



# LEADER ABILITY



## LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY

Using language that is accessible to organizational leaders and business professionals, we could say that some people are more capable than others, and these differences in “capability” can easily be seen in different contexts. For example, a manager might be great with numbers and strategic planning, but less effective in interpersonal relationships. This issue of

**An integrative framework of this nature allows leaders to incorporate important insights from capacity-specific specialists such as Goleman’s excellent emotional intelligence research and application, Piaget’s classic cognitive development model, Kohlberg’s pioneering stages of moral development, and even Fowler’s stages of spiritual development.<sup>4</sup>**

“competency” is central to organizational performance in general and leadership in particular. Despite the obvious need for a reliable and nuanced method to evaluate and manage people with different “levels of capability” who may excel or disappoint in different contexts, few comprehensive, integrated models exist.<sup>1</sup> Cognitive capacity receives some emphasis in organizational life, and in the past decade “emotional intelligence” has become increasingly popular. What is lacking is an orienting framework that pulls those together along with the other crucial capacities such as moral development and even spiritual development. How do all these capacity models fit together?

An excellent starting place is Howard Gardner’s “theory of multiple intelligences,” which created a benchmark for understanding different and discrete

facets of human capacity. Gardner divides human intelligence into seven types, the first two being linguistic and logical-mathematical, with the remaining five being interpersonal, intrapersonal, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and musical. *Interpersonal* intelligence is the ability to understand other people with regard to their motivations, their modes of operation, and how to work creatively and

cooperatively with them. While interpersonal intelligence is concerned with understanding, relating to, and managing others, *intrapersonal intelligence* concerns itself with the internal, subjective dimension that involves understanding, relating with, and managing oneself. Gardner acknowledges that his distinction of seven intelligences is simply one of many valid ways to frame the various human capacities. His findings can be placed into an AQAL integral framework by considering “quadrants” and “lines.” Integral theorists would situate Gardner’s “multiple intelligences” in the individual interior dimension (the Upper Left in the quadrant diagram). Gardner does not refer to his theory of multiple intelligences as “developmental lines” – a concept that was originally articulated by Wilber in *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* and widely applied

by the faculty of the Integral Institute.<sup>2</sup> However, the capacities that Gardner’s research uncovered can be reflected in individual interior developmental lines which encompass Gardner’s “multiple intelligences,” but are broader in nature.

In *Integral Psychology*, Wilber showed how various developmental lines can be aggregated and synthesized in a comprehensive way using what he calls an “integral psychograph.”<sup>3</sup> Different people have various levels of competency in different areas, and these variations can be illustrated graphically. For example, a person’s level of development in relevant core capacities can be graphed to designate low, medium, or high (or any other number of levels). For applications in an organizational setting, individual capacities can be grouped into six developmental lines: cognitive, sometimes emotional, interpersonal, moral, spiritual, and physical.

In addition to discerning various levels of “capability” using specific capacities or intelligences, several important pioneering developmental researchers such as Robert Kegan and Susann Cook-Greuter have elucidated broad stages that the “self” develops through over time.<sup>5</sup> While these models represent yet another “developmental line,” these “self-line” frameworks are unique in that they incorporate many other lines including cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal into a single presentation that represents a person’s “self identity.” In simple terms, these self-stage models are aggregate frameworks that represent a person’s overall psychological complexity. Kegan’s “Order of Consciousnesses” has been used in

education and the U.S. military for many years and Cook-Greuter and colleagues' "Action Logics" framework has seen widespread popularity in business applications. The latter model is based specifically on research with organizational

There is no shortage of evidence-based research to elucidate the developmental nature of learning, growth, and "organizational excellence." Theorist Elliott Jaques has suggested that the more senior the leader, the longer the time span she

business, society, competitors, workforce, and so on. Elliott Jaques was a pioneer in the field of "job complexity" or "task complexity" and has presented a compelling case that a requisite complexity of consciousness must equal the complexity of the task at hand if workers and their organizations are to be successful.<sup>9</sup> To paraphrase Robert Kegan, if a person's consciousness is insufficient for the challenges they face, they will be "in over their heads."<sup>10</sup> For a summary of several of the developmental lines (and levels) most relevant to leadership, see the chart on the following page.

**We encourage integral leaders to learn skillful ways to engage this issue for productive purposes while avoiding or sidestepping the difficulties that can result when developmental models are presented in the wrong way to the wrong audience.<sup>8</sup>**

leaders, and as such, represents *stages of development of leaders*—and is therefore highly recommended.<sup>6</sup>

As significant as these pioneering efforts are, many organizational leaders, employees and human resources departments are not yet entirely comfortable with the idea of "levels of development." This is especially true with pluralistic (Green)<sup>7</sup> organizations in which hierarchies of any kind may be perceived as limiting, threatening, and/or bad. Even though the topic of "levels of development" may not be popular (or appropriate) in every organizational setting, it is a reality that is unavoidable.

is responsible for managing. Put another way, the longer the time perspective the individual is responsible for, the higher the leadership level, and the more the individual should be rewarded. Peter Senge argues that the justification for hierarchy is breadth. The more senior the leader, the larger span of responsibilities he should assume.

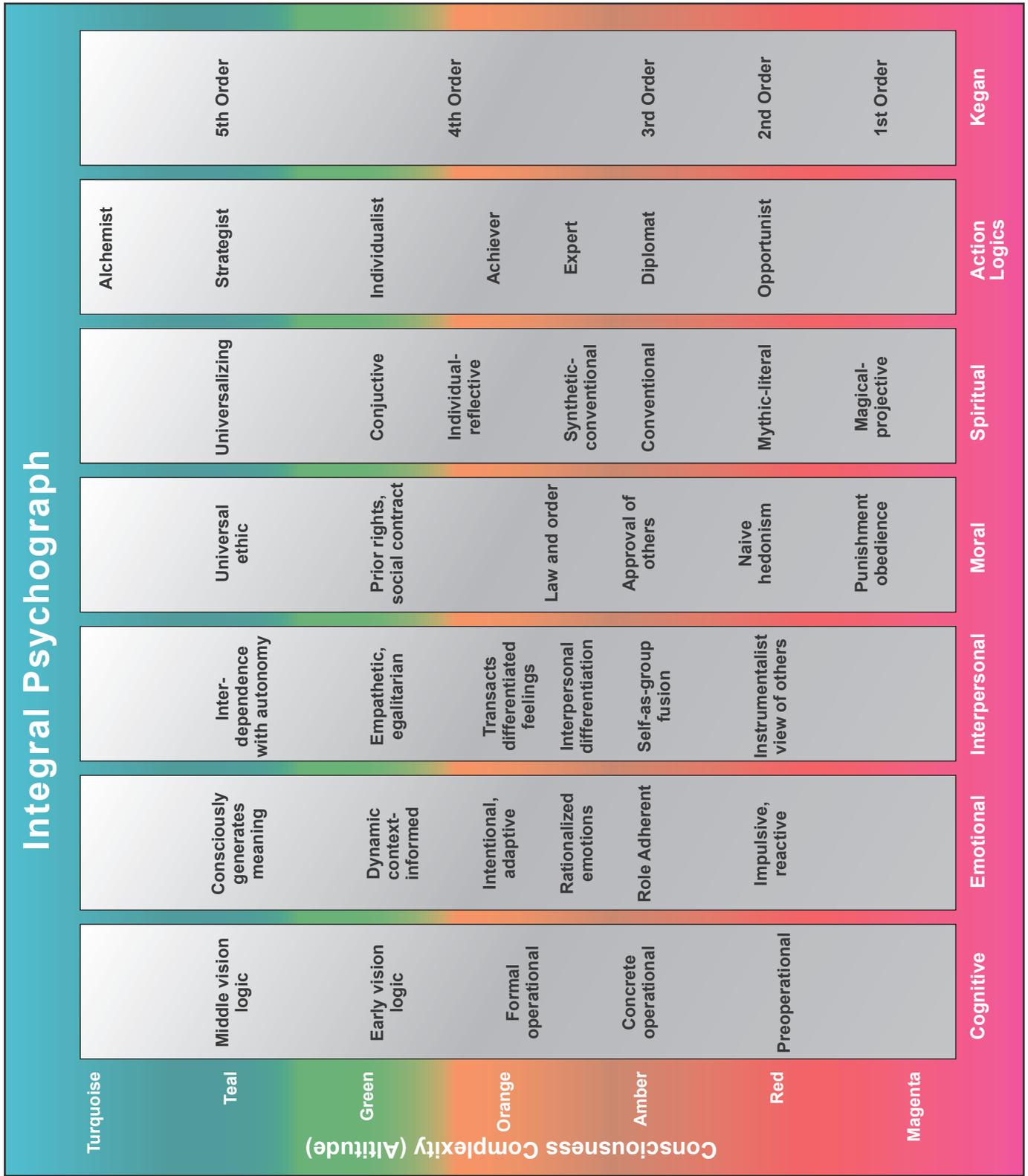
A frontline worker, for example, may only be required to look out to the end of the week and be aware of the micro function for which they are responsible. Whereas a Senior Executive must look 10 or more years ahead to assess the impact of decisions, and must consider the broad system and wide consequences of decisions on

Increasing complexity (higher bands of development) is tied to increasing awareness and skill. More awareness leads to more choices (more options). More choices can be leveraged into approaches, solutions to problems, and organizational strategies that are more likely to achieve desired outcomes. Forty years ago, in *The Effective Executive*, Drucker wrote "Effectiveness reveals itself as crucial to a man's self-development; to organization development; and to the fulfillment and viability of modern society."

**Figure 1: Expanding Perspective Correlated to Job Level<sup>11</sup>**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Breadth of perspective</b>
Senior Executive	10+ years ahead to assess impact of decisions	broad system and wide impacts of decisions on business, society, competitors, and workforce
Mid-level Leader	1-5 years	understand and deal with internal impacts and outside impacts of functional area
Junior professional	Up to a year	understand and deal with immediate impact of work
Worker/nonprofessional	Up to a few weeks	understand and deal with immediate impact of work

# Integral Psychograph



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## ENDNOTES

- 1 Certainly “competency models” abound, yet most are what integral theorists call “flat land” and “first-tier.” Few widely used competency models incorporate “development”—the fact that humans develop increasing competency over time and through predictable stages or waves, each transcending and including the prior stages.
- 2 The notion of “developmental lines” as denoting discrete categories of aptitude or existence can be applied to any of the four quadrants and can be further understood through the convention of “developmental levels,” which describe the hierarchical nature of the line’s unfolding in progressively higher levels of complexity along predictable pathways. Lines of development evidence a natural operation of “transcend and include,” which is to say that each level of a developmental line transcends and includes the level preceding it. This principle can be seen in psychological, socio-cultural, and even material development. For example, as it relates to the material dimension, atoms develop into molecules, which develop into cells that develop into organs. In the socio-cultural dimension, clans develop into tribes, which develop into villages, which develop into townships, which develop into cities, which develop into nation states and so on. For more on developmental lines and developmental levels in all four quadrants, see Wilber’s *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* or *A Brief History of Everything*. This presentation focuses exclusively on developmental lines and levels as seen in individual interiors (the Upper-Left quadrant) that are especially relevant to leadership.
- 3 Ken Wilber has correlated all major developmental theorists’ models (hundreds in all) and summarized his findings in the seminal text *Integral Psychology*.
- 4 See Daniel Goleman’s *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Piaget’s *Psychology of Intelligence*, Kohlberg’s *The Philosophy of Moral Development*, and Fowler’s *Stages of Faith*. Additional materials on levels and lines, including a pioneering integral psychograph framework—complete with both clinical and lay person definitions of six levels on six lines along with more detailed descriptions of low/med/high levels along with examples—are made available to participants at the Integral Leader Seminar.
- 5 See Kegan’s *The Evolving Self* or Cook-Greter’s “Post-autonomous Ego Development.”
- 6 See Harvard Business Review article “The Seven Transformations of Leadership.”
- 7 The color “Green” refers to Wilber’s levels of complexity often referred to as “altitudes.” For more information see Barrett Brown’s excellent introductory paper, “Overview of Developmental Stages of Consciousness.”
- 8 This point cannot be over-emphasized. Many people, when they first discover integral theory, try to explain features such as levels of development, and offend colleagues and co-workers—in some cases, doing irreparable damage to professional relationships. Please use caution when discussing development with others, especially Diplomats (Amber altitude) and Individualists (Green altitude).
- 8 See Elliott Jaques’ “Human Capability: A Study of Individual Potential and Its Application.”
- 9 See Robert Kegan’s excellent constructive developmental psychology texts, *The Evolving Self* and *In Over Our Heads*. (Robert Kegan is both a department head at Harvard and a founding member of Integral Institute.)
- 10 Adapted from *The Encyclopedia of Leadership* by Murray Hiebert and Bruce Klatt