What's Integral about Leadership?
A Reflection on Leadership and Integral Theory

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Abstract: This article provides an introduction to the idea of integral leadership. It describes the basic premises of integral theory, focusing on the four quadrants, levels or stages of development, and lines or streams of development. It briefly examines the relationship of consciousness to leadership, and then provides an overview of the history of leadership theory from an integral perspective. It then suggests a distinction between an integrally informed approach to leadership and integral leadership, and closes with questions deserving further inquiry.

Keywords: integral, leadership, consciousness, development, transpersonal.

Introduction

What's integral about leadership? I hear the term "integral" being applied to just about everything these days. There is integral psychology, integral ecology, integral education, integral kabbalah, integral politics, integral naked, and even this journal, the *Integral Review*. Leadership is no exception to this phenomenon. There are seminars on integral leadership, academic programs on it, marketing slogans based on it, and essays aiming to define it. Integral seems to be the buzzword of the times in many circles.

All this talk about integral this and integral that leads to assuming some widespread common understanding of what integral means. While there does seem to be a basic common cognitive knowledge of the main aspects of integral theory, what it means to apply the theory (let alone naturally embody an integral consciousness) is at best a project just beginning, and at worst a rationalization for private agendas. This state of affairs makes for a broad spectrum of offerings on the subject. For my part, in this article I will present observations on my experience with both integral theory and leadership theory, and speculate on implications that have emerged for me. I have engaged in an ongoing personal inquiry in both of these areas, and it is my hope that these reflections will open up space for the inquiry of others as well.

So why do I care enough to write about this? As I think back, I realize that there has been a thread, or trajectory in my life that has brought me to pursuing this question. Early on in life I was exposed to notions of leadership somewhat indirectly. I grew up on a farm, and my father was involved in agricultural politics, as well as some local church leadership issues. I seldom witnessed any of this activity directly, but it did seem to seep into the implicit context informing my early development. Looking back on early experiences with friends and neighbors, at school and so on, I can see how I wrestled in my own way with a question – how could groups of people accomplish things together?

Of course at such an early age the ways of doing such things was implicit for me. As I matured and had children, I came to be more involved in community activities, especially around their education. I found myself in positions of leadership, not from seeking them, but because nobody else seemed interested, or able to do the job. Experiences like these led me to begin questioning why others seemed confounded by the demands of such positions.

Eventually, such questions led me to the formal academic study of leadership. My involvement in community activities (I never actually worked in a business or organization) continued to reveal that people tended to operate from levels of consciousness inadequate for the situation. My formal study of leadership confirmed this, and also began to reveal a way to deal with the situation as I read of attempts to cultivate leadership.

Concurrent with this trajectory in my life was another one, and I have only recently been able to begin consciously integrating the two. I recall an evening conversation with a friend when I was 19. In the course of our discussion of esoteric topics, he stated that he wanted the ability to bend spoons psychically like Uri Geller. This drew out of me a response that I wanted the ability to change consciousness. While it has taken decades to realize the implications of that unanticipated pronouncement, it reflected a deep drive within me. It led to taking up a spiritual practice and eventually to pursuing a concurrent academic agenda (along with my course work in leadership studies) in the field of consciousness studies. My dissertation research (on *The Consciousness of Transpersonal Leadership*) began an attempt to integrate these threads, and has informed my understanding of the relevant issues in leadership and in integral theory.

In the course of my studies, I came across integral theory as a comprehensive framework for understanding the context for what I been learning and experiencing. For instance, I had wondered how to understand the seemingly competing truths of various theories on leadership over the last hundred years. I wanted to see the complexity of thought that has emerged as a coherent whole. I also wondered how the implications of a spiritual or transpersonal perspective could become meaningful and relevant in the context of figuring out how people could accomplish things together. It is these questions that will guide my reflections in this article.

To provide a snapshot of how I view these questions today, I will lay out what I view as the essential elements of integral theory, my thoughts on the development of leadership theory in this context, and then make a distinction between integrally informed and integral leadership in order to try and sort out what is integral about leadership. In making this distinction, I hope to find a useful way to distinguish why I would talk about integral leadership apart from all of the other ways of discussing it.

Integral Theory

Integral theory has as its goal to contextualize the "truth" about everything – that is, to show the domain of validity of any theory – its truth and its limitations, as well as the relationship of the theory to other theories.

> "An integral vision" - or a genuine Theory of Everything - attempts to include matter, body, mind, soul, and spirit as they appear in self, culture, and nature. A vision that attempts to be comprehensive, balanced, inclusive. A vision that therefore embraces science, art, and morals; that equally includes disciplines from physics to spirituality, biology to aesthetics, sociology to contemplative prayer; that show up in integral politics, integral medicine, integral business, integral spirituality. (Wilber, 2000b. p. xii)

Grounded in the work of Ken Wilber and those who have influenced his work (such as Jean Gebser, James Mark Baldwin, Jurgen Habermas, Abraham Maslow and Sri Aurobindo), it seeks a level of integration that has historically played out in debates between competing points of view. This is as true for the field of leadership theory as it is in hard sciences such as physics, or in the social sciences.

It is this capacity of integral theory to contextualize things, place them in a framework, that has been most useful for me as I have endeavored to understand the questions articulated above. I have found great value in the recognition of integral theory (in a way similar to post-modernism) that everyone is in some way right in their view. This validation of multiple truths has enabled me to hold my relationship to others with a more humble attitude. At the same time, knowing that each view also has its limitations, that all truths are not *equally* right, (not as present in post-modernism) has helped me understand, in very specific ways, how and why some views are more useful than others in a given context.

A core aspect of integral theory that resonates with me is how Wilber's conception of it is guided by a fundamental principle of wholeness. For me, this wholeness represents a transrational way of framing things. Gebser's (1985) notion of integral consciousness as being a "world[view] (that) goes *beyond our conceptualization*" (emphasis in the original, p. 267) points clearly to its being beyond our rational analytical mode of knowing the world. My experiences from spiritual practice, research in transpersonal areas of consciousness studies and psychology, as well as studies in hermeneutics and quantum physics have all reinforced and validated this view of the fundamental nature of wholeness.

To look more closely at integral theory I will focus on three fundamental aspects of the model that have been useful to me; the four quadrant model, levels or stages of development, and lines or streams of development.

The Four Quadrant Model

In my life I have encountered many varied points of view, most of which do not tend to agree with mine. At the same time I often perceive an underlying commonality in experience with others. As I struggled to understand why this was the case, coming across this aspect of Wilber's articulation of integral theory was very useful. With the four quadrant model, I could see how others were tending to emphasize different aspects of the wholeness of their experience in perception. This model shows that any phenomenon can be characterized along a pair of axes, a continuum between poles of internal and external aspects, as well as individual or collective aspects. Table 1 shows how these four quadrants map out the different domains.

The upper left hand quadrant covers the interior individual aspects of experience, and are intentional. This quadrant includes areas of study such as psychology. The lower left hand quadrant covers the interior collective aspects, and describes the cultural world space, and includes the interpersonal domain of relationships. The upper right hand quadrant covers the exterior individual, and is behavioral in its focus. It also covers the physical sciences such as physics, chemistry, geology etc. Finally, the lower right hand quadrant is the exterior collective, or social system, and includes approaches like sociology.

Table 1: The Four Quadrant Model
(Adapted from Wilber, 2000)

	Interior	**Exterior**
Individual	Intentional	Behavioral
Collective	Cultural	Social

The holistic principle underlying the integral model shows up here as a fundamental inter-connectedness. Wilber (1996) notes that "a pathology, a 'sickness,' in any quadrant will reverberate through all four quadrants, because every holon has these four facets to its being" (p. 138). An example he gives is of a society with

slave wages for dehumanizing labor (lower right quadrant), reflecting in low self-esteem for laborers (upper left quadrant), and corresponding dysfunctions in brain chemistry (upper right quadrant), leading to alcohol abuse becoming institutionalized (lower left quadrant). Thus a dysfunction that shows up most prominently in any one quadrant is also present in the entire system.

Levels or Stages of Development

The most helpful aspect of integral theory for me has been the concept of stages of development. Having a way to clearly distinguish stages of the evolution of a host of aspects of human nature (more on this in the next section) has enabled me to make coherent meaning out of previously baffling experiences. It has also helped me work more effectively with other people, taking into account how to communicate in ways that will make sense for them at a given stage of development.

Developmentalism is a key element of integral theory. The process of development is one of a fusion or identification with one level, a differentiation from or transcendence of that level, and an integration and inclusion of the new level. This process, while fluid, tends to stabilize or center itself around definite stages, or levels that are clearly recognizable. A number of theorists have set out models of development, based on extensive research, that Wilber has drawn on for his integral model. While there are differences in the number of stages listed in some models, and differences in terms of what lines of development is being looked at (ego, cognitive, moral, emotional, spiritual etc.), there is remarkable similarity in the overall patterns discerned by researchers.

A good description of the process of how our self sense develops comes from Robert Kegan (1994, 1982). Kegan describes how two basic personality structures relate to each other as development evolves. One structure is our sense of self as an object, something which one can consciously examine, suspend, or have a relationship with. The other is our sense of self as subject, or the structure from which we construct order from experience. The relationship between the subject and object fluctuates. Overall, this relationship is dynamic and evolving continuously in various dimensions. Within this dynamic evolution, there are periods of relative stability during which the self has a period of identification with each level, or order, of consciousness.

> Subject-object relations emerge out of a life-long process of development; a succession of qualitative differentiations of the self from the world, with a qualitatively more extensive object with which to be in relation created each time; a natural history of qualitatively better guarantees to the world of its distinctiveness; successive triumphs of 'relationship to' rather than 'embeddedness in.' (Kegan, 1982. p. 77)

This qualitative differentiation allows for distinct qualities and characteristics to be recognized as gains of each level. The "more extensive object" that we gain the capacity to be in relationship to at each level continually enlarges our capacities for acting in the world.

An example of a developmental model that illustrates this process comes from Bill Torbert (2004). His research has identified eight distinct levels of development, or what he calls action-logics. At each level, a new organizing principle, or action-logic emerges as the self as subject from which one makes meaning and order out of experience. What had previously been the operating logic of the self as subject at the previous level is now a self as object, or an object of

reflection, governed by the new operating principle. Thus the development of each stage transcends and includes what came before.

One begins at the impulsive level, where impulses rule behavior. At the second level, needs rule impulses, making an object out of what was the self as subject. At the third level, norms from society rule needs. At the fourth level a person has the norms of society as an object, and is ruled by a craft logic, or expert mentality. A person moves to level five when the self as subject operates through system effectiveness, and has craft logic as an object to relate to. Level six brings a capacity for reflexive awareness that rules the need for system effectiveness. At level seven, a self-amending principle rules reflexive awareness, and at level eight, process (an interplay of principle and action) rules over the self amending principle. From these descriptions, the "more extensive object" Kegan talks about is illustrated through the progressive expansion of what one is capable of having a relationship to rather than being embedded in.

Lines or Streams of Development

I noted above that the concept of developmental stages applies multiple aspects, or lines of human nature. In each of these lines, also sometimes described as streams of development, the process of evolving from simple to more complex relationships to these aspects of our human existence is similar to the one described for our self sense. Examples of other lines of development are intellectual, emotional, relational, spiritual, ethical, aesthetic, physical. Note that these relate to the individual quadrants, internal and external, the latter since there are corresponding behaviors associated with the internal streams. Thus the "the *overall self*, then, is an amalgam of all these 'selves' insofar as they are present in you right now . . . all of them are important for understanding the development or evolution of consciousness." (Wilber, 2000a. p. 34)

One implication of differentiating the various streams of development is that it helps us understand how we can be at different levels of development in different areas of our lives. We can have very well developed intellectual capacity, with poor moral development. Or we can have high levels of emotional and interpersonal development, but have stunted spiritual development. A central line of development is that of consciousness. My early interest in working with consciousness and my later formal study of the subject makes it is worth explicit attention on its own.

Consciousness

Consciousness is a core aspect of integral theory. Consciousness is seen as a fundamental component of reality by many researchers in fields like transpersonal psychology, quantum physics, and even leadership. Debashis Chatterjee (1998) notes that consciousness is not the result of processes in the human brain, but rather "an integral, unchanging entity characterized by the qualities of wholeness and indivisibility" that orchestrates all of the complex tasks of the human brain. In this context, even our self sense, or identity, is shaped by our level of consciousness.

Chatterjee goes on to explain that while;

> there can be various states of consciousness, . . . these different states do not alter the
> fundamental nature of consciousness. . . it is not consciousness that changes, but it is our

> way of becoming conscious that changes from one human being to another. (Chatterjee, 1998, pp. 35-6)

This reflects the self's personal *experience of* consciousness as changing, contrasted with the impersonal *nature of* consciousness itself as unchanging.

One way Wilber describes the developmental levels of consciousness is in terms of a ladder, with the rungs representing the different levels, or stages of consciousness. First, the rungs themselves represent the various levels of consciousness as fulcrums, or centers of gravity in the stages of consciousness. It is the self sense, identity, or ego, that climbs the ladder. This self has complex levels of development within itself, but tends to be centered around one particular rung at any given time. As this self climbs the rungs on the ladder, it gains a perspective, or world view corresponding to that rung. Thus there is the ladder, the self that climbs the ladder, and the world view from each rung.

Consciousness and Leadership

The intersection of consciousness with leadership is where the trajectories of my own life have come together. In doing my dissertation research, I came across a number of authors who had undertaken similar lines of inquiry. Chatterjee (1998) goes on to say that "leadership is not a science or an art, it is a state of consciousness" and that "we can now begin to grasp the phenomenon of leadership as the field of awareness rather than a personality trait or mental attribute" (p. 24). Harald Harung (1999) has done studies of leadership based on Transcendental Meditation. Harung's primary principle is "that how people perform, individually and collectively, is fundamentally controlled by one factor – human development" (p. 7)

In a study of world class leaders, Harung, Heaton, Graff, and Alexander (1995) describe how peak performance was related to experiences of higher states of consciousness. Findings showed that, compared to people in a normal population, a significantly higher percentage of world class performers had frequent experiences of higher states of consciousness. Descriptions of these experiences also listed heightened awareness as the major focal point. Harung et al. also noted a generalizability of peak performance to a wider range of activities, indicating that these higher states of consciousness were not tied to specific forms of activity or training.

Torbert's work, described earlier, provides another example of the relationship between consciousness development and leadership capacity. A long term study done by Torbert and associates clearly showed that the success of organizational transformation efforts was dependent upon the level of consciousness of leadership. In order to handle the complexity of change required for organizational transformation today, a level seven consciousness was required in CEOs.

These few examples of the centrality of consciousness to both integral theory and leadership point to the seeds of an integral approach to leadership that will be discussed later. In some ways they represent the result of a century of thought on the subject of leadership.

A Brief History of Leadership Theory

The brief introductory overview of integral theory provided above follows one of the main trajectories of inquiry in my life, the development of consciousness. The other main trajectory has been around understanding leadership. As I have moved along this trajectory, a question that has arisen for me is; how did leadership theory get to the place where it is beginning to take an

integral perspective? This section will follow this question by examining some of the main themes of leadership theory over the last century. Along the way I will apply the integral framework to the different theories. While there are many attempts to synthesize current and historical understandings of leadership, they often attempt this integration from the same level of consciousness as the theories they are integrating. This leads to a lack of perspective essential to the integration. Applying an integral framework to an examination of leadership can provide the necessary meta-perspective to move beyond current theories towards pointing out what an integral approach to leadership might look like.

An Integral Perspective on Leadership Theory Development

The four quadrant model of the integral framework can provide a useful way to look at how tensions in leadership theory development have emerged over time. The fundamental holistic principle underlying the integral perspective reminds me not to fit theories neatly within a quadrant. Instead, I have come to recognize that they represent lenses that frame our perception along certain lines. Actual experience always encompasses all four quadrants. Thus in leadership studies, the lens of leader's character and traits emphasize the upper left quadrant, or the intentional realm. Leader behavior and style shifts attention towards the upper right, or behavior quadrant. Cultural issues such as role expectations, implicit or explicit group norms and values are the focus attention of the lower left or cultural quadrant, and organizational structure issues generally emphasize the lower right, or social quadrant.

Examining the history of leadership theory along the axes of the four quadrant model, I see a tension between internal aspects of leadership, seen in areas such as traits and qualities on the individual side, and culture and communication on the collective side, with external aspects such as skills and behaviors for the individuals, and organizational structure and position for the collective. Also, there is a tension along the vertical axis that runs from the individual or agency aspect of leadership at the top to the communal or collective aspect at the bottom. This continuum is seen clearly in the history of leadership theory. There is a fundamental tension between the effect and role of the individual and the effect and role of a host of other factors including followers and their relationship to leadership, as well as to the context, situation, or environment.

Trait Theory

A hundred years ago, the value of the individual and the role of groups were hotly debated. While followers of Marx pointed to economic and social class factors in the progression of society, and followers of Darwin looked to the nature of biology as a determining factor, William James was defending "the notion that individual human beings can and do make a difference in the course of history" (Harter, 2003. p. 4) and that the study of such individuals is a valuable contribution to leadership.

This set the stage for some of the first systematic attempts to study leadership in the beginning of the 20th century, and contributed to the development of a trait oriented theory. Trait theory is also known as the "Great Man" theory, or the heroic model of leadership. It posited that by identifying the innate qualities and characteristics possessed by great social, political, and military leaders, one could find appropriate kinds of people to hold the reigns of power. (Northouse, 2001) This theory focused leadership almost exclusively in the upper left quadrant, with it being about individuals and their innate, intentional qualities and characteristics.

Style Theory

As time went on and people examined the trait approach to leadership theory and application, its limits became more apparent. For one thing, the growth of business in North America and elsewhere led to an increasing need for people in positions of management that entailed leadership capabilities, and there were not enough "Great Men" to go around. Thus there was a shift in emphasis in leadership theory from the "Great Man" personality trait that was innate, to the need to see leadership in terms of styles of personality and behavior that could be learned. This moved leadership theory into a focus on the upper right quadrant.

The style approach to leadership conceptualizes leadership as a "form of activity" and focuses on what leaders do and how they act. This includes the actions of leaders toward subordinates in various contexts (Northouse, 2001). A limitation of this shift in perspective from an integral view is that it fragmented leadership theory by not connecting the interior trait aspects of leadership with the exterior behavioral aspects.

As the style approach was developed over time, it identified two broad categories of leader behavior; task and relationship, expanding attention into the lower right quadrant as well as the upper right. Several important studies done in the 50's and 60's (e.g. Ohio State, Blake and Mouton) examined ways leaders mixed task and relationship to create a particular leadership style. This move into the relational aspects was also influenced by the concurrent growth of group dynamics approaches to leadership.

Group Dynamics Theory

While this move from trait to style still primarily focused on the individual, others were looking at the role of group dynamics in leadership, moving down the vertical axis into the collective domain. A definition that emerged in the 1930's stated that "Leadership is personality in action under group conditions. . . . It is also a social process" (Rost, 1991. p. 47). Rost describes how during the 30's the influence of sociologists recognized that leadership had a huge relational aspect – that leaders did not lead in a vacuum, but that they were dependent on the group. This group dynamic view of leadership continued to gain prominence during the 40's and 50's, in part fueled by the impact of the famous Hawthorne studies.

Situational Leadership Theory

As the study of leadership progressed, the limitations of trying to explain all leadership through theories that emphasized either the individual or the group became apparent to some researchers. Hersey and Blanchard developed the situational approach to leadership theory in the late 60's. This approach was based on the premise that different situations demand different kinds of leadership (Northouse, 2001). In the situational approach, a leader assesses the development level of subordinates and matches his or her leadership style (a mix of directive and supportive elements) to the subordinates needs in the particular situation. This represents a step towards being more sensitive to the context of leadership, an important integral principle, and indicates beginning to include the lower right quadrant in the picture. It should also be noted that what is meant by development level of followers is not necessarily the same as the levels of development of consciousness used in integral theory, but do represent a line of development, making distinctions between levels of capacity in people.

Other Theories

Other leadership theories have emerged over the last 30 years or so that looked for ways to better address the increasing complexity of the topic as researchers kept questioning the gaps between existing theories and experience. Contingency theory, similar to situational theory, looked to match the traits of leaders (upper left) with the context (lower right). This theory suggests that a leader's effectiveness depends on how well the leader's style fits the context, and that effective leadership is *contingent* on matching a leader's style to the right setting (Northouse, 2001).

Path-goal theory was the first leadership theory to strongly emphasize the leader/follower relationship through its focus on the level of motivation of the follower (lower left quadrant focus, also introducing a line of development, motivation). This theory was a kind of contingency approach that emphasized the relationship between the leader's style and the characteristics of the subordinates and their work setting (Northouse, 2001). As a style approach (upper right quadrant) rather than a trait approach, it sees that appropriate behaviors can be taught, and is thus less dependent on the traits of the leader and more amenable to training.

The psychodynamic approach is an attempt to explore the emotional factors at play within the leader-follower relationship. This brings another line of development into the picture, and has been developed more recently by Goleman (2002, 1995). From an integral perspective, emotional intelligence makes an important distinction of a key element of the interior aspects of leadership.

Transformational leadership was introduced by Burns (1978) and is concerned with inspiring or motivating followers to achieving higher levels of moral conduct and value based actions. It involved assessing followers' motives, satisfying their motivational needs, and treating them like full human beings. Transformational leadership introduces more lines of development, values and morals, into leadership theory.

Another aspect of an integral view of leadership development is the movement from egocentric views through ethnocentric ones, to worldcentric views. Some of the early trait theories centered on a very egocentric view of leadership. As group dynamic approaches became more popular, the good of the group brought a more ethnocentric view into prominence. An example of a worldcentric approach to leadership can be seen in Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership model, which placed the leader as servant, not primarily of the needs of the individual or company, but of the greater good of humanity. (See review of Greenleaf biography in this issue). Some of this worldcentric level of development can also be seen in transformational leadership.

More recently, there have been a number authors exploring new territory about how to look at leadership and organizations. Most of these new theories have arisen as theorists began to explore more advanced levels of development that recognize a need to respond to the complexity of the post-modern world with new ways of thinking that can meet these challenges. Thinkers such as Margaret Wheatley (1993), Peter Senge (1990, 1999, 2004), Ronald Heifetz (1994, 2002), Debashis Chatterjee (1998), Harald Harung (1999), Dee Hock (1999), Joseph Jaworski (1996), Harrison Owen (2000), Robert Rabbin (1998), Bill Torbert (2004), and Peter Vaill (1996), have all aimed to expand how we view leadership. These explorations have ventured into areas such as consciousness, spirituality, and new scientific theories. They have taken leadership theory into new territory, and help to bridge between older views of leadership and an integral approach to leadership.

Outlining an Integral Approach to Leadership

Having examined some basic principles of integral theory and then the development of leadership theory over the last century, I now turn to outlining what I perceive as the basic elements of an integral approach to leadership. The various leadership theories just examined cover the broad strokes of the territory for understanding the evolution of thinking on leadership, but none puts them all together. Not only that, none of them is grounded in a meta-framework able to contextualize and understand the value of each aspect of and approach to leadership, as well as their relationships to each other. What further distinguishes an integral perspective on leadership is that it also refers to a very specific set of developmental capacities that transcends how leadership has been seen up until now.

In laying out an integral approach to leadership, I want to distinguish between two variations. One is to talk about an "integrally informed" approach to leadership and its development. The other is to talk about "integral leadership." The integrally informed approach has a broad appeal, can be used by a wide spectrum of people, and sets the stage for some very strategic approaches to leadership development. Integral leadership in and of itself refers to a very specific level of development and set of capacities being present in a leader.

Integrally Informed Leadership

In the integrally informed approach, the integral model is utilized by and for leaders across the spectrum of developmental capacities. The advantage this has is that it makes the integral model accessible to those who wish to benefit from its strengths. Strategies for leadership development programs can benefit from understanding the need to address the four quadrants, recognizing specific lines of self that need growth, and tailoring all of this to the levels of development of those in such programs. An example of this is how the U.S. Military Academy at West Point "has updated their curriculum and pedagogy so that it now accounts for a cadet's level of self-development. . . . awareness of levels is primarily a tool for increasing *instructor* awareness and effectiveness" (Putz and Raynor, 2004. p. 13).

A challenge or drawback of this approach is that the capacity to gain intellectual understanding of the integral model can outstrip the ability to actually engage and act from an integrally informed perspective. Anyone using the integral model will comprehend and act on it in a way that is filtered by the leading edge of their developmental capacity. This can lead to a reduction of the concepts and principles of the integral model. This is further complicated by the issue of disparities in development along different lines within a person. These factors can produce a false sense of having grasped the integral model, and misusing it as a tool to justify actions that are less than integral in their scope or intention.

My own initial encounter with the integral model was of great benefit in understanding one situation in particular. At the time I was finding myself continually at odds with a person from whom I had taken over a leadership position in a small community non-profit organization. When we explored the foundation of our understanding of the mission of our organization, we appeared to see things the same way. Yet when we would act on that understanding, clear differences in interpretation would emerge. This led to constant frustration, and confusion for members of this organization dealing with the discrepancies in action and resulting conflict. For a long time I tried to understand this phenomenon without success, until I read through a section of Wilber's *Integral Psychology* that described the relationship of different developmental worldviews. A light went on, and I could see how the similar language between us was being

implicitly interpreted and acted upon in very different ways. This insight allowed me to stop banging my head against the proverbial wall, and begin to take a different approach that, while not totally resolving the situation, allowed me to make significant progress.

The integrally informed approach to leadership can make useful distinctions and bring insight into situations. A growing number of programs are utilizing the integral model to guide how they approach leadership development. Notre Dame University's Mendoza College of Business has begun an Executive Integral Leadership Program (www.nd.edu/~execprog/programs/eilp/). The Leadership Circle (www.theleadershipcircle.com) has begun using a 360 assessment tool that is grounded in the integral model. The number of such programs, as well as consultants and businesses that will make use of the integral model is bound to keep rising, as early adopters continue to have success in meeting the complex demands of leadership development today.

The other variation for approaching integral leadership is often viewed as being a more "elite" approach, as it says that integral leadership is not simply about being informed by integral theory, but is about displaying the level of development necessary to perceive and act from an integral place within oneself.

Integral Leadership

So now I come to the punch line – what's integral about leadership? How does integral leadership distinguish itself from any other kind of leadership? Also, why is it important or even necessary? What can one do as an integral leader that they could not do as any other kind of leader? These are big questions, and to answer them in full is beyond the scope of this article. What I can do is offer a perspective that distinguishes integral leadership in a very specific way, to introduce it as a concept. I can also point to areas for further exploration that take the convergence of these trajectories and project them out. In the end, integral leadership may be both invisible and obvious at the same time. It may exist around or in us, and yet not have the need to appear, or be recognized, unless circumstances elicit it.

To get started, I will draw on a distinction made by Putz and Raynor (2004). They delineate a view of integral leadership in the context of challenges for business to sustain growth in two areas, their existing core business competencies and simultaneously secure future growth through radical innovation that opens up new markets. "We call the ability to manage through paradox – to navigate the apparent irreconcilable demands of creating a sustainable growth business – *Integral* leadership" (p. 2). In examining the essential nature of what is being called for with integral leadership, they say that "the systematic development of the psychological maturity – rather than the intellectual capability" (p. 7) is key to the capacity for integral leadership.

Looking back at the discussion of levels of development, there is clear evidence that this is what is being described as psychological maturity. Kegan's (1994) work identifies five levels of consciousness. Putz and Raynor have adapted this to leadership capacities. Their description provides a specific set of conditions related to an integral consciousness and how it applies to leadership.

Table 2: Levels of Self Development and Leadership (Putz and Raynor 2004, with permission)

Level of Self Development	Subjective Self-Understanding	Leadership Strengths	Leadership Weaknesses
1) Impulsive	"I" am my impulses (like a very young child) and unable to take the perspective of others	None	Leaders not found at this level of development
2) Egocentric	"I" am my needs and desires -able to manage my impulses and to take the perspective of others, but motivated solely by my own needs and desires	Aggressive, "can do" personality	Destructive to teamwork and initiative ("my way or the highway")
3) Interpersonal	"I" am defined by my relationships and social roles – what is "right" is defined by rules, regulations and proper authority (chain of command)	Strong team player and supporter of organizational vision	Independent thinking, mediating competing relationship demands, e.g., boss, family, subordinates
4) Autonomous	"I" create my own identity, inclusive of but not defined by my roles, relationships and the expectations of others	Better able to take independent action and mediate competing relationship demands, e.g., boss, subordinates	Rigid self-identity that is associated with current success and threatened by fundamental change
5) Integral	"I" am a continually evolving person who is *aware* of development in myself and others; "I" have a flexible sense of identity that embraces complexity and paradox on a personal level (not just intellectually) but nevertheless has clear values and boundaries	More adaptive to fundamental change without threat to personal identity; better able to support the self-development of others, and understand oneself in a multi-paradigmatic way	Flexible self-identity may be confusing or threatening to subordinates; might push others to grow before they are ready

Putz and Raynor note that "an Integral leader is able to objectively assess how one's own identity tends to be formed within the frame of a true but partial paradigm and is more capable of evolving their sense of self-identity as required in the face of paradoxical change" (p. 11). This capacity to reframe identity is one way in which integral leadership sets itself apart from other kinds of leadership. This ability also only emerges in specific circumstances, with the above example from the world of business describing the paradoxical nature of such circumstances. These paradoxical circumstances are such that other levels of leadership are not able to meet the challenge, making integral leadership necessary in order to be successful.

When conditions of this nature arise, they are in essence asking a leader to be of two minds, literally, in order to manage the paradox. A leader will need to operate from a level five (See Table 2) consciousness, and choose to construct an appropriate identity, or mind, for operating in each pole of the paradox. An identity, or mind, will be constructed (utilizing a level four consciousness as a tool, or an object of reflection) with specific capacities, tendencies and strengths to engage the world, chosen for best dealing the particular pole of the paradox it is designed for. The leader will then construct another mind with the same process to deal with the other pole of the paradoxical situation. They will then be "of two minds" which can be confusing for those working closely with them! Yet it is this very capacity that is essential to handling the level of complexity brought about by the paradoxical situation.

This ability to be of two minds elicits a question. Who or what is choosing the design and doing the operating of those minds? This question speaks to the heart of the notion of integral consciousness. The lead article in this issue of *Integral Review* discusses Jean Gebser's opening of the integral paradigm, and he is quoted as characterizing the difficulties in representing integral by saying that "this world[view] goes *beyond our conceptualization*" (1985. p. 267). In turn, this leads into transpersonal realms, and notions of the soul. The burning question for me then becomes, what is the nature of this transpersonal beingness, and how does it show up at all of these different levels of consciousness, in leadership, and in our everyday lives?

Conclusion, or at least a pause for now

I now come to the end of this article, and pause to summarize where I have been and where it might lead. Writing this article has enabled me to reflect on two major trajectories in my life – leadership and consciousness. Excursions into the realms of integral theory and the history of leadership theory provided the background in these areas, and led to looking at their convergence in the notion of integral leadership. The question that titles this article, what's integral about leadership, now has the beginnings of a provisional answer. Fleshing out this answer is a subject for future consideration, as is the relationship between transpersonal consciousness to leadership.

So is there something to all the buzz about integral you name it? I find myself of two minds on the question. When I delve into the heart of the issue, I feel that yes, there is something of inestimable value behind the buzz. When I encounter it in the world, whether in application, discussion, or debate, I am not always so inclined to give my hearty approval. This could mean that we are all simply in the early stages of moving into this paradigm, and have not yet distinguished clear markers of its presence. It could at the same time reflect my own struggle to manifest a self in the world in an integral way. These are open questions for me, and reflections on these and other such questions will have to await a future issue of *Integral Review*.

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