

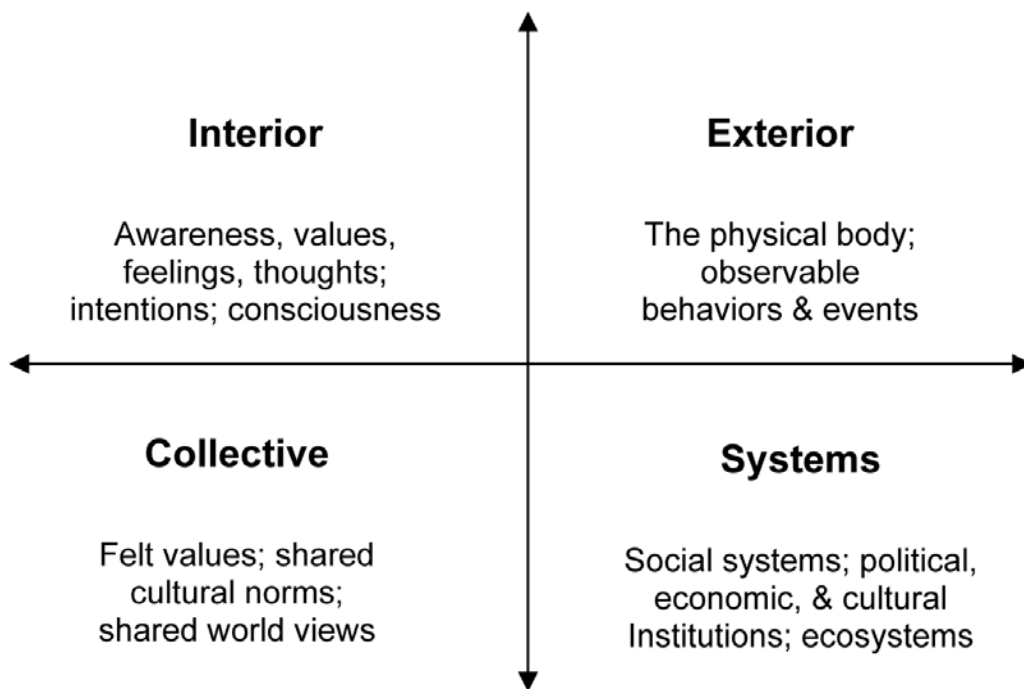
AN INTEGRAL MODEL TO GET STARTED

(excerpted from "Integral Leadership Coaching: A Partner in Sustainability" by Lloyd Raines, published March 2007, Integral Leadership Review.)

Ken Wilber offers a simple set of distinctions as a unifying framework for thinking and acting in the world. In a nutshell, he says there is an interior, exterior, individual and collective reality to almost everything. Take a look at the table below and think about your own life and how your entire human experience is felt and expressed in the quadrants below.

coach to listen for and observe in these four quadrants for potential developmental flex and leverage points. Here are some ways to think about what resides in each quadrant.

The **Upper Left quadrant**, the realm of the individual interior "I" that is known by felt-experience:



These four quadrants can be used as a quick diagnostic of a leader's or an organization's strengths and growth areas (including blind spots), providing a more complete set of considerations for comprehensive development and re-enforcement. When each quadrant is developed to be intentionally attuned with the others, each quadrant becomes a reinforcing feedback loop for the other quadrants. Conversely, if one quadrant is underdeveloped, it can hobble the effectiveness of the other three quadrants. An integral framework cues up the

- *Key leadership skill levels:* awareness of skills ranging from novice to mastery;
- *Moral/maturity levels:* awareness of maturity levels ranging from selfish/self-interested to care to universal care;
- *Lines of development:* awareness of distinctions within and between physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual domains of intelligence; Howard Gardner's seven intelligences;
- *States of physio-spiritual awareness:* basic physical sensations, subtle energetic sensitivities, communion or "flow" experiences;

- *Types of knowing*: awareness of personality preferences, MBTI, Enneagram, learning styles, DiSC, Firo-B, archetypes, etc.

The nature of coaching often involves slowing the leader's awareness of their thought processes and assumptions, emotions, body, and spirit to help them grasp distinctions in their interior world. Coaching conversations (and the exercises and practices coaches suggest) are like little hothouse experiments that later are transplanted into the open field of everyday organizational (and private) life.

Leadership behavior and performance that is known by observation ("It"), in the **Upper Right quadrant**, are assessed and developed by way of:

- 360° feedback tools: (The Leadership Circle, Benchmarks, Executive Dimensions, and many others)
- Brief 360° interviews conducted by coaches or consultants with immediate stakeholder group
- Shadowing of leader in various group situations
- Behavioral practices and experiments tracked as part of a coaching developmental process

Once completed and analyzed, a careful review with the leader of the data gathered is a mainstay of coaching, providing ample openings for contracting and declaring commitments important for the growth of leaders and the organizations they serve. Also, within the **Upper Right** quadrant's focus, connections are made between a leader's physical health, nutrition, sleep, stress levels, and other biological conditions—that directly impact leadership effectiveness.

Between the **Upper Left** (interior) and **Upper Right** (behavioral) quadrants, feedback loops are in continual process. Thoughts, assumptions, emotions and feelings from inside a leader are played out behaviorally (consciously and unconsciously) — potentially prompting self-reflection on the experience and outcomes while also noticing or inquiring about other people's reactions. For that matter, all four quadrants are

intimately linked and engaged in continual synergistic feedback loops – with many linkages occurring below our conscious awareness, while others are consciously identifiable by the leader. The more we are able to deconstruct and understand the content of our feedback loops (i.e., what specific stimulus generates what response), the more our conscious awareness is cultivated, becoming a *learning* loop, allowing either self-corrections (a range of chosen optional responses instead of an unconscious default response) or a reinforcing affirmation.

Through 360° feedback, shadowing, and dialogue, we sharpen the leader's sense of *how they are who they are*, and *how they do what they do* (i.e., their being and their doing). Leaders undertake this exploration and development within the daily realities of their individual roles, as a member of a leadership team, within an organization of employees and stakeholders who share a common culture that live through the metabolism of systems (organizational, social, and ecological).

When looking at the cultural dimension of leadership known by mutual resonance ("We"), **Lower Left quadrant**, there is an array of cultural climate surveys that uncover organizational values.

- The Leadership Circle Culture Survey (Anderson), Cultural Transformation Tools (Barrett) and PeopleScan (Spiral Dynamics integral) – all of which are integrally designed,
- Other in-house designed culture surveys,
- Many pre-developed and customizable cultural assessment tools.

Whatever tool is used for conducting culture scans or climate surveys, coaches are able to access the **Lower Left** quadrant of data for inquiry, awareness, engagement, and alignment *with content from the other three quadrants*. The **Lower Left** quadrant most often holds the key to understanding the level of esprit de corps and vitality within a working community, helps explain low morale, low productivity, sick leave rates, and turnover. Although overlooked by many leaders as "soft information," coaches

know this to be a critical nexus that captures or loses opportunities for tapping the collective intelligence and harnessing the social energy of an organization. As former IBM CEO Lou V. Gerstner expressed it: “I came to see, in my time at IBM, that culture isn’t just one aspect of the game—it is the game” (Inc. 2005).

Leaders who ignore the **Lower Left** quadrant suffer the steady trickle of lost talent, lost capacity, and disengagement with internal and external customers. For those leaders who recognize culture’s centrality, however, this is *the* lever for strengthening bonds, focusing energy, and engaging the best intellect and heart of the entire workforce.

In the **Lower Right quadrant** lives the systems dimension known by systemic observation and analysis (“It/and Social We”) of leadership: from design to implementation and oversight of the organization’s vision, mission, values, and principles, and embedding them in every system, practice, and process in the organization. For example:

- Designing and implementing an ownership structure (absentee-owner, employee stock ownership plan, employee-owned and controlled, etc.), organizational structure (hierarchical, matrixed, collaborative, etc.), systems (financial, budgetary, hiring, evaluation, compensation, benefits, rewards and recognition, etc.), and processes (strategic planning, decision-making, information sharing, feedback systems, development and promotion opportunities, etc.) that are aligned and mutually reinforcing,
- Creating and maintaining learning systems to address changes or opportunities at the local, regional, national, and international systems (socially, culturally, economically, politically, and ecologically).

We live in systems within systems within systems—adding up to a meta-ecology network within our biosphere. The unique impact and alignment of these synergistic force fields

require on-going assessments, tune-ups, and even re-design to maintain dynamic equilibrium, optimal capturing of intellectual and productive energy, and minimal waste of resources. Systems gurus like Francisco Varela, Humberto Maturana, Fritjof Capra, Peter Senge, Edward O. Wilson, Elizabet Sahtouris, Brian Swimme, Margaret Wheatley, Peter Block, and others have provided sophisticated assistance through their writings and field work, but ultimately, each organization is a constellation of systems within a unique environment and must map and journey within their own terrain as it sits within the larger world. There is a good deal of Lewis & Clark’s spirit of exploration into undefined and sometimes treacherous territory here.

The variables that affect the dynamic flow of energy within a workforce takes the efforts of many to discern, and is critical for leaders to understand. Just as doctors track the health and synergy of nine major interdependent systems within our skins (musculoskeletal, respiratory, cardiovascular, digestive, urinary, integumentary, lymphatic and immune, nervous, endocrine, reproductive), so too any organization needs on-going assessments of its own hard and soft systems (e.g., McKinsey’s 7-S Framework: structure, systems, staff, style, strategy, shared values, skills). It is in our self-interest as coaches and leaders to enhance our capacity to listen and observe well, and to learn about interdependencies that support the sustainability of life and organizational life. In the long term, it is an act of enlightened self-interest to act on our natural global interdependencies, acknowledging the reality of one meta-ecology upon which all human life depends.

Our need to understand the impact of our diverse political, economic and cultural systems on the ecological commons (and, therefore, on one another as humans) is inseparable from our pursuit of a peaceful, healthy, productive social life — locally and globally. Social sustainability and ecological sustainability live cheek to jowl. Yet we are not equals with nature. Ecological sustainability has time, wisdom, and enormous resilience on its side. It has continually

regenerated its living systems after major cataclysms, over millions of years. As durable and resilient as nature is, her capacity to meet our needs is increasingly challenged by an onslaught of industrial and consumer-oriented pollution, deforestation, over-fishing, loss of topsoil, and massive species extinction by our hands. Her regeneration is never in doubt. Ours however is.

Holistic interdependence is the actual narrative we are living. Does it show up in the way we coach leaders? Do we coach in active awareness of our positive obligations to the systems that support all life?

Do we have an alternative? We live in a globally intimate, climate-changing, and socially unstable world with resources desired by people worldwide. The puzzle that we share is to figure out how our daily actions as citizens and professionals affect others worldwide, for future generations, and for all living systems. And how do we see the connections between our seemingly minor, inconsequential choices and actions today with the well-being of global systems next year and twenty years from now? From our industrial worldview it's a stretch to take this in, to say the least, but we're getting there. It's a revolutionary change in our mental models and our ways of *being* and *doing* just about everything.