

THEORY

What is the thinking behind the chart?

Emotions help us to evaluate what is happening to us. They signal our needs and how well we are meeting these needs. Emotions are closely linked to our motives because they drive us to meet our needs.

Autonomy, or self-direction, is our super-motive. However, self-direction is always in relation to others; we have to balance our own needs with the needs of others. This conundrum lies at the heart of human relationships. Unsurprisingly, most of our emotions are mainly about our self-direction in relation to our goals and other people.

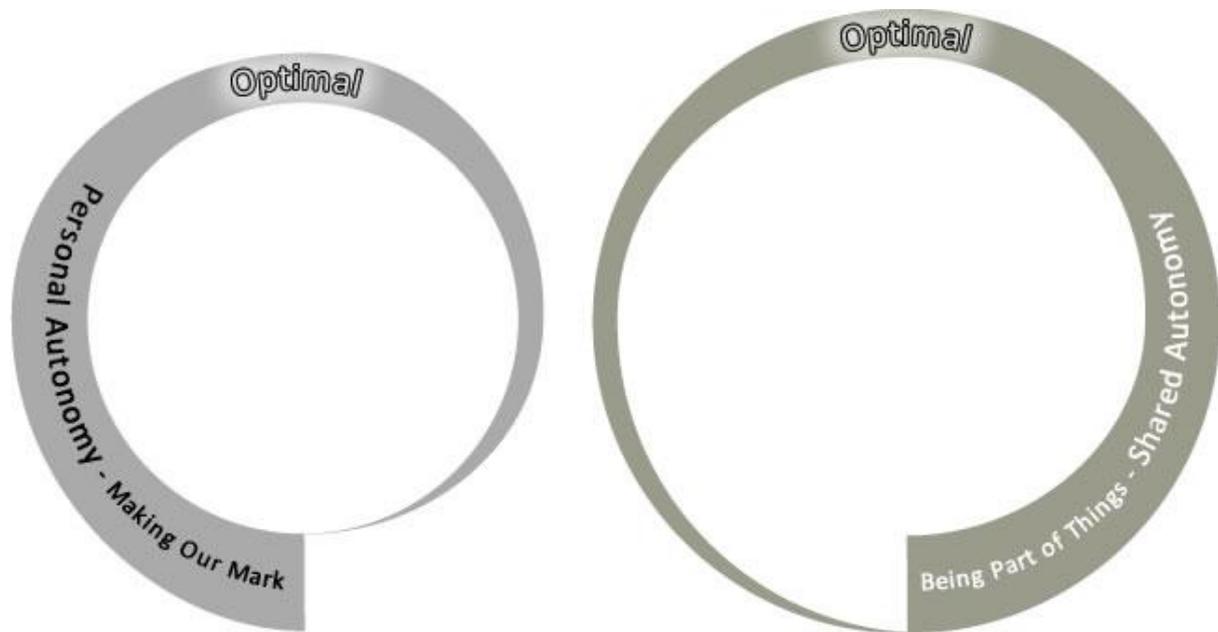


Figure 1 The Preferences

The ring model illuminates two preferences, namely *making our mark* and *being part of things*. We are driven by both, to a greater or lesser extent although most of us will have a preference for one or the other. The preferences are represented as spirals. Each spiral has an optimal mid-point and two extremes, one showing too much of the given quality and the other too little.

When put together the spirals form a ring. The upper half of the ring shows the spirals in balance, where the preferences are of similar weight. As we progress around the ring in either direction we can chart the increasing imbalance between the spirals. In the upper half the effect is bright and emotionally uplifting, below it spirals downwards into the dark side of the Ring.



Figure 2 The Ring of Preferences and the Emotion Quadrants

The ring is divided into quadrants. The chart gives us a picture of our current emotional state. It is best used to discuss what is enriching us and what is potentially draining or distracting us. The model helps us to make sense of what's happening to us and how we can best respond. It can aid us to better understand the purpose of each emotion and how emotions can get us into trouble as well as help us. It can also help us discover our own emotional recipe for our wellbeing.