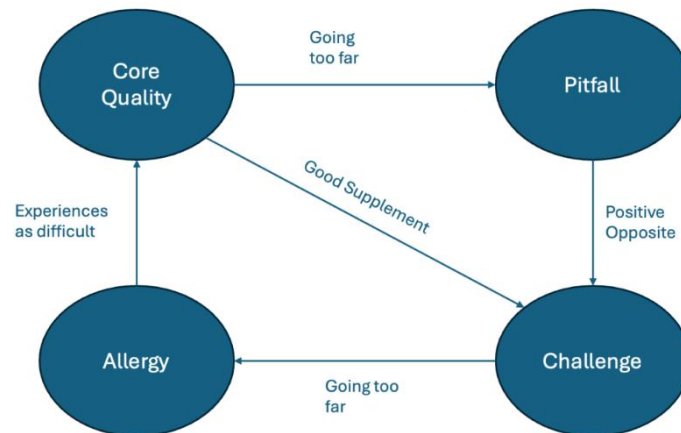


Core Qualities and the Core Quadrant by Ofman

The Core Quadrant is a tool for getting **to know the core qualities** in yourself and others. It helps you understand what happens when you **exaggerate a core quality**, how you can **stay connected to your core quality**, and why you may sometimes **dislike** certain characteristics in other people.

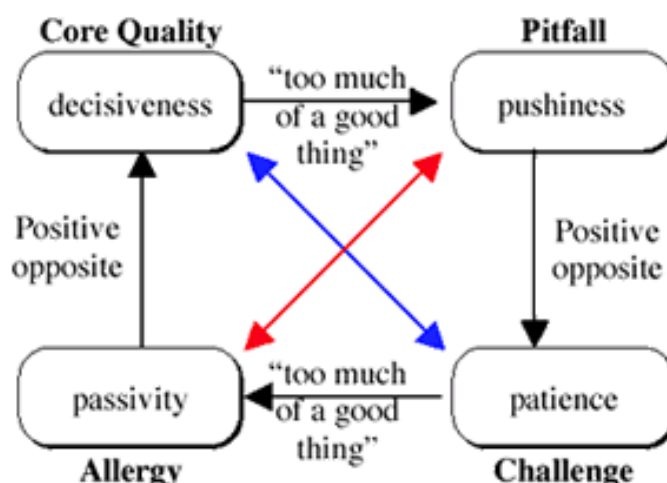
A **core quality** is a characteristic that belongs to the essence (the core) of a person. It is not learned behaviour; it comes from within. These qualities shape who you are. We often take them for granted in ourselves, and we may also expect others to have the same trait (e.g. *decisiveness*).



The downside of a core quality – **the excess of a good thing** – is called a **pitfall**. This is what happens when a core quality is taken too far: a strength turns into a weakness. In stressful situations or when faced with uncertainty, people may exaggerate their core quality and fall into this trap (e.g.: *when decisiveness goes too far, it can turn into pushiness*).

The positive opposite of the pitfall is the **challenge**. The core quality and the challenge are complementary. *For instance, the positive opposite of indecision is patience. The goal is to find a balance between decisiveness and patience. This is not a matter of either/or, but of both/and.*

Finally, many people are especially sensitive to an excess of their challenge – particularly when they see it strongly expressed in someone else. This is called the **allergy**, and it can lead to tension or conflict with others. *For instance, too much patience can become passivity. Someone who is very decisive may find passive behaviour difficult to deal with.*



Why is the model interesting?

- » The model provides insight into your own **strengths and qualities**. When you are more aware of them, you can also use them more consciously.
- » When you receive corrective feedback, it may indicate that you have fallen into a pitfall. You can then reflect on **which core quality lies behind that pitfall**.
- » The model helps you identify which **challenge** you can develop. This challenge complements your core quality and helps prevent you from falling into your pitfall.
- » The quadrant can also provide insight into **why certain behaviours in other people annoy you**. It encourages you to look beyond the allergy and **explore which core quality lies behind the allergy**. After all, every allergy (e.g., passivity) is an exaggeration of someone's core quality (e.g., patience). Recognising this can help you see others through their strengths. Interestingly, that core quality is often *your* challenge. In this way, an allergy can become a valuable learning opportunity instead of just a source of irritation.
- » When you are confronted with an allergy, it can be useful to reflect on how you typically respond. We often see that when people are **confronted with their allergy** (e.g., passivity), they **tend to fall into their own pitfall** (e.g., pushiness).

Identify your core quadrant

The following questions can help you identify your core quadrant:

Core quality	What distinguishes you from others?
	What do you take for granted in yourself (and sometimes expect in others)?
	What do others appreciate in you?
Pitfall	What corrective or negative feedback do you sometimes receive?
	What do others sometimes blame you for?
	What are you inclined to justify in yourself?
Challenge	What do you admire in others?
	What do you miss in yourself?
	What do others wish for you?
Allergies	What irritates you about others?
	What would you strongly dislike in yourself?

Examples of elaborated core quadrants

Core quality	Pitfall	Challenge	Allergy
Analytical	Indecisive	Decisiveness	Impulsiveness
Modest	Invisible	Self-promotion	Arrogance
Confident	Arrogant	Modest	Mediocrity
Decisive	Forcing	Considerate / Open	Indecisiveness
Orderly	Rigid	Flexible	Fickleness

Getting started yourself

You can use this model to reflect on situations at work in which you:

- » use a core quality,
- » fall into your pitfall,
- » are confronted with your allergy,
- » and learn something about your challenge.

You can start this reflection exercise **from any of the four corners** of the model, using the guiding questions above. Always begin with **a concrete experience**.

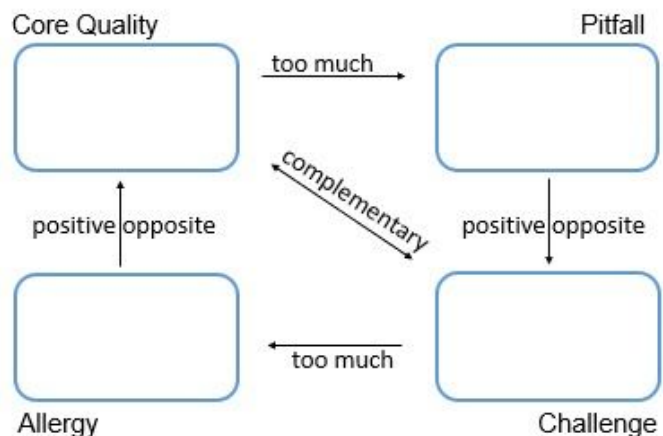
Ofman's Core Quality Model

Core Quality: This is a strength, an asset to your performance. It is what you do well.

Pitfall: What happens if you go too far in applying your strengths; it occurs when a Core Quality is overdone.

Challenge: Describes the type of behaviors that are a complement to your strength (Core Quality) and are challenging to you. Your "Challenge" is a positive opposite of your Pitfall.

Allergy: An Allergy is when the Challenge is overdone or there is too much of the Challenge. Your Core Quality is the positive opposite of an Allergy.



Note: The "Core Quality" and "Challenge" are positive complements. "Pitfall" and "Allergy" are negative opposites.