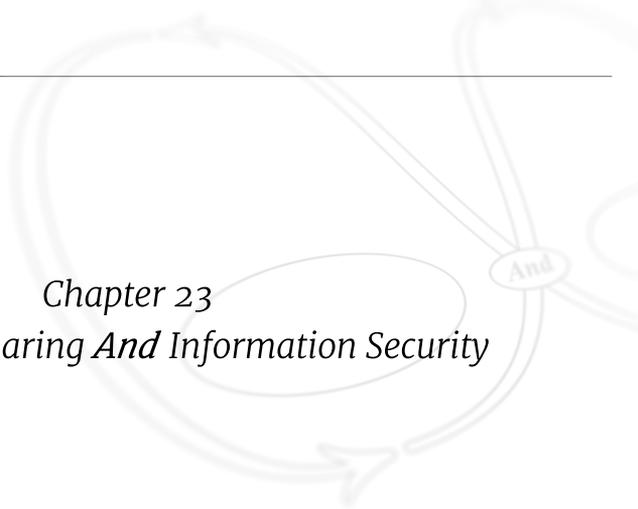
This book begins and ends with two double-messages (polarities) that come to us from most religious traditions.

1. All of us are loved unconditionally, without exception, *And* we are all accountable for our actions and inactions, without exception. In our effort to make a difference, we need to hold ourselves and others accountable. At the same time, the context for our accountability is that we are loved unconditionally (*Section Four*). When our message of accountability is combined with an often unstated message of unlovability, we generate a natural resistance from the self, family member, organization, or the country receiving the message of unlovability.
2. We are all connected in a unified whole *And* we are each unique. Neither our unity nor our uniqueness can be lost (*Section Two*). We can make a difference by affirming the reality of our connectedness *And* our uniqueness. We need not struggle to make us connected *Or* to make us unique. We are already both.

Not recognizing these two polarities (*1 & 2 above*) undermines our efforts to make the positive differences we seek to make with our families, organizations, and countries. Not recognizing these and other polarities in this book has contributed to organizational dysfunction, gross inequity and the marginalization mentioned above. Recognizing and intentionally leveraging these polarities and others can make a difference in how well our organizations are run, how financially sound they are, and how effective they are at enhancing our quality of life on the planet for all of us. My hope is that *And: Volume One* and *And: Volume Two* will support you in making your difference in the world.

Barry Johnson (he, him)⁴

⁴ In this book, I recognize diversity of identity and use she, her / they, them / he, him. For people I know well, and those identified in the public arena, like Dr. MLK, Jr., I use the pronouns they use for themselves.



Chapter 23

*Information Sharing *And* Information Security*

Meeting David Wennergren

I am sitting at a large, round table at a restaurant in Monterey, California, with senior officers from the information professional community of the U.S. Department of the Navy. The officers are in the middle of a two-week executive leadership course. I will be spending the next day with them with a focus on leveraging polarities. Also at the table is David (Dave) Wennergren, Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the Navy.

Jeanne and Barry Frew had created the course which they led at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey. Their firm, Frew & Associates, created an executive program to merge four communities within the Navy. They are both great at what they do, and I felt privileged to be part of it. Barry Frew is a retired Naval Officer and an emeritus faculty member at NPS, who has many years of experience in leadership development. I had arrived early so that I could meet Dave, who was attending as a guest resource. I sat in the back of the room listening to the discussion between Dave and the senior officers. I was struck by his warmth as well as the way he listened intently and responded directly to questions and suggestions.

As we sat around the dinner table, one of the officers asked what this “polarity stuff” was all about. My response generated more questions and a series of hypothetical situations, such as “What would you do if ... ?” It was a lively conversation. Dave did not say anything, he just watched and listened.

At the end of the meal, Dave took me aside and said, “I think the notion of leveraging polarities is very interesting. I’m disappointed that I won’t be able to be at your session tomorrow. Can I call you later?” I said I would welcome a call.

Seeing

Three months later, I received a call from the Pentagon. It was Dave. Since we met, he was promoted to Deputy CIO for the Department of Defense (DOD). In his new position, he has spent a lot of time listening, as he shifts from focusing on the Navy to focusing on the DOD.

He shared an issue that he found repeatedly: “Barry, there is a real fight going on between two groups. On the one hand, we have people who insist that we have good information sharing. Without that, the right hand doesn’t know what the left hand is doing and it can lead to disasters like 9/11. We cannot serve and protect the American people without good information sharing. At the same time, there is another group who insist on strong information security. Without that, the enemy will know what we are doing and can create disinformation and confusion within our system. We cannot serve and protect without information security. Barry, these two groups are each trying to protect the country from the other group! Is this one of those polarity things?”

I laughed and said, “I think so, sir.” He then asked me if Barry Frew and I would meet with the executive team to discuss how to leverage this polarity. Dave was very clear, “The fight between these two groups is not serving and protecting our country, and we need to do something about it.”

With the benefit of a few conversations on Polarity Thinking with Barry Frew and the dinner conversation I mentioned above, Dave was able to **See** the polarity of Information Sharing *And* Information Security. This is the first step in the 5-step SMALL process. Barry Frew and I spent six hours at the Pentagon completing the remaining four steps with Dave Wennergren and the executive team. He has given me permission to share the process and the results.

Mapping

Barry Frew served as a bridge between the executive team and me. I was anxious about doing a good job, and I wanted a polarity lens to be useful. I was aware of the polarity of Humility *And* Self-assurance. On the humility side, I had no military service experience. Respect for our all who serve in the military is a far cry from being someone who has served. There was plenty of reason to approach this effort with Humility. On the Self-Assurance side, I had experience joining people worldwide in leveraging polarities. I also knew that building a Polarity Map® was a values and language clarification process, and that the Polarity Map we would build together was a wisdom organizer. The wisdom was within Dave and the executive team. My self-assurance came from respect for their experience and wisdom and my own, combined with respect for the power and predictable functioning of all polarities.

We worked together to fill in a Polarity Map projected on a large screen. We started with a brief explanation of polarities and how they look and work, and then we started mapping Information Sharing *And* Information Security. Version 1.0 is shown in *Figure 1* on pages 186 and 187.

First, we filled out the two upper quadrants. We asked, “If we did a good job with this pole, what would the positive results be?” Then, we filled out the lower quadrants, asking, “What would the negative results be if we over-focused on this pole to the neglect of the other pole?” We used the content of the two upper quadrants as a source for putting its opposite in the diagonal downside quadrant.

Notice that the first positive result identified for Information Sharing is “Innovation.” The first negative result of over-focusing on Information Security, to the neglect of Sharing, is “Stifles Creativity.”

One of the results of mapping is that both points of view (upper left/lower right) and (upper right/lower left) are identified and respected. The map provides a “place to stand” for those valuing each pole^{R92} The Polarity Map also clarifies that fighting over the two poles does not serve and protect the country. Once we had filled out the four quadrants, we discussed and agreed on a Greater Purpose Statement (Information Advantage) and Deeper Fear (Irrelevance and Insecurity).

Assessing

Once we had filled out the Polarity Map, we did a quick assessment. I shared a couple of visual possibilities with them. *Figure 2* is a simple picture of what would happen if, within the DOD, the power was concentrated with those wanting good Information Sharing and they treated the tension as an *Or* issue.

Figure 3 pictures what would happen if the power was concentrated with those wanting solid Information Security.

Figure 2

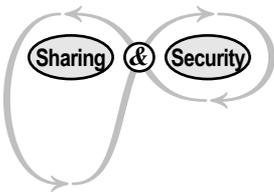


Figure 3

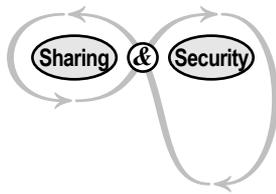
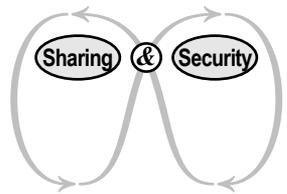


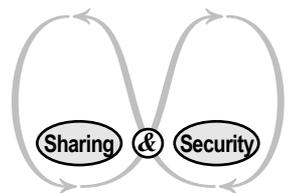
Figure 4



When I asked if one of those represented the present situation, they said, “No, we are in the downsides of both!” They agreed the picture should look more like *Figure 4*.

To serve and protect the country most effectively, the DOD needs to intentionally leverage the natural tension between Information Sharing *And* Information Security. If it does this well, the assessment results would look like *Figure 5*.

Figure 5



Learning

Learning occurs when we interpret the assessment results.

In this case, the assessment made it clear that the DOD was experiencing the downsides of both poles described in *Figure 1*. The map also shows that creating Action Steps for only one upside will not be sustainable. We must create Action Steps for both upsides and identify Early Warnings for both downsides.

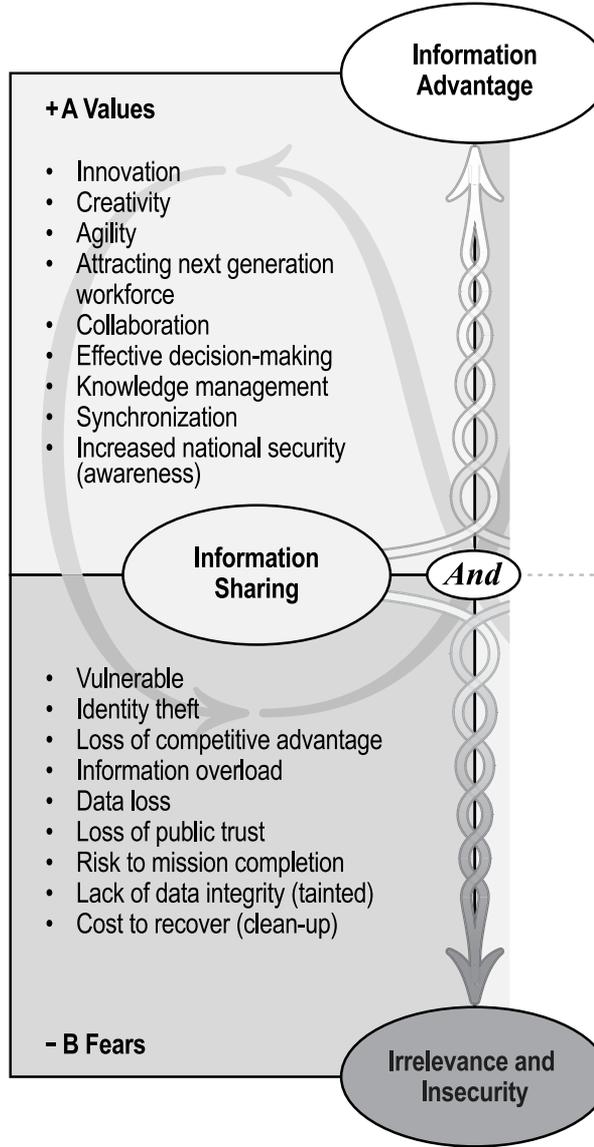
Figure 1

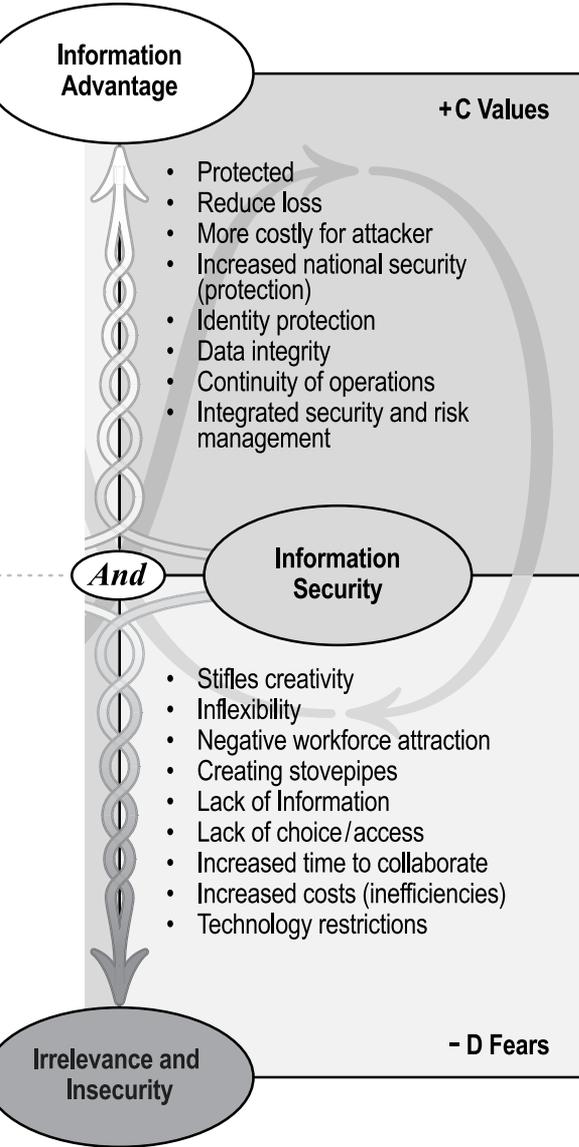
Action Steps

- Marketing (understand imperative to share)
- Training (how/ why to share)
- Integrate security solutions into sharing activities
- Implement Intel Community Information Security Marking (ICISM) standards
- Implement good governance and oversight (HL)
- Implement the DoD Net-Centric Data and Services Strategy by mission area and community
- Implement ABAC (HL)

Early Warnings

- Loss of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) up
- Successful Intrusions/Data exfiltrations up





Action Steps

- Marketing (understanding the value of security)
- Training (practicing good security hygiene)
- Providing good security tools
- Implement good governance and oversight (HL)
- Develop better metrics to measure security vulnerabilities
- Implement ABAC (HL)

Early Warnings

- Information in newly-fielded systems not visible/accessible outside of the enclave
- Time to get required information up
- Access to information denied

Leveraging: includes Action Steps and Early Warnings

Action Steps (Figure 1)

We started by defining Action Steps for gaining and maintaining positive results from Information Sharing (broad Action Steps shown in *Figure 1*). Each Action Step can be seen as a small or large project. Notice how the map develops parallel thinking. For example, Action Step 1 on both upsides relates to marketing:

Marketing	<i>And</i>	Marketing
(understand imperative to share)		(understand the value of security)

When the same action step leverages both upsides simultaneously, we label it HL for “High Leverage”. For example, “Implement good governance and oversight (HL)” and “Implement ABAC (HL)” show up as action steps for both upsides. ABAC = Attribute Based Access Control.

Early Warnings (Figure 1)

Early Warnings need to be as early as possible and measurable. To help the executive team think of measurable indicators, we asked them to consider what might be increasing or decreasing that would indicate early that they are getting into the downside of that pole.^{R93} For example, the first early warning of the downside of Information Sharing is that “Loss of Personally Identified Information” increases. Because this could be measured and is likely to be an early indicator, it could serve as a key early warning.

Evolution of the Information Sharing/Information Security Polarity Map®

Frew & Associates used the version 1.0 map in subsequent executive workshops for the DOD and the Navy. Each learning session involved more stakeholders and the map matured. In addition, Polarity Thinking enabled Dave to discuss the tension between Information Sharing *And* Information Security in speeches and talks with stakeholders in a powerful, culture-changing way. He began to talk about the need for “secure information sharing,” a phrase incorporating the values of both Information Sharing and Information Security. The change in language reshaped the thinking, beliefs, and behaviors regarding the natural tension for the DOD. Advocacy for a single pole of the interdependent pair was dramatically reduced. The same process can be used to address other polarities encountered while serving and protecting the country.

Summary

It does not take a great deal of formal learning experience to begin to see and leverage polarities. David Wennergren quickly identified a polarity between Information Sharing *And* Information Security. Seeing was step one of the five-step process. Dave’s executive team could **See** a polarity, create a **Map**, **Assess** it, **Learn** from it, and **Leverage** it (**SMALL**). The essence of this process can be accomplished in less than a day. While the ongoing leveraging of the polarity will

require sustained attention and effort, those involved gained the fundamental knowledge that the DOD can increase its effectiveness and make a difference by leveraging polarities.

New Realities in Chapter 23

Reality 92 One of the results of mapping is that both points of view (+A/-D) and (-B/+C) are identified and respected, providing a “place to stand” for those valuing each pole.

Reality 93 To help think of measurable indicators, consider what might be increasing or decreasing that would indicate early that they are getting into the downside of that pole.



Praise for And



“Polarity Thinking has revolutionized how we approach tough problems in our work. There are countless moments – from making a big decision as a management team, to launching an issue campaign that requires navigating fraught political waters, to building deep and lasting coalitions, to building more inclusive and collaborative teams – in which we map out a polarity to push our thinking and hone our strategy. In today’s complex world of politics and advocacy, identifying ways to better leverage key polarities has exponentially increased our impact. We are vocal evangelists and have shared the tool with countless customers and partners who have adopted it to increase the efficacy of their own progressive advocacy work!”

~ **Lanae Erickson**
Senior Vice President for Social Policy & Politics :: Third Way



“The fight for equity, inclusion, social justice and humanity is not an ‘or’ argument. It is a ‘must’ argument which can only be achieved when advocates and allies augment *either/Or*-thinking with *both/And*-thinking. These two volumes are uniquely divided between Foundations skill building in Polarity Thinking, and a wide variety of Applications of *both/And*-thinking. The two volumes contain critical information to help us all break the divisiveness that can result from only using *either/Or*-thinking.”

~ **Eddie Moore, Jr., PhD**
Founder/Program Director, The White Privilege Conference



“Polarity Thinking is one of the essential disciplines underlying our vital and never-ending search for win-win solutions to our many challenges and dilemmas. Barry Johnson has given us an invaluable gift in creating – and now deepening – this powerful tool. It can help us arrive at *And* solutions in a world that often seems hopelessly tangled in a bipolar dance within polarities. Along with systems thinking, Polarity Thinking is an essential skill that should be part of the education of every human being on the planet, especially anyone charged with leadership responsibilities.”

~ **Raj Sisodia**
*FW Olin Distinguished Professor of Global Business, Babson College
Co-founder & Co-Chairman, Conscious Capitalism Inc*

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