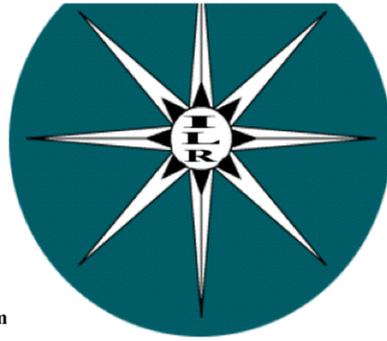


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## Integral Leadership Coaching: A Partner in Sustainability\*

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*This article addresses the shifting and expanding role of leadership and leadership coaching for the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With increasing instabilities from global trends and environmental factors like global warming, leaders (and the coaches who serve them) are challenged with designing strategies that are more integrated in terms of social, environmental, and economic goals. Drawing on the experiences of "early adopter" leaders from the "green" or "triple bottom line" movements, leaders are crafting synergistic ways to harness forces that previously had been perceived as mutually exclusive. In parallel development, leadership coaching is discovering its own strategies for cultivating frameworks, methods, and tools in service to sustainability.*

### **The Leading Edge of Business and the Future of Leadership Coaching**

Climate change is dramatically altering the way we understand ourselves and our relationship with the world around us. Recent instabilities in our climatic and weather patterns have forced leaders in the private, public, and civil sectors to take stock and focus on these structural shifts. Little by little, the realities of climate change are forging a re-examination of how we live, produce, consume, and create waste. We are seeing the web of relationships between nature and our economy – and how the very design of our economic system is problematic. We are being educated about renewable and non-renewable resources, the concept of "the global commons," and tipping points in living systems. And in the process, we are beginning to see more clearly the inter-related nature of economic, ecological, and social well-being.

Even though scientists have been warning policy makers for years of the growing impact of global warming, deforestation, pollution, topsoil erosion, overpopulation, and other critical trends, we are just now in the beginning phase of seriously confronting these crises. We are on a collision path with new global trends that make our way of life more and more untenable.

It has taken over 40 years for the accumulation of scientific research to gradually make its way into the American political dialogue in earnest. A political tipping point in the dialogue occurred in early 2007 when President Bush first acknowledged the reality of global warming. Up until that point, a sliver of influential naysayers and critics managed to forestall any politically-focused efforts from the executive branch. Once acknowledged by the president, however, daily talk about climate change has mushroomed. Ordinary citizens have become more attuned to the importance of carbon emissions, cap and trade policies, ecological footprints, hybrid cars, and the need to re-think and change the very design of how we live and work.

We seem to be on the verge of a paradigm shift, moving from a deeply fragmented way of seeing life to one rich with coherence. After hundreds of years of industrial progress defined as growth and consumption, extracting resources, dumping toxins into the soil, air, water, and wildlife, nature has reached absorption points and is no longer able to cleanse the toxins or replenish its resources. Nature is undergoing structural challenges to its homeostasis in all its major living systems.

With the climb in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels from industry and transportation emissions, vast ice sheets are melting, and the receding ice is releasing methane (23 times more powerful than carbon dioxide) from the previously frozen tundra. The release of methane gas creates a reinforcing cycle of negative feedback



loops, accelerating the pattern of global warming. While the impact of melting ice may be hard to grasp in its implications, there are other symptoms of global warming that are easier to recognize: the progressively hot summers and milder winters, in the US and Europe; more extreme weather conditions – including the number and ferocity of storms, the duration of draughts, and intensity of floods. Climate and weather patterns are changing in front of our eyes.

Ironically, it is the long-term impact of our short-term profit and production system that has brought us full-circle, back to an awareness of our place in the natural order. The crisis of climate change finally repositions science ahead of ideology, bringing an honest accounting of the full costs (internal *and* external) of our systems of production and consumption.

Beyond the traditional bottom line concern for financial success, a *triple bottom line* (TBL) perspective includes strategic concern for social and environmental health and well-being, as well. TBL companies treat all three bottom lines as primary and inextricably linked in the company's strategic plans, goals, and metrics. Over the past 10-15 years, many well-known corporate leaders have come to their own judgments about what good, sustainable business should look like. Johnson & Johnson, Interface, Goldman Sachs, Unilever, Dow, DuPont, Hewlett Packard, Patagonia, Starbucks, and a long list of other familiar companies comprise TBL companies. (For one version of the list, see Esty and Winston 2006, p. 314). Even Wal-Mart has initiated some of the most forward-thinking environmental initiatives in the past year, while also beginning to address concerns raised by critics of its social bottom line record (a lack of health care coverage, low wages, and gender bias).

It is within this larger set of forces that leaders operate today. Leaders who acknowledge and embrace the reality of climate change sooner will be better able to act as responsible stewards for their organization's resources (financial, human, technical, and natural), and keep their companies viable. Embracing climate change's impact is, at its core, a holistic and systems based awareness—connecting the dots between people's thinking, actions, culture, and systems within the broader social, economic and ecological systems within which we live.

Many of these TBL companies previously had been major polluters, yet without being forced by government regulation, they chose to respond to the science-based trends, take the long view on their corporate and fiduciary responsibilities, and change the very design of how they envisioned and implemented their business model.

Prior to early 2007, the concept of "sustainability" was on the fringe of mainstream awareness. Yet, every day it is becoming more mainstream, part of the daily dialogue, and the way news reports are framed. Hundreds of major companies and thousands of smaller businesses have been addressing sustainability in a disciplined, strategic way for well over a decade. Of late, the general public, politicians, and federal government have tipped to acceptance of global warming by the combined impact of former Vice President Al Gore's film "An Inconvenient Truth," Britain's recently released "Stern Review Report on the Economics of Climate Change" (HM Treasury 2006), and the international "Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change" (<http://www.ipcc.ch/>). These reports acknowledge what has been obvious to scientists worldwide for quite some time. The reality of climate change is no longer in question. What does this mean for leaders? What does this mean for coaches?

Over the past few years, I have been surprised and at times startled by the lack of awareness and active discussion of sustainability and climate change trends in the companies and federal agencies where I coach. What I hear instead are responses about a diverse set of opinions regarding climate change's relevance or veracity. In the heartland of organizational life, these external factors haven't yet shown up on the agendas or in strategic conversations of most workplace leaders. Yet, an integral coaching conversation with a leader that raises awareness of certain issues at one point in time may find that six months later (or even less) this new awareness is now leading to sustainability conversations and actions.

For now, though, I want to leave behind the larger social and environmental context, and drop into the



person-to-person level where all coaching begins.

### **Where Coaching Starts**

When we're invited to be interviewed as a potential coach for a leader, we may hear some specific developmental focal points like: enhance communication skills, cultivate leadership presence, sustain high performance, delegate more, mentor others, improve work-life balance, or enhance relationships and networks. At some point, the leader will want to know what is the coach's method or philosophy. Each coach responds uniquely, giving his or her approach to serving and partnering with leaders.

The scope of *integral coaching* addresses four key areas of leadership competence, and these are what I talk about when being interviewed by the leader. I seek to support their effectiveness through heightened holistic awareness and intentional actions that strengthen resilience and sustainability in terms of their:

- Personal interior (beliefs, observer, thoughts, emotions, sensations, spirit),
- Personal exterior (actions, reactions, body language, voice, tone, etc.),
- Collective interior (contextual setting of cultural norms, values, and espoused beliefs), and
- Collective exterior (contextual setting of expressed values and beliefs-in-action, social behaviors, business & economic systems, ecological systems, etc.)

I have found it valuable up front to establish a holistic framework for appreciating a leader's experience. This begins to stretch and stimulate the client's capacity for systems thinking – strengthening their understanding of the links between their internal and external realities. Most clients find this approach intriguing. They often say that it speaks to the rich context of their experience.

### **The Invitation into the Leader's World**

When leaders invite coaches into their private worlds, they share many aspects of their private reality. We hear unguarded thoughts and feelings, observe behavioral messages in posture and affect, sense subtle mood and energy shifts. We ask questions that, perhaps, few others might feel safe to ask, and do so with the blessings of the leader. They want someone to speak directly with them and to them. We are "inside the kimono," building trust and safety.

To get familiar with the leader's world, coaches meet with them personally, perhaps "shadow" them as they go about their work, and may also coach their teams. We interview peers, direct reports, supervisors and sometimes spouses to learn more about who they are and how they go about leading and living. What vision do they convey and embody? What attitudes and feelings do they engender in others in the leadership team and broader organization? How conscious are they of enriching the diversity of the workplace and input into their discussions? Getting a sense of their work-life balance is important to know – how and when do they relax, spend quality time with their family, and rejuvenate? How do they connect (or not) with important stakeholders? Also, coaches read the leader's 360 feedback reports and performance evaluations. In the process, we learn a great deal about them, their organization's culture, structure, and systems, gaining an appreciation for the complex context within which these leaders work.

Recently, I reviewed the files of 50 leaders with whom I've worked in the last few years and listed the issues they chose to work on. Not surprisingly, the lion's share had to do with enhancing the effectiveness and impact of their communication as key to their leadership effectiveness. Communication may have taken the form of improving certain skills like presenting, listening, inquiry, dialogue, building team cohesion, driving outcomes, or cultivating group intelligence instead of simply leading meetings. Often, though, communication is a function of a leader's interior development—including awareness of their stories and mental models, managing their emotions (including "triggers," "shadows," and "projections"), strengthening their authenticity, walking their talk, and generally attuning their mind, body, emotions, and spirit for enhanced effectiveness in communicating, leading, and driving change. And, at times,



leaders wanted assistance on positively impacting the organization's culture, bringing about more accountability, collaborating to dissolve silos, maintaining mutual respect, and building esprit de corps. Often, to achieve these improvements, changes would need to be made in some practices, policies, systems, or structures.

When a leader is entering the top tier of leadership ranks, the challenge for them is to make a qualitative transition from one kind of leading to another. At these pivotal points, leaders recognize their former managerial mastery as no longer what is being asked for or valued. Instead they are being called to a different way of engaging the company's vision, with a broader strategic view, and a more sophisticated communication and networking acumen with stakeholders. They will have to let go of trusted markers and competitive strategies that got them to the top of their game up to this point. And, they will begin learning new approaches for leveraging value.

Coaches help leaders bridge these transitions through dialogue, reflection, targeted readings, and experiments in learning—using self-awareness exercises and behavioral practices to create new habits. What an integral approach does for me, as a coach, is to help me pay attention to the presenting issue while stepping back conceptually and wondering how other dimensions might play into supporting or getting in the way of moving this leader's overall operating model from one level to the next.

### **The Frameworks We Hold, the Lenses We Use**

Every coach holds a particular framework when coaching, along with lenses that lay beyond our conscious awareness. For example, a coach may listen and observe primarily from a cognitive perspective—picking up on how language provides entry into the client's interior world, thinking, assumptions, point of view, dominant stories, and insights into his or her interactions with others. Another coach may be naturally attuned to working from an emotional lens, sensing the degree to which the leader is emotionally self-aware, socially aware, and healthy in terms of self-care and social care. This emotional intelligence lens may bring significant focus to the leader's capacity to harness social energy through emotional connections and the experiences that make those connections meaningful. Or the dominant coaching frame might be somatic, seeing the subtle and unmistakable ways that the inner world of a leader shows up in their bodies, movements, and energy. And so on for other significant frames – like gender, race, class, nationality, ethnicity, spirituality, sexual orientation, etc. We can see, in short order, how layered and inter-connected our lenses are, operating above and below our conscious awareness, shaping the ways we perceive, make sense of, draw meaning from, and engage in social life.

Coaches can be specialists or work holistically, partnering with leaders for specific improvements or to cultivate a more integral approach for congruence and enhanced effectiveness. (Note: I shall use the terms "integral" and "holistic" interchangeably.) Holistic leadership coaching holds a frame of reference that listens and observes for coherence that goes beyond the leader's personal development. It includes how the leader affects the organization's culture and the design and integrity of its systems and processes. Are the organization's culture, systems, and processes, in fact, animating and reinforcing the attitudes, values, and behaviors that align with the organization's vision and mission? Do the vision and mission align with the long-term social and ecological health and well-being?

Within each leadership coach's conceptual framework is a set of stories informed by our biography, biology, culture, expertise, and education. It adds up to how we understand the world. Therefore, we have a particularly unique approach and style when we coach—a particular manner and focus to our curiosity and inquiry, how we challenge, evoke, sometimes provoke, and listen with discernment and non-judgment. In the process we build a useful body of distinctions, stay disciplined and purposeful in our conversations, while helping to stimulate further insights and capacities in the leader. As we coach, we encounter moments of new possibilities for leaders—moments that coaches call "openings." These openings offer a mother lode of opportunities for growth and development, and sometimes a particular kind of growth will have transformative impact, with cascading benefits to other areas of their leadership effectiveness (not to mention benefits to family relationships and home life).



My experience in working with various coaching *communities of practice* suggests that each leadership coach evolved his or her expertise from one or several preferred quadrants from the integral model: 1) intrapersonal, 2) behavioral, 3) cultural, and/or 4) systems.

Depending on many factors, we find ourselves with a tendency to be attracted to using particular quadrants first and others to a lesser degree. We coach to our natural strengths. Yet, that may not be enough to serve leaders well. While focusing on two out of four basic dimensions – like the intrapersonal and behavioral – can result in valuable coaching and leadership results, it is less powerful than engaging with all four quadrants. With four quadrants in play, a holistic whole systems view emerges.

For me, my preferred quadrants were in the intrapersonal and systems quadrants. Not surprisingly, I chose to study psychology (focused on the intrapersonal and behavioral) at the undergraduate level and justice (intrapersonal, behavioral, and social systems) at the graduate level. Even though both my undergraduate and graduate studies included a behavioral focus, I was more drawn to the individual's interior world and the systems that affected their behaviors. I approached behavioral riddles from the inside out and from macro institutional forces down to individual behaviors.

Early on, as a leadership coach, I began wondering how power, position, and privilege enhanced or got in the way of people's development and contributions in social organizations. And, in a roughly analogous way, I wondered about the same thing for myself as a leadership coach. Also, I pondered the influence of power on dignity, respect, mutuality, reciprocity, fairness, and justice; and, finally, power's impact on the nature, resilience, and durability of social relationships. But, later I became aware of the importance of the parts I had paid less attention to—culture and a more in-depth study of individual behaviors. Once I became cued in on the contributions of these other elements to the whole, I engaged in active study, training, and *communities of learning* to fortify my knowledge base. Culture became core in understanding how an organization reproduced itself (for good or ill) over time, and helped me to understand the behaviors of those inside that organization. Culture, I finally was able to see, contributed a valuable set of factors essential for a holistic understanding of how things worked.

When it came to sharpening my awareness around behaviors, I was surprised at the richness in nuances and distinctions I had previously overlooked. The body indeed expressed so much of the interior story that a trained eye could notice indicators of self-limiting or self-destructive thoughts and behaviors. A person's interior world literally expressed itself in their somatic expressions (e.g., pace of movement, gestures, eye focus and movements, facial expressions, gait, subtle energy, posture, tone of voice, attentiveness, presence, balance). How additionally beneficial it was—for my clients and me—when I was able to include those observations in my approach.

In my coaching, what I may miss *without* an integral mindset, is the rich interplay of the leader's interior experiences *with* their subtle behaviors *with* their impact on the organizational culture *with* the design of organizational systems—and how harmoniously (or not) they work together. And, I can miss the larger web of relationships and variables in extra-organizational systems and natural systems. When written out in this way, it may seem too big, all-encompassing. Yet, it is as intimate as the air we breathe, water we drink, food we eat, and longings we feel. Discovering ways to scale my coaching conversations from the personal to the larger global systems has been a matter of learning from experimentation and experience. And sometimes it has been rough around the edges as I learned to see and make transitions in a more organic way. Yet, like all things in life, it is an adaptive work in progress.

### **Coaching Through a Wide-Angle Lens**

There are two cardinal truths that coaches know: 1) the client holds the requisite wisdom and expertise worthy of birthing whatever growth and development are called for; *and* 2) to be in shape to coach involves more than just calling on the coach's intuition and capacity to ask good questions.



How do coaches stay in shape to coach? Like other professions and professionals, we attend learning forums, conferences, and seminars. We form study groups, communities of learning, take relevant formal post-graduate courses, and make other investments of time and money to stay abreast of theoretical advances, innovations of tools, and best practices. Plus, most of us are voracious readers. When gathering at some event, coaches' talk often turns to "what are you reading that's good?" Ask five coaches that question and you'll likely hear excited chatter about five books or articles that they are in the process of reading. Leadership coaches read from the literature of the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and business. We read novels and poetry, too – anything that informs or inspires the spirit and provides insights into the human condition.

As my reading and study of the human condition has evolved, and my awareness continues to sharpen around the connections between things at the micro and macro levels, so does my appreciation for the potential scope of leadership coaching. A holistic approach to coaching (that scales to a global level) is not going to be every leader's cup of tea. And I'm sure I've lost more than a few potential clients who wanted a more locally focused approach. On the other hand, I know there are other leaders who have chosen me as their coach because they were attracted to this kind of framework that includes the larger contextual considerations.

### **Is It Time for a Bigger Coaching Role?**

Traditional business leaders may tend to respond more comfortably to traditional coaching (e.g., behavioral/performance-based), with some room for broader holistic inquiries – while not going too far out too soon. Early adopter business leaders, likewise, may tend to respond well to early adopter coaching. The integral framework is the best holistic lens I have encountered to use for cutting edge leadership coaching. It is a well-balanced, aggressively engaged form of coaching which blends theoretical insights, scientific trends, practical explorations, and an applied awareness of stage development within a systems context.

Integral coaching is fertile as a learning intervention when the coach carefully balances his or her own development between the art of coaching and the science of life. When coaches are artists, we are in the moment with the leader, open to any variation of thinking or acting, willing to engage in a bold and risky brush stroke outside the lines of convention, while trusting our intuition. When coaching as scientists, we know the data and science of social life, organizational life, business life, ecological life, global life, and are able to inquire, make declarations, or introduce provocations that help leaders to confront the short and long-term impact of their actions within the broader global realities and trends. We are better informed and equipped as coaches when we ponder the meaningfulness of the global story, and ask how these global facts map to our day-to-day conversations and actions.

Consider, for example, these statistics and trends from the book *Natural Capitalism* (Hawken, Lovins and Lovins, 1994, p. 4).

In the past half century, the world has lost a fourth of its topsoil and a third of its forest cover. At present rates of destruction, we will lose 70 percent of the world's coral reefs in our lifetime, host to 25 percent of marine life. In the past three decades, one-third of the planet's resources, its "natural wealth," have been consumed. We are losing freshwater ecosystems at the rate of 6 percent a year, marine ecosystems by 4 percent a year. There is no longer any serious scientific dispute that the decline in every living system in the world is reaching such levels that an increasing number of them are starting to lose, often at a pace accelerated by the interactions of their decline, their assured ability to sustain the continuity of the life process. We have reached an extraordinary threshold.

Facts like these may be difficult to internalize as a person, and tougher yet to operationalize in our coaching with leaders. These statistics and trends challenge coaches and leaders to bridge the meaningfulness of such potent information to our daily experiences. But, it seems worth the effort.



One of David Whyte's poems (1999, p. 88) brings our focus back to fundamentals, helping us see the human element in this mesmerizing age of information.

### **Loaves and Fishes**

This is not the age of information.  
This is not  
the age of information.  
Forget the news,  
and the radio,  
and the blurred screen.  
This is the time of loaves and fishes.  
People are hungry, and one good word  
is bread for a thousand.

What are the good words, loaves and fishes offered by leaders? And by coaches? I think there are many in our line of vision—prototype businesses that are loaves and fishes, holistic coaches that cross-pollinate stories from one company (or country) to the next as best practices. With business breakthroughs and transformations popping up faster than we can track and absorb them, it is exciting to try to stay abreast of trends and best practices of cutting edge businesses. "People are hungry, and one good word is bread for a thousand." Here's a good word: the trend worldwide is towards more socially and environmentally responsible corporations. And there are many transformations in how people are living and working that align with the historical longings for living harmoniously with each other and nature.

In 2004, nearly 1,800 transnational corporations (TNCs) or their affiliates filed reports on issues of corporate responsibility, up from virtually none in the early 1990s. With some 1,600 reports already filed for 2005—estimated at about 85–90 percent of the likely total—this trend is on track to grow. These responsibility reports, sometimes referred to as non-financial reports, cover everything from labor standards and impacts on local communities to toxic releases and greenhouse gas emissions. (Hawken, Lovins and Lovins, 1999, p. 4)

Where do we stand in terms of corporate and environmental responsibility in the United States? How are our corporations doing relative to the rest of the world?

Thus far, most responsibility reports are filed by European corporations. Of those produced between 2001 and 2005, 54 percent came from Europe, 25 percent from Asia and Australia, 17 percent from North America, 2 percent from South America, and 2 percent from Africa and the Middle East. (Worldwatch Institute, 2006)

There is much progress to be made in corporate consciousness. As the US government and businesses catch up, the awakening process will create new opportunities for holistically prepared coaches, too. To face our positive obligations as professionals and citizens, and to be morally engaged, coaches are called by the full reach of our professional standards to stay abreast of and lean into industry and global trends, with a growing knowledge of integral approaches and best practices worldwide. As coaches, and especially at the Master Coach (MCC) level, we can be expected to coach with more perspective, depth, courage, and compassion, from a perspective that bears witness to the larger social, economic, and environmental conditions and trends in the world. I know that stance may strike some as an agenda, but I believe it is simply a framework grounded in the profound challenges we face. What is the alternative – especially in this globally intimate, climate-changing, ecologically endangered, and socially unstable world in which we compete for limited resources? This is the world we live in, and, as coaches we can work within those realities with a sense of whether the leader's development is towards wholeness or towards fragmentation. And if an integral perspective has any worth beyond being a nifty organizing process for understanding phenomena from a systems perch, it is that at the heart of an integral perspective is a normative stake in



the ground around the health, wellness, and the sustainability of people and living systems globally.

### An Integral Model to Get Started

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, particular 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.



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 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:

- *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.

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.

### **A Normative Stance within Leadership Coaching**

Let me offer a few examples, grounded in the democratic values of fairness and equality, to illustrate this coaching normative stance. As a leadership coach, when I am in the discovery process during the first several sessions with a new client, I'm taking in a lot of data – reading, listening, observing. Much of the data comes from feedback instruments, performance reviews, and my interviews with my client's stakeholders. I am also taking note of the broader context and social dynamics: the gender, race, and diversity make-up of the leadership team and broader organization.

Twenty plus years ago, when I began my coaching career, the workplace was much less diverse. During those years, if the leadership team was all or nearly all one gender (usually men), one race (traditionally white), and one ethnicity (traditionally WASP), I not only noted this as relevant information, *I spoke to it*: "I've noticed that the leadership ranks here are overwhelmingly white males. Is there an organizational story that goes with that?" "What might be some of the implications of a lack of diversity – for you, the organization, and your stakeholders?" "What might be some of the ways that bringing in a diversity of talents and perspectives, especially in terms of gender, race, and nationality, could bring additional benefits to leadership's effectiveness and the organization's esprit de corps?" "What might be some of the messages sent throughout the culture of this organization by the make-up of the top leadership ranks here?" Or "If the organization wanted to expand its diversity of leadership, what might be some of the ways you could intentionally start to bring about that shift?" Let me ask you: are these appropriate questions to have been asking?

The point I am offering is that I was being intentionally inquisitive and perhaps provocative in my questions to the leader, and doing so from a position of social health, diversity, and wholeness instead of being passive or timid about the reality in front of me. I was bearing witness to the experience of those who may have been culturally excluded and diminished, *as well as* bearing witness for the unrealized potential of the organization's talent. It might be awkward and uncomfortable, but so be it. I do this in service to the leader and the organization as it lives within an increasingly diverse world. My assumption is that the lack of diversity is already awkward and uncomfortable throughout much of the rest of the organization – even if it is "accepted" as normal. As a coach, I'm just calling it into view and awareness – in a way that is respectful to the leader as well as to the people in the organization who would like to feel more visible, valued, and fairly treated.

Do the previous questions strike you as too assertive or intrusive? Imagine this: you are working in an organization that is comprised of people of the opposite gender, another race, and ethnicity. Every day you have experiences of being treated as an outsider, excluded from important information and conversations, not seen at all or seen as different, less than, and not quite as capable as others. Imagine



that you see this leadership coach going into the leader's office for his bi-weekly session. Are you hoping that the coach notices the lack of diversity and brings it up in conversation? What are the chances of that, especially if the coach mirrors most or all of the leader's characteristics? If the coach did notice and raise this to the leader's awareness, what might be possible?

Coaches bring fresh eyes, hearts, and spirits to new settings when we work with leaders. And, as outsiders, we are able – even expected – to say what others might not be able or willing to say from within the organization. This gives us a unique position and enables us to voice what we see and hear in ways that shake things up. In a sense, coaches can help break the cultural trance that leaders get into after being in the same culture and relationships over time. We help them to think, see, and hear with fresh perspectives.

### **Silencing One Another in Life and in Organizational Life**

One of the things I have come to notice in my coaching is the panoply of ways people are silenced or engage in self-silencing. Cultural influences, organizational practices, leadership's individual behaviors and language, and the prevailing mental models may intentionally or unintentionally conspire to silence some while giving disproportionately powerful voices to others.

Each of us, knowingly or unknowingly, has silenced other people (or groups) at one time or another in our lives. Parents silence their children, couples silence their partners, one clique in school or adult life ostracizes another, cultural tribes silence other tribes – with words, physical gestures, rules, language, tone of our voice, a look, silence, shunning, turning away, moving towards, and many other subtle and obvious expressions. What is the impact of silencing? It is a form of banishment, objectification, subordination, and systematic disrespect. It lets the other person (or group) know that they are not like the other, they are “less than.” It diminishes the humanity, dignity, intellect, heart, and hopes of silenced individuals and groups. And it broadcasts a pecking order where domination/superiority requires subordination – rationalized as showing proper respect for authority.

Often, individuals enter a hierarchical culture or subculture and pick up a clear sense of deference by some to others. That deference may be based on position, location (the corner office vs. the cubicle), attire, and other characteristics of the dominant class. Those who abide by the cultural norms fit in, tend to get along well and advance, and those that ignore or challenge the norms risk being seen as disrespectful, insubordinate, and trouble-makers. Recognizing the risks of behaving outside the prevailing dynamics, individuals may choose to simply self-silence.

For coaches, when this phenomenon is present in organizational dynamics, it offers an opening for reflection and learning with the leader. The coach can offer observations that are noticed from interactions during meetings (who's paid attention to, called on, and who is overlooked or cut short), or how the leader talks about and speaks with stakeholders and people at various levels inside and outside the organization. What's gained and lost from these differential behaviors? What attitudes and assumptions give rise to those different behaviors?

I have found it almost always beneficial to start this kind of inquiry with a leader by asking him or her to recall a time when they experienced being treated as an outsider or second class by someone else in the organization. (Examples I hear often have to do with a person's interactions with those with more power in an organization.) Or, in the case of women and minorities (racial, ethnic, religious, etc.), people of the same rank or even lower rank may subtly or not so subtly exclude and silence them.

Once I have called those memories forward for the leader, I ask him to tell me what emotion came up for him in those situations. It is often a combination of anger, fear, and sadness. (These emotions are ripe for exploration, and might easily uncover other related experiences that are helpful to ventilate.) I ask him to tell me the assumptions and judgments he feels were being made about him by the others; and then, what are the judgments he made about the others? I am curious to learn how his emotions, assumptions,



judgments, and behaviors (in reaction to others' behaviors towards him) affected his sense of self, his connection with the team, and his loyalty to the organization.

I have chosen to use a male leader here to anchor the meaning of being treated as “inferior” even though males are culturally dominant. Rejection or being diminished is commonly experienced by humans. By tapping into this deeply personal experience and bringing it to conscious awareness, I can use it as a bridge for appreciating the impact of his behaviors on others. Through his own sense of suffering, he is able to empathize with the experience of others on the receiving end of his dominating behaviors. Even more, it can generate a sense of mission around spearheading inclusive values and behaviors in the team and organization.

### **Cultural Blind Spots, Privilege, & Self-Interest**

There is a blind spot that accompanies cultural privilege, and it is easy for good people to actively and passively behave in ways that reinforce privilege and the harms it perpetuates. I know I find myself regularly surprised by the power of my self-interested blinders when it comes to speaking or acting in the moment when I'm inappropriately benefitting from cultural privilege. I don't mean to reinforce my privilege, yet it's so easy to allow it. It's a hidden lottery that I cash in on without actively playing. I see it showing up regularly in world events, too.

I remember being struck by an article in the early days of the transition from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa. Under apartheid, there were on-going efforts by black South Africans to establish a Bill of Rights to legally declare equality of the races. Had a Bill of Rights been accomplished it would've been a legal bulwark against the many cultural expressions of subordination suffered by non-whites. But, the culturally and politically dominant whites repeatedly repudiated the necessity of such laws. Upon the release of Nelson Mandela, his election to the presidency, and abolition of apartheid, one of the first petitions of the white minority, however, was to establish a Bill of Rights to protect their equality in the country where they were now the less powerful political minority. Moving from being the minority population that held dominant power to the minority population that no longer held dominant power shifted their self-interested perspective about the importance of basic human and political rights.

The gravitational pull of our self-interest is substantial, and what's tricky is that its warping effect is usually hidden until called out – perhaps by a reversal of fortune or from someone who names it. In virtually the entire developed world, men and particularly white men dominate. Within the cultural reality of patriarchy and racial dominance, each of us looks out at the world from the culturally defined messages associated with our gender, race, nationality, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, class, educational level, and so forth within the dominant culture. Depending on who we are surrounded by, who we choose to surround ourselves with, and who we choose to be, those meanings can reinforce a feeling of value and empowerment or undermine them severely. For coaches and the leaders we serve, these dynamics are often in play. Yet, in my experience, these old-school cultural dynamics seem to live mostly in leaders from the Boomer generation (and certainly the retired Veteran/WWII generation). And that makes sense. Even though Boomers were the generation that transformed the structural and cultural discriminations of race, gender, and sexual orientation, that history still lives on to some degree at the cellular level in that generation. As a Boomer myself, I see through that historical lens that persists in my body-memory. It's part of a Boomers' operating system and held in our hard drive memory. We knew and walked in the world when race and gender (and homosexuality) were at very different stages of awareness, cultural acceptance, beliefs, laws, and policies.

One major piece of good news is that with the passing of the cultural center of gravity from the Boomer generation to Gen Xers and the Millennials, diversity is experienced as normal and a *strength* instead of something to be struggled for or against. Gen Xers and Millennials are aided by having in their history and bones the shifts already largely established by the tumultuous civil rights and feminist movements. Their cultural center of gravity has shifted to inclusive, first class assumptions for all. These assumptions of equality, in other words, are largely unquestioned – they're given. In fact, one expression of this is that



many of the Millennial generation will move away from workplaces and communities that they experience as too culturally limited, moving towards the more catalyzing and generative effects they experience with diverse relationships and communities.

I remember a watershed moment of change when I was teaching justice-related classes at American University. About a third of the way into the course, we studied justice issues in the workplace. I had crafted an introduction that posed the paradox between American political beliefs and beliefs at the workplace. Basic political assumptions about democratic life (equality, fairness, and high levels of participation and decision-making throughout society) did not seem to be expected in the workplace. Up until 1987, this part of my introductory comments was met with a basic response: “get real.” I would ask students what seemed so unreasonable about that thought. They simply noted that the workplace was a dictatorship. That was the accepted view in the culture. Suddenly, though, in 1988, my introductory comments about the possible integration of democratic values into the workplace were met with this response: “of course, they must be.” Just like that, within a year the tipping point of generational expectations had shifted. These students went into the work world expecting to be treated as active participants, not passive second class members of the organization. I didn’t see that change coming. It just showed up. In a sense it was below the radar screen, or at least my radar screen. And it was but one example of changes emerging in diverse places throughout the culture, like crocuses in a new season.

### **A Species Blind Spot?**

Having described the phenomenon of blind spots, imagine now what kind of blind spots we might have from a *species* point of view. How do humans see the rest of nature – its life forms, land forms, and ecosystems? Is it simply stuff to be drawn from and exploited for our needs and pleasures? Or do we see ourselves within it, part of it, nourished by and dependent on it? Is nature unlimited stuff for us to take, make things from, and waste? Is the human species the one that really matters above others, giving us complete dominion over other life forms (flora, fauna, watersheds, rivers, fishes, mammals, and all that makes up the magnificently interwoven diversity of the biosphere)? Or are we intimately connected with and inextricably part of nature?

When we see ourselves as the top of the food chain and phylogenetic tree, and we equate that with the right to do with the rest as we see fit, then something sacred is broken. The integrity of the whole suffers a gaping hole from the hubris and ignorance of our species.

At the heart of a healthy story about nature is the realization that we are nature and nature is us. If we separate from nature, we separate from ourselves. That simple, that true. That is the creation story we’ve lost, and in the losing emerges our destruction story.

### **At a Minimum: Do No Harm**

Let’s take a look at the assumptions of this holistic story so far. One way to think of the core story is, “that which unites is sacred; that which alienates or divides is profane.” At a minimum, coaching and leading can be said to live by a common expectation: *do no harm*. Below, biologist Pepper Trail (2007) offers 10 principles for living in greater harmony with the earth. He calls the principles “The Earth Precepts”:

1. Honor the earth, upon which all life depends.
2. Consider the consequences of all environmental actions over at least a 100-year time frame.
3. Do not destabilize the earth’s atmospheric or aquatic systems.
4. Do not depend upon energy sources that cannot be replaced.
5. Do not remove living resources, including soil, trees, and marine life, faster than they can replace themselves.
6. Exploitation of the earth must be accompanied by restoration of the earth.
7. Preserve biological diversity.



8. Do not have more than two children.
9. Do not assert ownership over species or their genetic codes: they are not ours to claim.
10. Do not exempt corporations from the environmental precepts that individuals must follow.

Some of those 10 precepts may be easy to accept and support, while others may invoke push-back or pause. That's a good start to a worthwhile conversation. Other internationally recognized sources have created their own operating principles for sustainable living, most notably Karl-Henrik Robert's "The Natural Step" (2007). These are attempts at identifying the governing principles for responsible living and sustainable living systems.

What other ways can we look at our operating principals for living? I have been strongly influenced by the words of Magaly Lara. What guides Magaly is the maxim (taught to her by her mother): "wherever I am, I try to do good." Not *be* good, but *do* good. This is an action-oriented maxim. As an example, she offered, when she goes to the playground and sees another child playing alone while other children are playing nearby, she goes to the alone child and asks if they would like to play together. Magaly is 10 years old and lives from an open and helpful heart. I love when she visits and I learn from our conversations. She is always reading and regularly pondering the nature of things. It would be easy to say she's an old soul. Yet, moreso, I think that she has learned from her mother's Nicaraguan culture and religious beliefs about empathy for others. Magaly shared her belief that she is ready to reach out to anyone in need. This basic connection with others connects her to herself in a beautiful way. At her young age, she knows who she is and wisdom radiates from her heart and eyes. Buddhists might say she is in "right relationship" with herself and the world.

How can we also be in right relationship with the Earth?

### **Imagining the Closed System that is Earth**

Formed by gravity over billions of years from fragments of star dust, and made hospitable to life by the evolution of balanced conditions in the atmosphere and land (with the gradual sequestering of toxic elements underground), life forms harnessed the sun's energy and emerged. The transition from single celled organisms to complex forms, reptiles, mammals, and finally humans occurred within a relatively short period of geological time. The emergence of civilization is but a moment on the geological clock. And in that moment, we evolved within an extraordinary balance of forces that was largely invisible to us. To a great extent we didn't appreciate how delicate that balance was or the industrial revolution's impact on the Earth's homeostasis. We take the relative stability of climate and weather for granted, just as we do the limitless resources we depend on.

To get a sense of what we take for granted, Paul Hawken, Amory B. Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins' (1999, p.1) describe a 1991 scientific experiment that attempted to recreate the conditions of our biosphere. A domed structure was built to replicate the conditions present on Earth. That sealed construction was called Biosphere II. The experiment showed, in part, the extraordinary complexity required for humans to reproduce the complex self-regulating systems that balance the chemistry of air, soil, and water in ways hospitable to life. They write,

...a small group of scientists was sealed inside Biosphere II, a glittering 3.2 acre glass and metal dome in Oracle, Arizona. Two years later, when the radical attempt to replicate the earth's main ecosystems in miniature ended, the engineered environment was dying. The gaunt researchers had survived only because fresh air had been pumped in. Despite \$200 million worth of elaborate equipment, Biosphere II had failed to generate breathable air, drinkable water, and adequate food for just eight people. Yet Biosphere I, the planet we all inhabit, effortlessly performs those tasks every day for 6 billion of us.

Disturbingly, Biosphere I [i.e., our Earth] is now itself at risk. The earth's ability to sustain life,



and therefore economic activity, is threatened by the way we extract, process, transport, and dispose of a vast flow of resources – some 220 billion tons a year...

As the Biosphere II experiment vividly illustrates, humans live *within* the earth's environments and ecosystems, and what we do within that biosphere directly impacts its health and our own, in turn. We are all downstream from what we put into the air, land, and water. *What we collectively put out there, we absorb in here.* Our social actions, marketplace decisions (as leaders, producers, and consumers), and ecological concerns are looking for ways to be mutually sustaining and healthy. We are tasked by global warming and climate change to consciously design ways for our living, working, and consuming to be mutually sustainable within our biosphere. To do so, it will require the creation of new assumptions, mental models, stories, and visions of daily life. Consider this excerpt from *Natural Capitalism*:

Natural capitalism maps the general direction of a *journey that requires overturning long-held assumptions, even questioning what we value and how we are to live.* Yet the early stages in the decades-long odyssey are turning out to release extraordinary benefits. Among these are what business innovator Peter Senge calls *'hidden reserves within the enterprise'—'lost energy,'* trapped in stale employee and customer relationships, which *can be channeled into success* for both today's shareholders and future generations. All three of us have witnessed this excitement and enhanced total factor productivity in many of the businesses we have counseled. It is real; it is replicable... (emphasis added)

I've italicized particular phrases in the above excerpt to highlight the common language that characterizes powerful leadership and effective coaching. At the core of leading and coaching is transformation – often including a “journey that overturns long-held assumptions,” “questioning what we value and how we are to live” – to harness “hidden reserves and ‘lost energy’ trapped in stale relationships” to be “channeled into success for shareholders and future generations.” We might call the process “The Global Journey,” socially responsible education and action, or stewardship for sustainability.

As integral coaches we might ask:

- How might the impact of leadership be enhanced if: a) three or four of the integral quadrants are developed more consciously; b) the authenticity and integrity of leaders included working to respect social and ecological needs; c) leaders were paying attention to the health and morale of the culture as well as the health and well-being of external stakeholders worldwide, beyond bottom line financial concerns; d) systems, processes and practices were regularly assessed and re-aligned for synergy and effectiveness with the organization's mission and culture?
- What does sustainability look like in our nation's production and consumption systems? What messages do we receive and promote about what we need, what “the good life” is, and what matters in life? How are we integrating sustainability goals, metrics, and reinforcements into our organizations' strategic plans? (Likewise how are we integrating sustainability goals into our personal and family life?) How are we engaging in training and education of our whole workforce to tap the collective intelligence, spirit, engagement, and ownership of our mission around sustainability?
- What does transformation look like? Where transformations are needed at this point to get us on a sustainable path? How can we be more efficient, eliminate waste, and recycle everything we use? How are we moving forward to connect the dots between what we see, what could be, and what we're doing?
- What personal journey calls to us regarding self-attunement with social, ecological, and global attunement – now and for the needs of future generations?
- What impacts do social, economic and ecological trends and tipping points have on the ways leaders lead (and coaches coach)?



- How do we intellectually absorb and emotionally motivate ourselves to act boldly, with visionary goals, and an enlightened self-interest, with the global care needed to address the challenges of sustainability?
- How do we transform the design of organizational structures, systems, processes, practices, and cultures to honor the minimally required dictum: “do no harm”?
- What are the synergy points between our organization’s financial, social, and environmental health and sustainability?

Now, imagine you are in a leadership coaching role and meeting your client for the first few sessions. How can you discover what quadrants they tend to live in and lead from? What are their operating assumptions that live beneath the surface and direct their behaviors and reactions? Also notice what quadrants you tend to coach from and which ones you might be less comfortable with or attuned to. How might we stretch our awareness and capacity to make distinctions in the depth and span of the four quadrants?

### **What is Integral Coaching?**

Integral coaching is a panoramic, integrated vision of the wholeness of life, within which parts are focused on and developed—for the health, well-being and benefit of the whole. An integral approach is both client-centered and integrally-centered *at the same time*—holding awareness and bearing witness to what is and what wants to be. Integral coaches help leaders explore ways to connect their individual attunement with their leadership team and ultimately with the whole of the organization’s talent. An integral view stretches conscious awareness of how organizations sit within the larger living systems and how organizational behaviors and byproducts affect the health and well-being of life on the planet. We are global human and natural systems with a global commons, living at a particular location at a unique time on this spherical planet. We are the stewards for this incomparable biodiversity of life.

Integral coaches engage leaders in a personalized pilot program of holistic development. We always begin wherever the client is—with their “presenting issues” as identified by the leader. At the same time, we know that these presenting issues are but parts of larger wholes and systems. Indeed, part of the joy and power of coaching and being coached is around this *growth that wants to happen*. Get anywhere close to the door of growth, and it swings open freely.

Like plants, we lean towards the light (of energy and growth) and will reposition ourselves in that direction if we can find a way. Yet, it is also true that we are habitual creatures with well-worn neural and behavioral patterns. Positive changes are brought about in many ways, just as resistance to change shows up in many forms. Even good ideas, ones we take as “no-brainers” may lay fallow in the face of habits. Consider a few of mine: I should get to bed earlier, but I love reading when the house is quiet late at night. I’m trying to lose weight, but while reading, a few spoonfuls of Haagen-Dazs are just the perfect pleasures after a busy day. I *know* better, but then...I’ve got competing desires and commitments tugging at each other. I would like to satisfy both, but they’re mutually exclusive, so – in the interim, I take each day at a time, being at choice point each evening when commitments and desires confront each other. Ultimately, I have to ask myself directly, “Is my long term health of more value to me than the temporary pleasure of eating ice cream?”

Or, for a more substantive example, I’m not crazy about squirreling away a third of my income a year into my IRA savings plan, and it annually creates great stress around tax time. It hurts. But, it is the only way to be personally responsible for the basic financial condition of my life when I hit retirement. With my wife’s disciplined help, generosity, and reinforcement, I somehow manage to sublimate my short-term self-interested motivations to my long-term interests. I’m amazed that I do it. Long-term need must rise above short-term desires.

To develop behaviors that serve us better, we can call upon clear visioning followed by discipline and



willpower, desire for a good retirement or fear of a dependent one. If those are not sufficient to break a habit (and its neural pattern), then we can call on a support community. A coach, colleagues, friends, and family members can be enlisted to help reinforce our intentions by keeping our awareness high and accountability intact or at least moving in the right direction. And, if our actions are at a critical point of self-destructive behaviors, a coordinated intervention may be needed.

At its most basic level, integral coaching is about awakening and cultivating the breadth and depth of what is good, true, and beautiful in the individual, the team, organization, and stakeholders worldwide – through focused development of leaders' intentions and behaviors, at the individual and social levels. The process of leadership coaching strengthens awareness, deepens understanding, stretches capacity through explorations and experiments with new behaviors, assesses learning and makes corrections along the way. It is about a balanced cultivation of observing with fresh eyes, non-judgment, curiosity, generosity, assertiveness and receptiveness, and with an eye towards the health and well-being of the whole.

### **Integral Coaching as Servant Leadership**

Robert Greenleaf (1970) took an innovative position on leadership, setting forth a new framework called “servant leadership.” The essence of leadership, said Greenleaf, is the desire to serve one another and to serve something beyond ourselves, a higher purpose. My sense is that this larger context is the defining narrative of our work as coaches and leaders, and it begs to be with us, a voice of conscience bearing witness, taking note of what is in front of us, and bringing this awareness into our conversations as we lead and coach. Anything less is a convenient paring down of the bigness of the story we live in.

Ultimately, our self-interested, short-term motivations come back to bite us hard. Short-term benefits for some at the expense of many, lacks a moral maturity. We may do well to study anew the basic connections between things: What depends upon what? Who depends upon whom? Many indigenous people have understood the connections between the individual, community, nature, and cosmos in ways our culture and institutions have forgotten. We remain in peril because of that forgetting and the fragmented worldview that incapacitates our abilities to see what needs to be seen, and do what needs to be done.

### **How Is Integral Coaching Different?**

The business world contains a spectrum of enterprises with diverse motivations or drives for doing business. They operate in a marketplace still strongly influenced by Milton Friedman's dictum that the sole responsibility of business is to maximize profits for shareholders (Friedman, 1962, p. 133):

...there is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud.

Friedman presents an elegant principle, which, at the same time, is brutal in its disconnection from a sense of stewardship or care – except care for maximizing profit for owners. Taken to its logical end, this principle despoils the social and ecological commons, consumes free market forces through ever-increasing concentration of wealth (and market power), while eroding its own defining principle of *maximizing individual liberty and minimizing coercion*.

Fortunately, many companies have chosen to lead their businesses in an opposite direction from that championed by Friedman. And they are doing so from an enlightened self-interest, creating a business philosophy that is socially and environmentally responsible while also concerned with profitability. Far from being weakened by these additional dimensions of care, their businesses prosper. They call themselves *socially responsible, green, or triple bottom line* businesses and include a growing presence in the Fortune 100 and 500. Their agenda is to be good business people while also being good corporate citizens in the world.



In a parallel sense, what I'm proposing in this article is that leadership coaching benefits too from being socially and environmentally responsible. (To get the logic of this, imagine the opposite proposition: "Leadership coaching should not be concerned with social and environmental responsibility." Or, "Leadership coaching should be non-judgmental regarding social and environmental health and well-being.") Social and environmental responsibility, we are beginning to see more clearly, are interdependent with and ultimately inseparable from financial ventures *that are sustainable*. This kind of coaching cultivates a profoundly different way of seeing our relationships with each other, how we work and live, and how we live within nature.

Coaching from a holistic lens may seem to some like being prescriptive. I see integral coaching as analogous to holistic medicine. Holistic medicine, like specialized medicine, are both powerful and, I think, needed. As a person, I want to understand my health from a holistic perspective and, likewise, have a doctor or practitioner assess my conditions from that perspective. Yet, I also want to be able to call on specialists in particular areas so that I can get as well-informed as possible before taking big steps in any direction with my health.

For the consumer, holistic medicine has the huge advantage of being proactive in its approach; while traditional medicine and specialized medicine tends to be reactive. A holistic perspective of anything enables greater understanding of the complex factors affecting the ecology of any particular thing as a part of larger systems. When understood in that way, choices expand dramatically and proactive strategic decisions can be made and actions taken regarding the long-term health and well being of an individual, social groups, economies, nations, the global community, and the environment.

When I began coaching leaders and executives, I had the scaffolding of an integral perspective and practice. But, I found I had much work to do. I had to deepen my knowledge of the business world, its processes, the markets, and jargon through self-study and communities of learning. I had to deepen my understanding of how the market's natural dynamics led to the ignoring of the "ecological commons." And, at the same time, I was engaging in a pretty comprehensive integral scan of myself, plugging the gaps in my integrity as a person and steward of vital resources in my domains of living and working. What the integral framework does is to make that scan disciplined, simple, fast, and applicable immediately. And it enables me to see my part in harmful outcomes, whether intended or not. This awareness humbles me and keeps my critical faculties most sharply focused on my own choices and behaviors. To be engaged in holistic coaching, I must be actively engaged with similar areas of development in myself. The cobbler, so to speak, must be walking in decently maintained shoes.

### **Integral Coaching, Holistic Leadership**

My intention in integral coaching is to help cultivate the best capacities in a leader around responsible, intelligent, resilient, and wise stewardship of vital resources. At the core of stewardship is a commitment to the dignity of people and the vitality of nature as reflected in leadership values and behaviors, organizational culture, relationships with stakeholders, and the design of organizational systems.

For coaches, leadership coaching is an extraordinary "opening," *by design*, to contribute to the learning edge of leaders. We help leaders to coax from themselves their human potential, wisdom, and courage, and, in turn, to understand how to cultivate that in others.

What else is *integral leadership*? Integral leaders know how to craft and continually tell meaningful stories about the organization while *intentionally* embedding that story into the culture of the organization. That includes the actual architectural design (or modifications) of the building and its infrastructure, the business ownership structure, the organizational structure, and the design of systems, processes, and job functions. The entire anatomy of the organization, therefore, expresses the organization's core identity (values, principles, vision, mission), tone of relationships (top down, collaborative, matrix, learning community), and ways of accessing and sharing information (from carefully restricted on a need to know basis to complete transparency). When done well, the stories and



design will stimulate and strengthen people's dignity, meaning, and community while stimulating innovations that deliver solid value to shareholders. From the confluence of these interdependent elements the organization's culture is shaped.

### **Moral Development and Integral Coaching**

How do coaches explore the moral dimensions of leadership without passing judgment in the process? How might we engage in inquiry in ways that stimulate careful reflection on the leader's and organization's impact on others and nature? Carefully, yet courageously. Moral development is a dialogue of exploration that requires looking truthfully at the short-term, intermediate, and long-term responsibilities that go with positions of authority. How can we do that?

As mentioned earlier, coaching always starts with where a client is, presently, and develops from there. The coaching might initially start in the cognitive domain, yet quickly move toward explorations of the body, emotions, and spirit—noticing how one dimension relates to the other.

This entire process moves developmentally towards maturity, in moral and spiritual terms, through three basic stages, according to Carol Gilligan (1982). At the **first stage**, we encounter behavior that is *self-interested and selfish*. This looks out for Number One, regardless of what it means for others. I am the center of the universe, and I act accordingly. There is an experience of “me and the rest of the world.”

The **second stage** encounters behavior that expresses *care*. When our circle of concern expands, we see our self-interest as being directly tied up with the self-interests of others in our close-in tribes (based on some particular likeness, belief, or affiliation). These tribes have an insular feel, with members acting one way with other tribal members, and another with those not of the tribe. There is an “our and they” or “insiders and outsiders” experience.

At the **third stage**, we experience the interconnectedness of people everywhere and our connection to nature. This interconnectedness is expressed by behaviors that act from a sense of *universal care*. At the third stage, the entire global community and ecology are experienced in an “I-Thou” relationship. There exists an inclusive “we” experience. This third moral stage acknowledges and behaves as if people anywhere are part of one tribe, inseparable, where we experience the joys and suffering of others as closely akin to our own. And the universal tribe acts willingly and willfully from a reverence for the beauty and bounty of nature and the dignity and common longings of the global human community.

Achieving a higher stage of moral development is not permanent, however. When under duress, stress, conflicts of interest, the intoxication of privilege or power (in service to self-interest), or the desperation of powerlessness and alienation, anyone can fall from a higher moral stage to lower ones—sometimes dropping two moral stages in Gilligan's taxonomy.

Each of these three stages, in a way, also has to do with harnessing intelligence. The first stage, *selfishness*, harnesses the individual's intelligence to serve the interests of the individual. The second stage, *care*, is for harnessing the collective intelligence of one's close-in tribes for the care of those tribes. And finally, the third stage, *global care*, involves the full-fledged harnessing of the collective intelligence of the human community to benefit the whole community, including those least well off and those who are the least powerful.

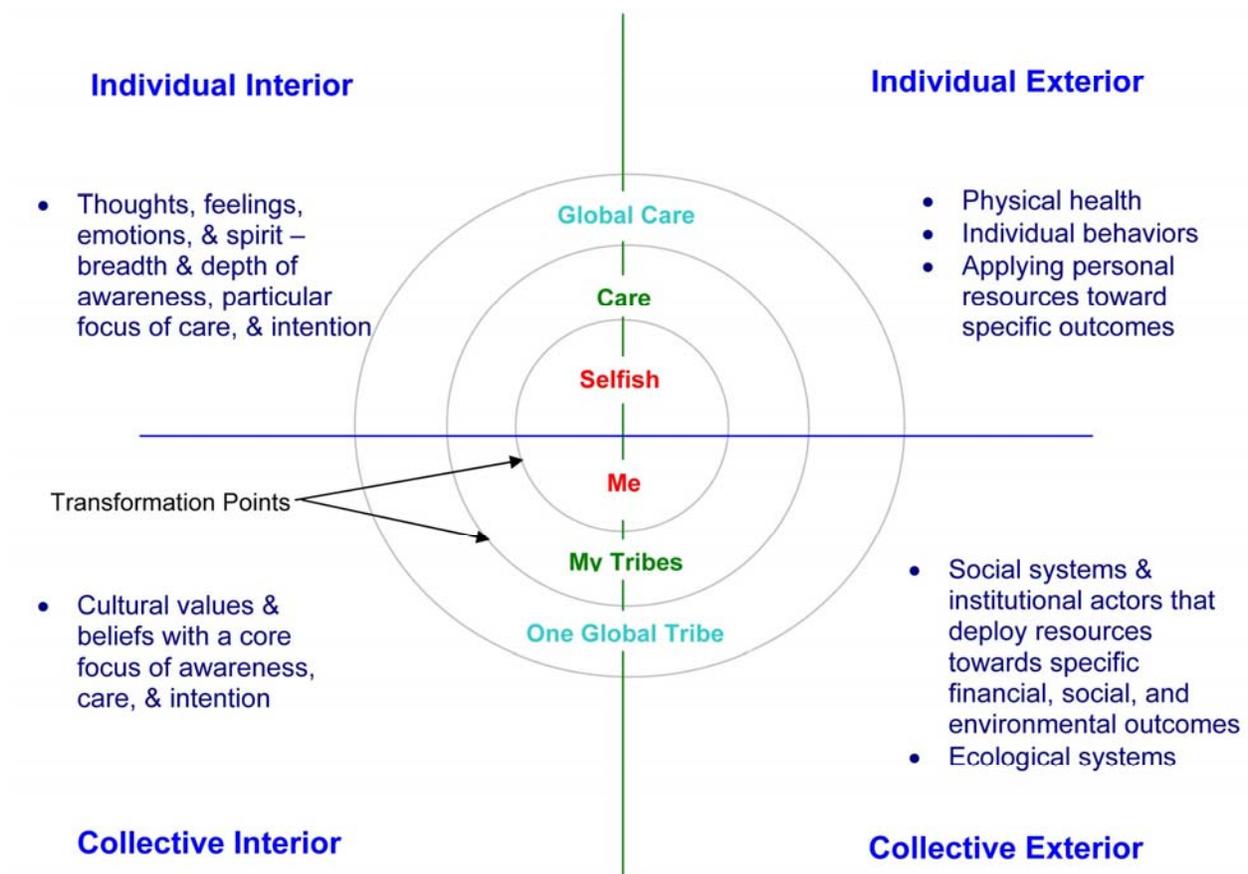
As leadership coaches, we can choose to *bear witness* for the well-being of the global community through our listening, distinctions, questions, and provocations. We can choose to take part in conversations with powerful leaders, with the dispossessed and those without voice or power – sitting invisibly on our shoulders, listening with us, wondering if, how, and when we coaches will speak for the dignity of their spirits, and ask questions that honor their predicaments.

For a visual representation of these domains and dimensions of stewardship and care, see the following



model. It integrates Wilber's integral model with Carol Gilligan's simplest taxonomy of moral stages of development.

## Stewardship for...



© Lloyd Raines, 2006; based on Ken Wilber's integral model and Carol Gilligan's moral stages

Figure 2: Holistic Stewardship

What the integral framework provides for leadership coaches and leadership coaching is a way to see the wholeness of the playing field we enter every time we engage in coaching. By holding a framework of wholeness, we can be more attentive, careful, and caring about what we listen for and inquire about with leaders. It enables us to have a balanced awareness and approach to supporting the personal flourishing of a leader in service to the responsibilities and opportunities that accompany their position. Connecting the interior landscape with the exterior reality becomes the muse.

In one of the Hindu sacred texts, the Mahabharata, the warrior Arjuna pauses to confer with Lord Krishna before beginning armed battle. In his spiritual confusion, he confesses to Krishna, "I'm torn because I don't know whether the real battle is on the field or in my heart," to which Krishna responds, "I can see no difference." A partially cultivated heart renders, at most, partially cultivated eyes for discerning the truth



and knowing how to respond from the wisdom of the heart-mind instead of lower order instincts.

### **Engaging Oneself**

What orientation might coaches embody to partner in the cultivation of wisdom in leaders? The good news is that many diverse approaches to leadership coaching work. I continue to be moved and amazed at the multitude of ways that coaching evokes transformation in leaders. It's as if there are so many ports of entry for that catalysis, and the desire and hunger are so strong on the part of clients, that touching any one dimension of that longing throws open big doors and windows, cascading into many smaller shifts that result in a qualitative shift. It's beautiful to behold.

Based on my own experience, I also know that I am able to coach only to the limit of my own understanding and experience. To that degree, I am called to continually study, experiment, and grow as an experienced integral leadership coach, improving in the ways I am able to hold active focus on the interplay between the leader's interior and his or her behaviors (performance and outcomes), the surrounding culture/s (organizationally and beyond), and systems (organizational, social, ecological). That's a rich, holistic awareness.

Each of these dimensions is synergistically alive in the other, engaged in an on-going exchange of subtle energies. Each approach holds within it the seeds of the other, and when consciously aligned has a multiplier effect, enhancing the potential for a greater capacity in four areas understood as one whole "ecological" system. From a distance, as the astronaut flies, we can see and begin to grasp life within one natural biosphere populated by endless systems within systems. Our challenge now is to *act* as if we understand that we are one interdependent biosphere.

### **Integral Gap Analysis**

Leaders are familiar with and are likely to regularly use a "gap analysis" to gauge their team's or organization's progress. *It can also be applied to a leader as an individual.* It involves three basic questions:

- What is the current reality?
- What is the desired future state?
- What needs to happen to get from here to there?

Approaching each question, above, through four quadrants of leadership development (see Figure 1) accesses substantial data that directly impacts a leader's potential for effectiveness and organizational influence.

Leaders most often are highly competent in analyzing and acting on the **Exterior** quadrants & less proficient with the **Interior**—at both the individual & collective levels. In Wilber's language, they are more at ease and competent with "It" and "Its" than they are "I" and "We."

The interior and exterior dimensions include the *physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual* developmental domains, including distinctions in levels of mastery and particular types of development. Within each of those four domains, the span of focus includes the individual, team, organization (and stakeholders), and finally the whole human community *and* global ecology.

### **What is the *Current Reality*?**

What is the leader's current level of development around self-awareness (in the physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual domains), self-appraisal (strengths and weaknesses), feeling of being treated with



dignity, finding meaning through work, and balance of self-confident and humility? (Competency in the Personal Dimension)

- Is the organization's culture (and shared values) healthy and compatible with long-term sustainability? Is the leader strategically helping to shape and strengthen the culture, core values, norms, and desired behaviors? (Competency in the Cultural Dimension)
- What is the leader's current level of personal development around behaving authentically, walking their talk, relationship building, transparency, courage, driving positive change, executing strategic plans, appropriately using technology, engaged in on-going due diligence, etc.? (Competency in the Behavioral Dimension)
- What is the leader's current level of development with business systems acumen, accountability with stakeholder groups, care for the health and well-being of people, stewardship for ecological systems, active care for the organization's sustainability & long-term impact on the global community? (Competency in the Systems Dimension)

### **What is the desired *Future State*?**

- What is the leader's desired level around self-awareness, self-assessment, dignity, meaning, and balance between self-confidence and humility? (Competency in the Personal Dimension)
- What is the leader's desired role and impact re the organizational culture's core values and behaviors around empathy, compassion, courage, ethics, collaboration, and general social awareness? (Competency in the Cultural Dimension)
- What is the leader's desired level of personal development around behaving authentically, walking the talk, relationship building, executing strategic plans, technology, finance, etc.? (Competency in the Behavioral Dimension)
- What is the leader's desired level of development around business systems acumen, accountability with stakeholders, care for the health and well-being of people, stewardship for ecological systems that affect the organization's sustainability & long-term impact on the global community? (Competency in the Systems Dimension)

**What needs to happen *to get from the Current Reality to the Future State*?** (to intentionally develop and implement actions that bring congruence, mutual reinforcement, and *integral mastery* to the Personal, Cultural, Behavioral, & Systems Dimensions)

- What actions are needed — with exercises and practices to expand awareness and distinctions, enhance judgments and behaviors, cultivate feedback loops for heightened awareness and self-correction, and strengthen networks — within a particular time frame, to achieve desired outcomes?

The actions of leaders, like those of anyone, are affected by their internal personality traits, biography, education, expertise, strengths, weaknesses, blind spots, and shadows. Their actions, in turn, impact their internal reality—their sense of self-respect and dignity, optimism or pessimism, being a victor or victim. At a social level, leaders are affected by their interactions with colleagues, family, friends, and stakeholders. The push-pull is ever-present.

Moving through an integral gap analysis affords coach and leader a thorough window and considerable data for focused development.

### **An Integral Leadership Coach's Dream**



When I daydream about clients I'd love to coach, I imagine being inside the world of CEOs of traditional companies that want to re-design towards a triple bottom line strategy, or coaching government leaders who have identified stewardship and sustainability as key issues in their leadership vision. Yet, there is one client—even more than these—that dominates my imagination: Mother Earth. I wonder what it would be like to coach this most successful of all CEOs in history. This humble servant leader that has organized an incomparably vast network of intelligence, diverse resources, and organic technologies worldwide, into the most efficient, collaborative, “green,” durable, and resilient productive enterprise ever.

What would it be like to coach her? Here's how I envision it. During the first meeting, I am sitting across from Mother Earth. She is perched in a sturdy winged-back chair, ever so slowly rotating on her axis, yet basically remaining in place. Patiently, she listens as I describe our coaching partnership, our agreements, the way we'll be focusing on things that matter to her – areas in which she wants to develop and grow. I let her know that I'd like to do a series of interviews with her stakeholders.

She's a great listener, absorbing everything I say and do. I'm immediately aware of being in the presence of stillness and dynamism. How does she do that, I wonder? I know from readings about her that she spins at almost 1,000 miles per hour (not to mention hurtling at 67,000 miles per hour through space in her revolution of the sun), yet she appears to be still much of the time. I've got to watch my assumptions. As I take in her presence, I feel her unconditional acceptance.

I recognize right away that this is an eloquent, no-nonsense client. She doesn't speak in the conventional way, and will require more subtle capacities in me for a good working relationship to take form. I sense she is poet and artist, creator and destroyer made manifest in her being. She *is* art and science, species and integral systems, flora and fauna, emergence and dissipation. She seems to have it all. I recognize we'll have to collaborate differently than I have with any other client I've ever encountered.

Before long I have that recurrent feeling as a coach: being both the coach and the client. I am learning as much from the client (about myself and the world) as the client could be learning with me. We are mutually exploring, experimenting with what is and what wants to be.

I pose a series of questions to Mother Earth: “What explains how successful you've been? What have been some of your most meaningful experiences over time? What has helped shape who you are? What's going well right now that you appreciate and want to reinforce? What would it be like if it was even better? What could you be doing more of, less of, or differently that would make a difference that mattered? What goals do you want to set so that our conversations can be purposeful and meaningful? How can I best support you in meeting your goals?”

I listen and observe quietly, relaxed and appreciatively. Clearly, she speaks with a different voice than any to which I'm accustomed. She provides detailed pictures of what's going well and where there are breakdowns—pointing to parts of her being, her somatic self. From what I am observing, I can see she is “saying” a great deal, yet, honestly, I know I'm missing a lot. It's as if she is speaking in some ancient tongue that, surprisingly, I grasp. I hear Mother Earth say, “It seems you are a little distant when you sit with me, observing, calling me Mother Earth. I feel as if you are observing but not really seeing; listening but not hearing. Why not occasionally use my initials when you are addressing me and just call me ‘ME’?” Hmm, I felt that one.

Over the first several sessions, I'm gathering information. I go to people who have studied her, taken her measure, so to speak, and spoken for her. Here's what I'm told. Mother Earth has mastered efficiency, is full life cycle, is constantly seeking value in detritus so that there is no waste – everything is valuable to some other part of her systems. But, there is one species that has had an impact that challenges her capacity to absorb and self-correct: humans.

ME absorbs everything that is – all the creation and destruction of life, beauty and poisons, life and death – from the tectonic plates to micro-organisms. Yet, humans have mined from the earth toxins that took



millions of years to naturally sequester. Human's dug out toxic ores and elements, and created oil-based synthetic toxins in amounts that go beyond Earth's capacity to absorb and cleanse them. Beyond that, her precious topsoil (that takes 1000 years to accumulate one fertile inch) is being washed away at a rate that threatens our capacity to grow enough food to feed ourselves. ME's topsoil continues to be poisoned through our oil-based fertilizers – making agriculture the most polluting industry in America. "You might ask yourself: What are you doing to ME?" Trying to wake me up—I finally begin to listen more intently, with more awareness to the connections between things, as if what I ask about her is also about me.

Now I'm spinning on *my* axis, and we've just really begun to dialogue in earnest. As I observe and feel, she reveals to me that her most advanced species is caught in a negative feedback loop based on continual growth and diminishing resources. Mesmerized as humans are by an ancient historical belief in dominance and competition, it is killing Mother Earth's natural capital – astonishingly, the very capital that this humans take for granted—even though we are dependent on nature for everything we need in order to survive.

Between sessions, as her coach, it is *I* who end up being given homework. She asks that I read Jared Diamond's book, *Collapse* (2002). Then she suggests *Blessed Unrest* (Hawken 2007), and both of Al Gore's books (1992, 2006) so that I can get a better handle on envisioning how a healthy, sustainable economy coheres with healthy, vibrant ecosystems and the organizations and the societies they support. And there are still other things she suggests for me to read, places to visit, people to talk with. She suggests I visit three different types of her ecosystems.

A *Type I* ecosystem is a random mix of organisms, plant, and animal species—an area of intense activity around abundant resources. There is only a drive to reproduce, consume, and move on. Picture the farmer's newly turned field and the wide-open opportunities for weeds to take root.

*Type II* reflects the beginnings of cooperation and balance between some organisms, throwing down deeper roots that endure the seasonal changes, resulting in more stability over time, some cooperation, and more efficient usage of available resources. Picture the farmer's field with perennial berry bushes and tree seedlings.

*Type III* is a fully integrated, self-organized flow of energy exchange between organisms, in a state of relative equilibrium, living in synergy and characterized by zero waste—everything providing service and value to other systems, with totally efficient usage of available resources. Picture prairies, coral reefs, old-growth redwood forests. (For more on these three types of ecosystems, see Benyus, 1990).

As I ponder those three Types, I sense they are roughly equivalent to Gilligan's three levels of moral development.

- Nature's *Type I* ecology is akin to moral level one: selfish;
- *Type II* is like moral level two: care for one's own tribes (or readily compatible species); and
- *Type III* is roughly equivalent to harmony among the global species and tribe.

Nature, then, has its own dynamics of selfishness, cooperation, and enlightened self-interest. If we study nature's lessons, we may learn from her organic intelligence embedded in her technology and systems. Imagine creating natural processes that efficiently filter water, transform sunlight to energy, grow protein-rich marine life, and scrub the air clean of pollutants—in ways far beyond the best technological capacity of humans. And she contributes this absolutely astounding value to humans for free. Free. For the poor, agrarian, indigenous, and wage-workers in the world, this is a huge gift and stabilizing force.

Everything I learn about ME helps me in some direct or indirect way. Whether literally or metaphorically, each conversation, observation, reflection, and exploration with nature animates new ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving, that are unifying. Fragments of myself are coming together into a coherent story.



Coaches are observing, inquiring assemblers of our clients' storyboards. And, more often than not, those storyboards happen to resemble big parts of our selves, as well. When our storyboard expands outward to include connections with Nature, we are able to reflect on how to live sustainably and flourish. If coaches and leaders are attentive to the natural order the dynamic matrix of life, then we will understand how to properly steward our environment, design our businesses, empower our government and citizenry, and live in harmony with life.

### **Integral and Non-Integral – Does It Matter?**

Can an integral approach offer value that is qualitatively different from non-integral? In various ways, I've tried to share how I've experienced the value of that difference. An integral perspective has deepened and broadened my scope of awareness and curiosity and helped me to develop a larger, more meaningful coaching conversation. That bigger conversation opens my clients (and me) to active participation in the intentional shaping of the kind of world we want to live and work in.

Unlike earlier decades and centuries, it seems that the tipping points of the late 20th century and early 21st century, especially regarding climate change and pollution, call for leaders to be more aware of the impact of visible and hidden connections that bind humans to humans and humans to nature—not just at the organizational and local levels, but fundamentally at a systems global level. Individual and business actions cascade well beyond their locale.

Leadership coaching, like any other enterprise, is a medium for growth, perhaps even a measure of enlightenment, enhancing one's capacity to enjoy and contribute to a meaningful life. Whether people 'chop wood and carry water' or lead large organizations in the delivery of goods or services, we can choose to cultivate an attitude of openness, observation, and learning about the deeper and broader connections in life. And then people can make choices that align with that awareness. In so many ways, what coaches and leaders do together is explore the visible and hidden structures that make life work.

Purposeful conversations, self-observation exercises, and behavioral practices serve to enhance a leader's capacity for wise stewardship of vital resources. The fruits of the collaborative inquiry between leaders and coaches help leaders engage the best intelligence available for implementing responsible strategies to benefit local and global customers and citizens—and to do so in ways that preserve and restore the health of the global commons. Global communications and a global economy have dissolved boundaries of space and time, making us virtual neighbors and intellectual partners no matter our coordinates on the map. This self-organizing global network is re-designing the very architecture of human living to attune with nature. That attunement may well be human history's greatest breakthrough in healing the human spirit.

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