

By Ralph Perrine

## Drawing helps you think and get clarity.

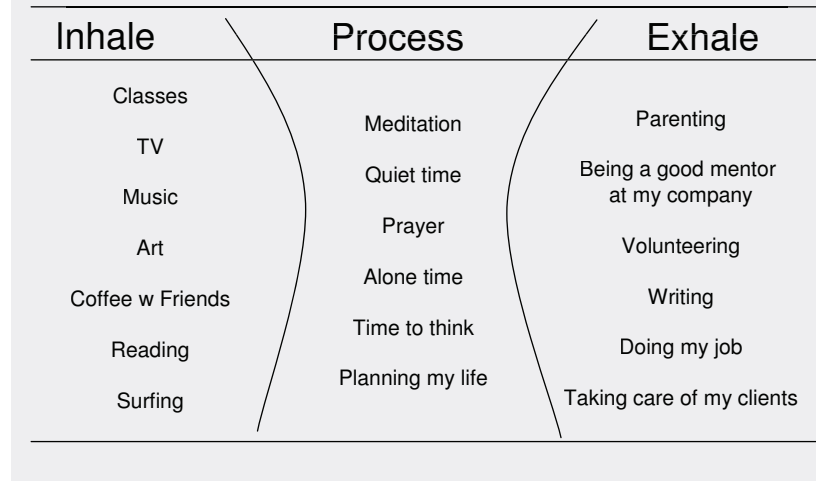
I have found drawing to be indispensable to good planning and good collaboration—the top two critical skills for success in life.

The drawings in this manifesto have been used in real world situations to help groups and individuals gain clarity. These drawings have brought insight to companies, project teams, and individuals, including myself. These drawings are thinking exercises that help you understand and focus on what is pivotal.

These simple drawings can be drawn by hand. To help you learn them, they are shown here as line drawings. But they are designed to be quickly drawn by hand—by anyone. Even if you can't draw a straight line. Think of it as doodling your way to enlightenment!

Ralph Perrine

## Balancing Your Life



## What it does

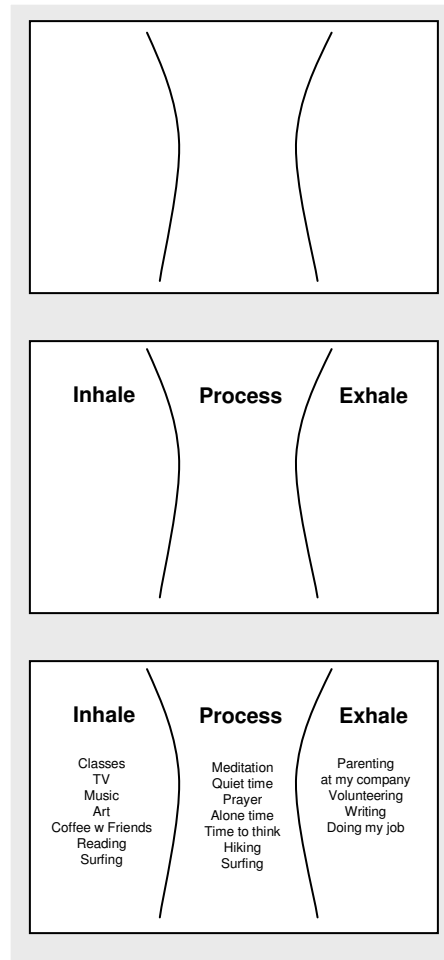
This drawing shares a new perspective on what it means to balance your life. Life seems to follow a cycle of taking in, processing, and giving out. Inhale, process, exhale. It's the natural cycle that all living things must follow in order to thrive.

Inhaling means taking in things that hopefully nurture, inspire or educate you. Processing means

thinking, prioritizing, deciding what things mean, and coming to your own conclusions. Exhaling is output. What you produce, write, create. Your work, your contributions. These must be kept in balance. If you are taking in all the time but never giving out, or there's giving with no taking in, or no time to process—life becomes frustrating.

## When to use it

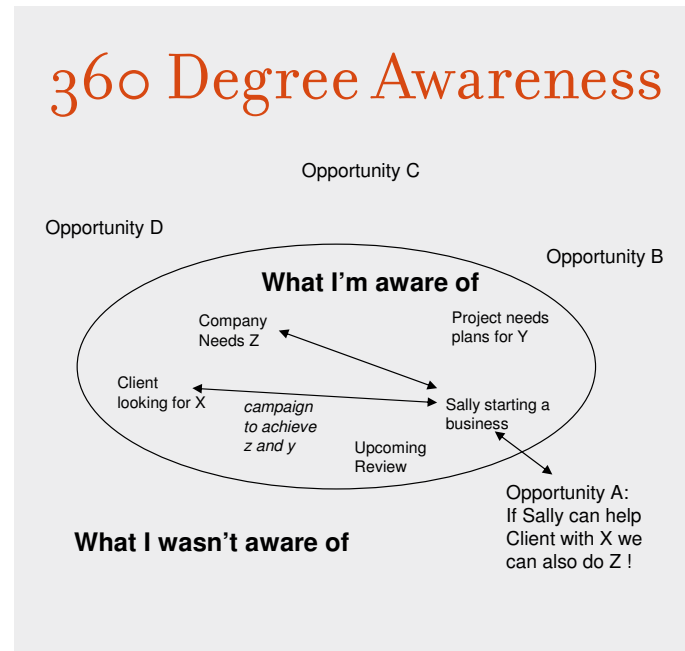
This is a great activity for a birthday, New Years or any milestone. Or whenever you just need to regain your equilibrium and plan a more balanced life.



## How to draw it

1. Draw two vertical lines that divide the sheet into 3 sections. You can make these lines straight or slightly curved as shown—to approximate a set of brackets like this: ><
2. Label the sections “INHALE”, “PROCESS”, and “EXHALE.”
3. Under INHALE, list the things you take in...the things that nurture and re-energize you. This can include good books, surfing, birdwatching, certain people, sunsets, etc. Anything that nourishes you, and gives you oxygen.
4. Under PROCESS, list the activities that let you think, gain clarity and process things. This can include meditation, quiet time, reflection and planning. This is the time when you come to conclusions about things, check your inner compass and set the direction of your week or your next steps.
5. Under EXHALE, list what you produce, give out—the things that “take it out of you.” Your work, your giving and caring, and all the things you pour your energy into when its time to execute.
6. Key Questions: Are these 3 activities in balance? Do you spend a disproportionate amount of your time in one or two of these but not the other? How will you change this?

## 360 Degree Awareness

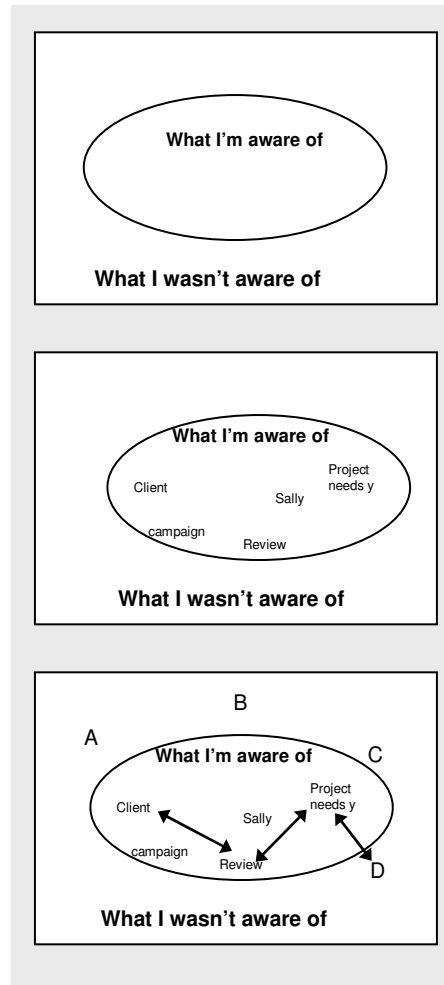


## What it does

Ever feel like you miss opportunities or emerging issues that you should have spotted earlier? Ever say to yourself, “Wow how did I miss that?” or “Why didn’t I think of that?” This drawing helps you learn to widen your awareness so you can spot opportunities and issues earlier. Great ideas, and opportunities, as well as important issues often lie in our periphery, waiting for us to connect the dots. Learning to see them before its too late is a skill that you can develop.

## When to use it

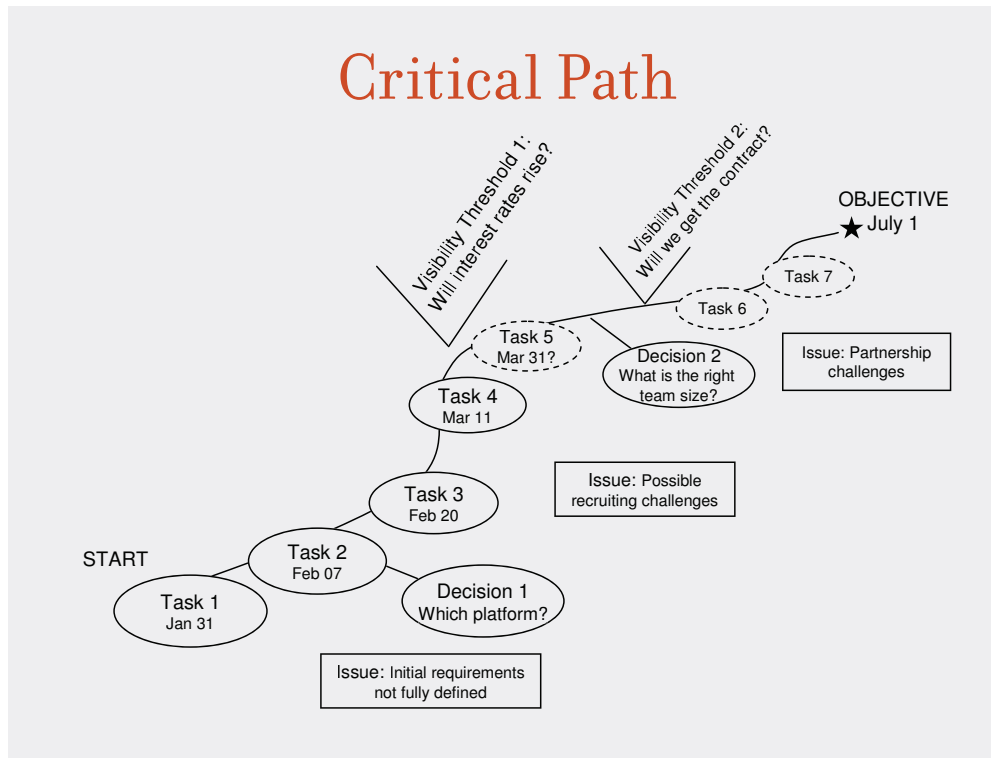
Use this regularly to spot opportunities or issues early on. The exercise that this drawing takes you through is especially helpful during very busy times. It forces you to stop and notice what you are about to miss.



## How to draw it

1. Draw an oval in the middle of your paper.
2. Inside the oval write "WHAT I'M AWARE OF".
3. Outside the circle write "WHAT I WASN'T AWARE OF."
4. Inside the circle, write all the things you are currently aware of.
5. Look for connections between these items and draw lines between any items that have some connection, common ground or synergy. Feel free to make notes or jot down ideas.
6. Sit quietly and think about what other opportunities may exist. Try to have a 360 degree view of the situation, and think about what possibilities lie just outside of your current horizons—just a little outside of the scope of your current frame of reference. As you gain new ideas and insights, write them outside of the circle.

This exercise really is a deliberate method of thinking outside the box, or outside the circle in our case. It helps you learn to use your strategic peripheral vision, and look for connections and synergies you didn't see before.

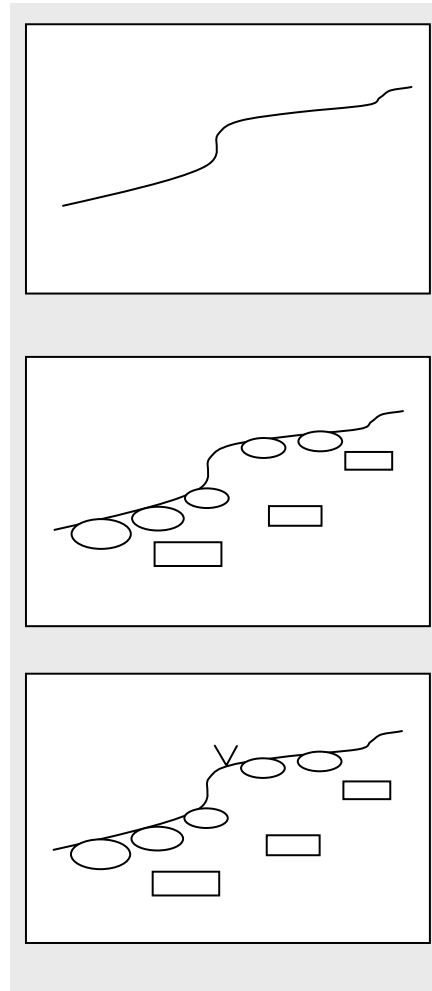


## What it does

The Critical Path drawing helps you think through a sequence of important items you must navigate through in order to reach an objective. Do this exercise with a group to spot risks or issues ahead of time. It is a great tool for discussing likely scenarios or decisions that may become necessary. The Critical Path always frames the discussion in the context of a set of long term objectives. This helps keep your thinking process on track.

## When to use it

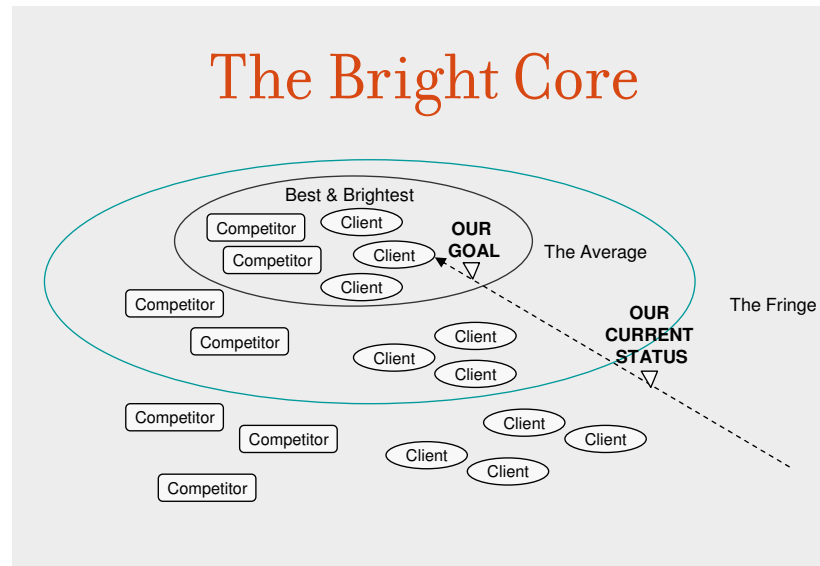
Use the Critical Path drawing regularly to plan (and track) your path toward personal or business objectives. Revisit earlier Critical Path drawings to measure your progress and compare your plans with what actually took place.



## How to draw it

- 1.** Draw a straight or wavy line that illustrates the path to your objective.
- 2.** Along this path, draw ovals at the points where key tasks or decisions are necessary. These are the stepping stones to your objective. Write the name of the task or decision inside each oval.
- 3.** Draw rectangles along the path which represent issues you might have to deal with. What issues are likely to arise, given the nature of the task, the people we are working with, and the typical challenges faced in our line of business? Ask more experienced individuals for their advice.
- 4.** At certain points you may want to draw a large “V” to represent a Visibility Threshold: a point where you gain insight or knowledge you previously did not have. This new knowledge may require you to change direction, or it may allow you to make a more informed decision.

## The Bright Core



## What it does

The Bright Core drawing helps you think about your “playing field.” More specifically, where you are in relation to competitors, vs. where you want to be. But it doesn’t just apply to business.

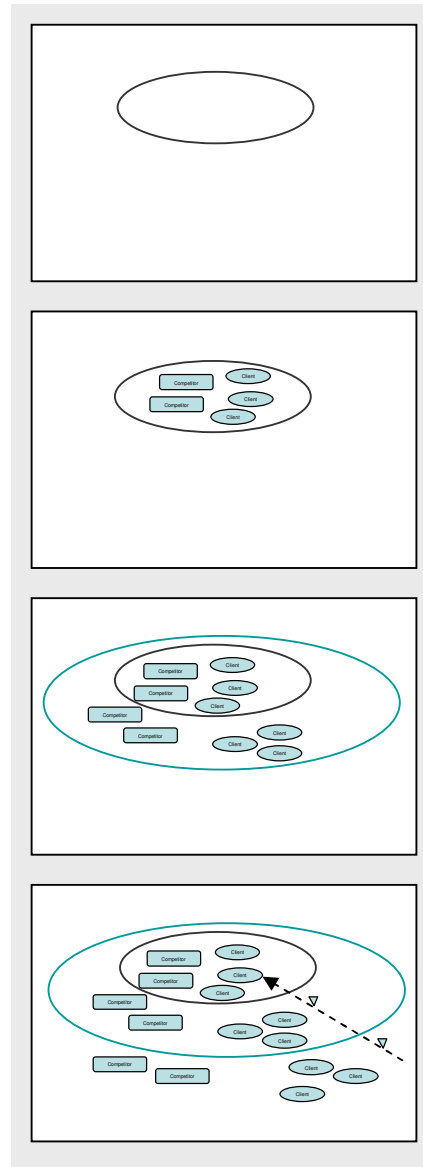
It can help in assessing any situation where there are competitors and opportunities to improve your game.

This drawing uses the analogy of a solar system to categorize the players in your playing field. The smallest circle in the center is the bright core. The set of the best and brightest players. The best competitors, the best customers, best vendors, and the best rewards. And of course, the highest standards. In the middle zone, live the average players. These competitors, clients and vendors may do fairly well, but they are never good enough to play in the bright core. Out in the dark fringe, the weakest players languish and struggle to eek out an existence. Low quality vendors and clients who need each other because no one else would ever want to work with them.

## When to use it

Use this drawing plan your path to excellence. It will help you select employers, clients and partners, and determine who you want to work with, learn from and emulate.

## How to draw it



**1.** Draw a circle in the middle of the paper. This is the bright core. Inside this circle write the names of the best and brightest players in your industry or region. If you want to, you can differentiate clients, vendors, competitors by writing them inside different shapes. (In my example, clients are inside ovals and competitors are enclosed in rectangles).

**2.** Draw a larger circle around the inner circle. Put the average players in this circle. The area outside of this circle is what we call the “Dark Fringe”. In this area, list the below average players.

**3.** Draw a line that runs from the outside—the Dark Fringe—to the Bright Core in the innermost circle. On this line, mark your current position, and your desired position.

**4.** Key Questions: Is my social network, or my business development network, in good alignment with my interests or my goals for excelling in my field? What do I need to do, to move toward the Bright Core? What does our company need to do to prepare for the more challenging environment in the Bright Core?

## Summary

Some of these drawings have practical applications in business.

Some will help you communicate and present your ideas more effectively.

All of them will help you gain personal clarity and direction for your life.

These drawings are powerful because they are more than drawings... they are mental exercises. They teach you new ways to think about your life, and help you master the skill of foresight. It is not a stretch to say that the constant practice of these simple drawings will take you to the life you want to have.

## info



Get more details or buy a copy of Ralph Perrine's [12 Drawings Calendar](#).

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Ralph Perrine is the author of [America 2076: Pop Technology and the New Future of Democracy](#) and other works. The drawings in this manifesto are excerpted from the monthly calendar [12 Drawings That Will Change Your Life](#), a twelve-month calendar for 2008, available at [www.ralphperrine.com](http://www.ralphperrine.com). Each month you will learn a new drawing, following the simple instructions on how to draw it and what you gain from it. By the end of the year you will have a new vocabulary—a visual vocabulary that empowers you to think, plan and navigate through life on a whole new level.

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