



LEADING OTHERS



WORKING WITH OTHERS

This handout expands on one aspect of the AQAL Leadership Model,¹ namely describes the dimension of the model concerned with the AQAL Matrix arising in others (or the “We”).²

“Because the ‘players’ in an information-based organization are specialists, they cannot be told how to do their work,” writes Peter Drucker in Harvard Business Review. “There are probably few orchestra leaders who could coax even one note out of a French horn, let alone show the horn player how to do it. But the conductor can focus the horn player’s skill and knowledge on the musicians’ joint performance. And this focus is what the leaders of an information-based business must be able to achieve.”³

Integral leaders may naturally resonate with Drucker’s orchestral analogy. Leading others is analogous to conducting a diverse group of people, each with specialized capabilities and tasks to perform. Unfortunately, many leaders do try to persuade a French horn player to produce piano sounds. Human capacities are poorly differentiated to the untrained eye and the average leader simply cannot tell a French horn gift from piano playing skill. The AQAL components, “lines and levels,” and the integral psychograph, provides one way that leaders can better

recognize the strengths and limits of people and can be more informed about how to delegate to them, support them, and develop them.⁴

Perspective-taking is a central practice of integral practitioners, and the most fundamental perspectives are *I*, *We*, and *It*.⁵ In his classic work, *I and Thou*, philosopher Martin Buber distinguishes what he calls “I-Thou” from “I-it” relationship. Leaders who make the error of failing, however fleetingly, to recognize the multidimensional reality that arises in another, inadvertently reduces a “subject to subject” interaction to a “subject to object” exercise.

While few would openly admit to viewing or treating others, especially followers, as “Its” or “objects,” this is precisely what occurs when leaders reduce a human being to an “it” by only considering their external behavior at the expense of the person’s “interior.”

Integral theory often uses the convention of first person, second person, and third person perspective to bring additional nuance to interpersonal dynamics. The fundamental realization of another person’s humanity is a prerequisite for moving from two separate “I’s” into a shared experience of “We”. A “We” only emerges when two “I’s” are in reso-

nance. The importance of resonance—or in its higher form: trust—is an essential factor in effective leadership. Integral leaders work to cultivate a “We” in their relationships by recognizing the AQAL matrix arising in the other (after or simultaneously being aware of the AQAL matrix arising in self), and by more deeply understanding others, chiefly by stepping into their perspective and “meeting them where they are.”

The AQAL Leadership Model may show us when, where, and with whom, different approaches may work, or not, and why. Leadership “styles” are a good example of an approach that works well with different people in different circumstances, yet when and where each is best suited is not commonly known. Most readers are familiar with various leadership styles including: the autocratic leadership style, the traditional leadership style, the transactional leadership style, the transformational leadership style, and so on. These well-known styles draw upon the major “schools” of leadership theory.

Unfortunately, many of the proponents of these various styles assume that their style is the “best” style and should be used primarily, and often to the exclusion of other styles. Organizational leaders who read the literature associated with a given style

THEORY AND PRAXIS OF INTEGRAL LEADERSHIP

Theory Framework

AQAL Matrix Arising in Self X AQAL Matrix in Others X AQAL Matrix in Organization

Praxis Framework

- AQAL Awareness (akin to strategic thinking)
- AQAL Approach (akin to strategic planning)
- AQAL Action (akin to execution)

Altitude	Action Logic	Typical Worldviews	Leadership Style (Schools of Leadership)
Teal	Strategist	Integral	Integral Leadership (includes all below)
Green	Individualist	Postmodern	Collaborative Leadership (a.k.a. transformational)
Orange	Achiever	Modern	Strategic Leadership
Amber	Diplomat/Expert	Traditional	Authoritarian Leadership
Red	Opportunist	Imperial	Autocratic Leadership

In practice, integral leadership is usually “two-to-one” which in integral theory parlance means “2nd Tier” interacting with “1st Tier.”¹⁰ Each level or stage of development has its own “dominant mode of discourse.” Put simply, people at different levels speak different (meaning-making) languages and have different motivations, drives, needs, and goals.

are rarely provided with any guideline as to which style works with which people.

Further, different leadership styles may not even be comprehensible or useable to certain leaders. An integral approach—that takes the interiors of the individual leaders and followers into perspective—can provide reliable guidelines in this regard. In this brief introductory text, we will limit our discussion of leadership styles to pointing out how quickly integral theory can inform leaders. One of the most important developmental lines is the “self line.”⁶ Several self-line theories are available, and one of the most relevant of these to leadership is “Action Logics” developed by Bill Torbert, David Rooke, Susann Cook-Greuter and associates. Borrowing some of their labels, and combining this with Wilber’s color-code names for levels of consciousness complexity (which he calls altitudes), we can quickly see that people at different stages of development resonate with and benefit from different “schools of leadership.”⁷ (See Illustration.)

Peter Drucker wrote, “If we required saints, poets, or even first-rate scholars to staff our knowledge positions, the large-scale organization would simply be absurd and impossible. The needs of large-scale

organizations have to be satisfied by common people achieving uncommon performance. This is what the effective executive has to make himself able to do. Though this goal is a modest one, one that everyone should be able to reach if he works at it, the self-development of an effective executive is true development of the person. It goes from mechanics to attitudes, values and character, from procedure to commitment.”⁸

While much of the leading edge of integral theory research focuses on the very high bands of human development, especially the integral waves of development referred to as “second tier” encompassing Wilber’s higher altitudes of Teal and Turquoise⁹ Drucker’s insight that the bulk of the work that gets done in organizations is completed by “common people” is extremely informative for integral practitioners. Today, it is exceedingly rare to lead other integral people (no more than one or two are usually found on even the most talented teams).

Given the fact that less than 5% of the population has developed to the higher integral bands, as an integral leader, odds are you will be leading non-integral followers the vast majority of the time.

To be an effective integral leader, one needs to become sufficiently familiar with these levels, learn to recognize them in others, and learn to communicate and work with them in skillful ways. This is often referred to as “skillful means” and represents one of the hallmarks of integral leaders.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 See the article “Integral Leadership Primer.”
- 2 The AQAL Matrix refers to “all quadrants, all lines, all levels, all states and all types” arising in each person with which a leader interacts. For more information, see the article “Integral Leadership Primer.”
- 3 Using the Loevinger/Cook-Greuter scale of self-stages, these higher bands are called Autonomous, Construct-Aware, and Ego-Aware. In Action Logics, they are referred to as the Strategist and Alchemist stages.
- 4 See “Leader Ability” handout.
- 5 “I,” “We,” and “It” is shorthand for I/We/It/Its which is in turn shorthand for the four quadrants.
- 6 See “Leader Ability” handout.
- 7 For more information see Barrett Brown’s paper, “Overview to Developmental Stages of Consciousness.”
- 8 *The Effective Executive*, 1966 (Drucker).
- 9 Using the Loevinger/Cook-Greuter scale of self-stages, these higher bands are called Autonomous, Construct-Aware, and Ego-Aware. In Action Logics, they are referred to as the Strategist, Alchemist stages, and in Spiral Dynamics (values line) Yellow, Turquoise vMememes.
- 10 “First Tier” is generally understood to include all the levels that proceed the integral (Teal) level. Teal is the first level on the “Second Tier”