

# What Is the Integral Approach?

During the last 30 years, we have witnessed a historical first: all of the world's cultures are now available to us. In the past, if you were born, say, a Chinese, you likely spent your entire life in one culture, often in one province, sometimes in one house, living and loving and dying on one small plot of land. But today, not only are people geographically mobile, we can study, and have studied, virtually every known culture on the planet. In the global village, all cultures are exposed to each other.

Knowledge itself is now global. This means that, also for the first time, the sum total of human knowledge is available to us – the knowledge, experience, wisdom and reflection of all major human civilizations – premodern, modern, and postmodern – are open to study by anyone.

What if we took literally everything that all the various cultures have to tell us about human potential – about spiritual growth, psychological growth, social growth – and put it all on the table? What if we attempted to find the critically essential keys to human growth, based on the sum total of human knowledge now open to us? What if we attempted, based on extensive cross-cultural study, to use all of the world's great traditions to create a composite map, a comprehensive map, an all-inclusive or *integral* map that included the best elements from all of them?

Sound complicated, complex, daunting? In a sense, it is. But in another sense, the results turn out to be surprisingly simple and elegant. Over the last several decades, there has indeed been an extensive search for a comprehensive map of human potentials. This map uses all the known systems and models of human growth – from the ancient shamans and sages to today's breakthroughs in cognitive science – and distills their major components into 5 simple factors, factors that are the essential elements or keys to unlocking and facilitating human evolution.

## Welcome to the Integral Model

What are these 5 elements? We call them **quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types**. As you will see, all of these elements are, right now, *available in your own awareness*. These 5 elements are not merely theoretical concepts; they are aspects of your own experience, contours of your own consciousness, as you can easily verify for yourself as we proceed.

What is the point of using this Integral Map or Model? First, whether you are working in business, medicine, psychotherapy, law, ecology, or simply everyday living and learning, the Integral Map helps make sure that you are “touching all the bases.” If you are trying to fly over the Rocky Mountains, the more accurate a map you have, the less likely you will crash. An Integral Approach insures that you are utilizing the full range of resources for any situation, with the greater likelihood of success.

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Second, if you learn to spot these 5 elements in your own awareness – and because they are there in any event – then you can more easily appreciate them, exercise them, use them... and thereby vastly accelerate your own growth and development to higher, wider, deeper ways of being. A simple familiarity with the 5 elements in the Integral Model will help you orient yourself more easily and fully in this exciting journey of discovery and awakening.

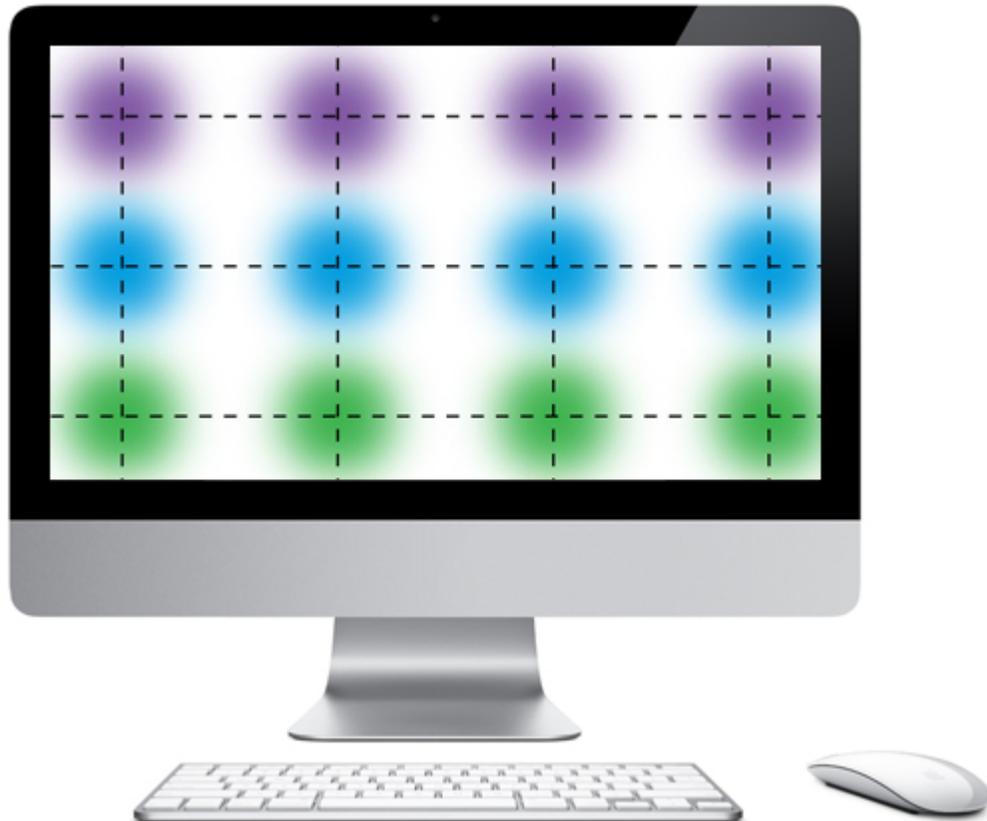
In short, the Integral Approach helps you see both yourself and the world around you in more comprehensive and effective ways. But one thing is important to realize from the start. The Integral Map is just a map. It is not the territory. We certainly don't want to confuse the map with the territory, but neither do we want to be working with an inaccurate or faulty map. The Integral Map is just a map, but it is the most complete and accurate map we have at this time.

## **What Is an Integral Operating System?**

In an information network, an operating system is the infrastructure that allows various software programs to operate. We use Integral Operating System or IOS as another phrase for the Integral Map. The point is simply that, if you are running any "software" in your life – such as your business, work, play, or relationships – you want the best operating system you can find, and IOS fits that bill. In touching all the bases, it allows the most effective programs to be used. This is just another way of talking about the comprehensive and inclusive nature of the Integral Model.

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## Element #1



### States and Stages of Consciousness

We said that all of the aspects of the 5 elements of the Integral Model are available, right now, in your own awareness. What follows is therefore, in a sense, a guided tour of your own experience. So why don't you come along with us and see if you can spot some of these features arising in your own awareness right now.

Some of these features refer to subjective realities in you, some refer to objective realities out there in the world, and others refer to collective or communal realities shared with others. Let's start with states of consciousness, which refer to subjective realities.

Everybody is familiar with major **states of consciousness**, such as waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Right now, you are in a waking state of consciousness (or, if you are tired, perhaps a daydream state of consciousness). There are all sorts of different states of consciousness, including *meditative states* (induced by

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yoga, contemplation, meditation, and so on); *altered states* (such as drug-induced); and a variety of *peak experiences*, many of which can be triggered by intense experiences like making love, walking in nature, or listening to exquisite music.

The great wisdom traditions (such as Christian mysticism, Vedanta Hinduism, Vajrayana Buddhism, and Jewish Kabbalah) maintain that the 3 *natural states* of consciousness – waking, dreaming, and deep formless sleep – actually contain a treasure trove of spiritual wisdom and spiritual awakening.... if we know how to use them correctly. In a special sense, which we will explore as we go along, the 3 great natural states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep contain an entire spectrum of spiritual enlightenment.

But on a much simpler, more mundane level, everybody experiences various sorts of states of consciousness, and these states often provide profound motivation, meaning, and drives, in both yourself and others. In any particular situation, states of consciousness may not be a very important factor, or they may be the determining factor, but no integral approach can afford to ignore them. Whenever you are using **IOS**, you will automatically be prompted to check and see if you are touching bases with these important subjective realities.

## Stages or Levels of Development

There's an interesting thing about states of consciousness: they come and they go. Even great peak experiences or altered states, no matter how profound, will come, stay a bit, then pass. No matter how wonderful their capacities, they are temporary.

Where states of consciousness are temporary, **stages of consciousness** are permanent. Stages represent the actual milestones of growth and development. Once you are at a stage, it is an enduring acquisition. For example, once a child develops through the linguistic stages of development, the child has permanent access to language. Language isn't present one minute and gone the next. The same thing happens with other types of growth. Once you stably reach a stage of growth and development, you can access the qualities of that stage – such as greater consciousness, more embracing love, higher ethical callings, greater intelligence and awareness – virtually any time you want. *Passing states* have been converted to *permanent traits*.

How many stages of development are there? Well, remember that in any map, the way you divide and represent the actual territory is somewhat arbitrary. For example, how many degrees are there between freezing and boiling water? If you use a Centigrade scale or "map," there are 100 degrees between freezing and boiling. But if you use a Fahrenheit scale, freezing is at 32 and boiling is at 212, so there are 180 degrees between them. Which is right? Both of them. It just depends upon how you want to slice that pie.

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The same is true of stages. There are all sorts of ways to slice and dice development, and therefore there are all sorts of **stage conceptions**. All of them can be useful. In the chakra system, for example, there are 7 major stages or levels of consciousness. Jean Gebser, the famous anthropologist, uses 5: archaic, magic, mythic, rational, and integral. Certain Western psychological models have 8, 12, or more levels of development. Which is right? All of them; it just depends on what you want to keep track of in growth and development.

“**Stages of development**” are also referred to as “**levels of development**,” the idea being that each stage represents a level of organization or a level of complexity. For example, in the sequence from atoms to molecules to cells to organisms, each of those stages of evolution involves a greater level of complexity. The word “level” is not meant in a rigid or exclusionary fashion, but simply to indicate that there are important emergent qualities that tend to come into being in a discrete or quantum-like fashion, and these developmental levels are important aspects of many natural phenomena.

Generally, in the Integral Model, we work with around 8 to 10 stages or levels of consciousness development. We have found, after years of field work, that more stages than that are too cumbersome, and less than that, too vague. One stage conception we often use is that of Spiral Dynamics Integral, founded by Don Beck based on the research of Clare Graves. We also use stages of self-development pioneered by Jane Loevinger and Susann Cook-Greuter; and orders of consciousness, researched by Robert Kegan. But there are many other useful stage conceptions available with the Integral Approach, and you can adopt any of them that are appropriate to your situation.

## A Simple Example

To show what is involved with levels or stages, let’s use a very simple model possessing only 3 of them. If we look at moral development, for example, we find that an infant at birth has not yet been socialized into the culture’s ethics and conventions; this is called the **preconventional stage**. It is also called **egocentric**, in that the infant’s awareness is largely self-absorbed. But as the young child begins to learn its culture’s rules and norms, it grows into the **conventional stage** of morals. This stage is also called **ethnocentric**, in that it centers on the child’s particular group, tribe, clan, or nation, and it therefore tends to exclude care for those not of one’s group. But at the next major stage of moral development, the **postconventional stage**, the individual’s identity expands once again, this time to include a care and concern for all peoples, regardless of race, color, sex, or creed, which is why this stage is also called **world-centric**.

Thus, moral development tends to move from “me” (egocentric) to “us” (ethnocentric) to “all of us” (world-centric) – a good example of the unfolding stages of consciousness.

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Another way to picture these 3 stages is as **body**, **mind**, and **spirit**. Those words all have many valid meanings, but when used specifically to refer to stages, they mean:

Stage 1, which is dominated by my gross physical reality, is the “body” stage (using body in its typical meaning of gross body). Since you are identified merely with the separate bodily organism and its survival drives, this is also the “me” stage.

Stage 2 is the “mind” stage, where identity expands from the isolated gross body and starts to share relationships with many others, based perhaps on shared values, mutual interests, common ideals, or shared dreams. Because I can use the mind to take the role of others – to put myself in their shoes and feel what it is like to be them – my identity expands from “me” to “us” (the move from egocentric to ethnocentric).

With stage 3, my identity expands once again, this time from an identity with “us” to an identity with “all of us” (the move from ethnocentric to world-centric). Here I begin to understand that, in addition to the wonderful diversity of humans and cultures, there are also similarities and shared commonalities. Discovering the commonwealth of all beings is the move from ethnocentric to world-centric, and is “spiritual” in the sense of things common to all sentient beings.

That is one way to view the unfolding from body to mind to spirit, where each of them is considered as a stage, wave, or level of unfolding care and consciousness, moving from egocentric to ethnocentric to world-centric.

We will be returning to stages of evolution and development, each time exploring them from a new angle. For now, all that is required is an understanding that by “stages” we mean progressive and permanent milestones along the evolutionary path of your own unfolding. Whether we talk stages of consciousness, stages of energy, stages of culture, stages of spiritual realization, stages of moral development, and so on, we are talking of these important and fundamental rungs in the unfolding of your higher, deeper, wider potentials.

Whenever you use **IOS**, you will automatically be prompted to check and see if you have included the important **stage aspects** of any situation, which will dramatically increase your likelihood of success, whether that success be measured in terms of personal transformation, social change, excellence in business, care for others, or simple satisfaction in life.

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## Element #2



## Lines of Development

Have you ever noticed how unevenly developed virtually all of us are? Some people are highly developed in, say, logical thinking, but poorly developed in emotional feelings. Some people have highly advanced cognitive development (they're very smart) but poor moral development (they're mean and ruthless). Some people excel in emotional intelligence, but can't add 2 plus 2.

Howard Gardner made this concept fairly well-known using the idea of **multiple intelligences**. Human beings have a variety of intelligences, such as cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, musical intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence, and so on. Most people excel in one or two of those, but do poorly in the others. This is not necessarily or even usually a bad thing; part of integral wisdom is finding where one excels and thus where one can best offer the world one's deepest gifts.

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But this does mean that we need to be aware of our strengths (or the intelligences with which we can shine) as well as our weaknesses (where we do poorly or even pathologically). And this brings us to another of our 5 essential elements: our multiples intelligences or developmental lines. So far we have looked at **states** and **stages**; what are **lines** or multiple intelligences?

Various multiple intelligences include: cognitive, interpersonal, moral, emotional, and aesthetic. Why do we also call them **developmental lines**? Because those intelligences show growth and development. They unfold in progressive stages. What are those progressive stages? The stages we just outlined.

In other words, each multiple intelligence grows – or can grow – through the 3 major stages (or through any of the stages of any of the developmental models, whether 3 stages, 5 stages, 7 or more; remember, these are all like Centigrade and Fahrenheit). You can have cognitive development to stage 1, to stage 2, and to stage 3, for example.

Likewise with the other intelligences. Emotional development to stage 1 means that you have developed the capacity for emotions centering on “me,” especially the emotions and drives of hunger, survival, and self-protection. If you continue to grow emotionally from stage 1 to stage 2 – or from egocentric to ethnocentric – you will expand from “me” to “us,” and begin to develop emotional commitments and attachments to loved ones, members of your family, close friends, perhaps your whole tribe or whole nation. If you grow into stage-3 emotions, you will develop the further capacity for a care and compassion that reaches beyond your own tribe or nation and attempts to include all human beings and even all sentient beings in a world-centric care and compassion.

We can think of these lines of development as multiple intelligences that have evolved in response to life’s core questions:

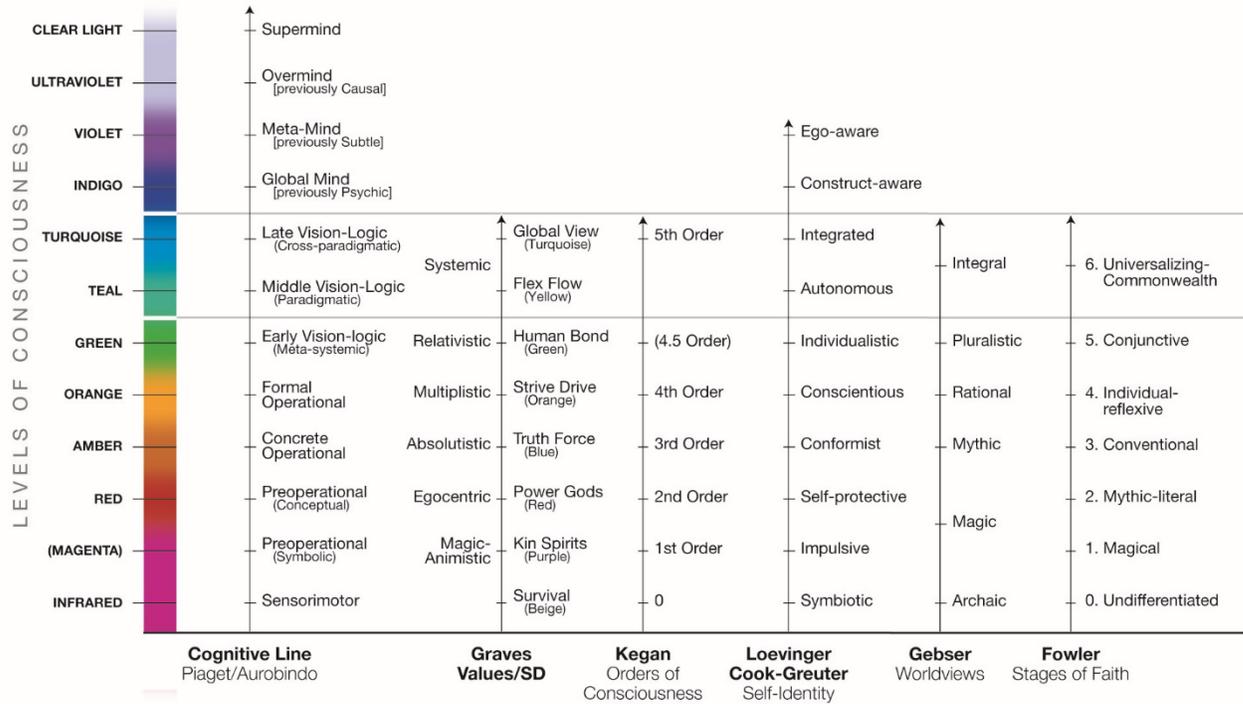
- What am I aware of? (Determined by the cognitive line of development.)
- What do I need? (The needs line.) Who am I? (Self-identity.)
- What is important to me? (Values.)
- How do I feel about this? (Emotional intelligence.)
- What is the right thing to do? (Morals.)
- How should we interact? (Interpersonal.)
- How should I physically do this? (Kinesthetic.)
- What is of ultimate concern to me? (Spirituality.)

Although these lines are intertwined and interrelated in many important ways, they all tend to evolve at different rates, helping us understand how some individuals can be very developed in some areas, but poorly developed in others.

And remember, because these are stages, you have attained them in a permanent fashion. Before that happens, any of these capacities will be merely passing states: you will plug into some of them, if at all, in a temporary fashion – great

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peak experiences of expanded knowing and being, wondrous “aha!” experiences, profound altered glimpses into your own higher possibilities. But with practice, you will convert those states into stages, or permanent traits in the territory of you.

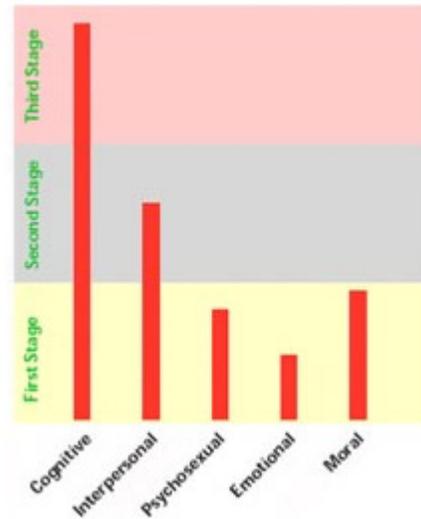


There is a fairly easy way to represent these intelligences or multiple lines. For example, in the graphic above, we have drawn a simple graph showing the major stages (or **levels** of development), arranged according to the colors of the rainbow. And we have selected six of the most researched intelligences (or **lines** of development). **Through the major stages or levels of development, the various lines unfold.** These levels or stages can apply to any developmental line – sexual, cognitive, spiritual, emotional, moral, and so on.

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In the figure to the right, we have shown somebody who excels in cognitive development and is good at moral development, but does poorly in interpersonal intelligence and really poorly in emotional intelligence. Other individuals would, of course, have a different “psychograph.”

The **psychograph** helps to spot where your greatest potentials are. You very likely already know what you excel in and what you don't. But part of the Integral Approach is learning to refine considerably this knowledge of your own contours, so that you can more confidently deal with both your own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of others.



The psychograph also helps us spot the ways that virtually all of us are unevenly developed, and thus helps prevent us from thinking that just because we are terrific in one area we must be terrific in all the others. In fact, usually the opposite. More than one leader, spiritual teacher, or politician has spectacularly crashed through lack of an understanding of these simple realities.

To be “integrally developed” does not mean that you have to excel in all the known intelligences, or that all of your lines have to be at level 3. But it does mean that you develop a very good sense of what your own psychograph is actually like, so that with a much more integral self-image you can plan your future development. For some people, this will indeed mean strengthening certain intelligences that are so weak they are causing problems. For others, this will mean clearing up a serious problem or pathology in one line (such as the emotional-sexual). And for others, simply recognizing where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and planning accordingly. Using an integral map, we can scope out our own psychographs with more assurance.

Thus, to be “**integrally informed**” does not mean you have to master all lines of development, just be aware of them. If you then chose to remedy any unbalances, that is part of Integral Transformative Practice, which actually helps to increase levels of development through an integrated approach.

Notice another very important point. In certain types of psychological and spiritual training, you can be introduced to a full spectrum of **states** of consciousness and bodily experiences right from the start – as a peak experience, meditative experience, shamanic state, altered state, and so on. The reason that this is possible is that the many of the major states of consciousness (such as waking-gross, dreaming-subtle, and formless-causal) are ever-present possibilities. So you can very quickly be introduced to many **higher states** of consciousness.

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You cannot, however, be introduced to all the qualities of **higher stages** without actual growth and practice. You can have a peak experience of higher states, because many of them are ever-present. But you cannot have a peak experience of a higher stage, because stages unfold sequentially. Stages build upon their predecessors in very concrete ways, so they cannot be skipped: like atoms to molecules to cells to organisms, you can't go from atoms to cells and skip molecules. This is one of the many important differences between states and stages.

However, with repeated practice of contacting higher states, your own stages of development will tend to unfold in a much faster and easier way. There is, in fact, considerable experimental evidence demonstrating exactly that. The more you are plunged into authentic higher *states* of consciousness – such as meditative states – then the faster you will grow and develop through any of the *stages* of consciousness. It is as if higher-states training acts as a lubricant on the spiral of development, helping you to disidentify with a lower stage so that the next higher stage can emerge, until you can stably remain at higher levels of awareness on an ongoing basis, whereupon a passing state has become a permanent trait. These types of higher-states training, such as meditation, are a part of any integral approach to transformation.

In short, you cannot skip actual stages, but you can accelerate your growth through them by using various types of Integral Transformative Practices, and these transformative practices are an important part of the Integral Approach.

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## Element #3



### What Type?

The next component is easy: each of the previous components has a masculine and feminine type. There are two basic ideas here: one has to do with the idea of types themselves; and the other, with masculine and feminine as one example of types.

**Types** simply refers to items that can be present at virtually any stage or state. One common typology, for example, is the Myers-Briggs (whose main types are feeling, thinking, sensing, and intuiting). **You can be any of those types at virtually any stage of development.** These kind of “horizontal typologies” can be very useful, especially when combined with levels, lines, and states. To show what is involved, we can use “masculine” and “feminine.”

Carol Gilligan, in her enormously influential book *In a Different Voice*, pointed out that both men and women tend to develop through 3 or 4 major levels or stages of moral development. Pointing to a great deal of research evidence,

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Gilligan noted that these 3 or 4 moral stages can be called *preconventional*, *conventional*, *postconventional*, and *integrated*. These are actually quite similar to the 3 simple developmental stages we are using, this time applied to moral intelligence.

Gilligan found that stage 1 is a morality centered entirely on “me” (hence this preconventional stage or level is also called **egocentric**). Stage-2 moral development is centered on “us,” so that my identity has expanded from just me to include other human beings of my group (hence this conventional stage is often called **ethnocentric**, traditional, or conformist). With stage-3 moral development, my identity expands once again, this time from “us” to “all of us,” or all human beings (or even all sentient beings) – and hence this stage is often called **world-centric**. I now have care and compassion, not just for me (egocentric), and not just for my family, my tribe, or my nation (ethnocentric), but for all of humanity, for all men and women everywhere, regardless of race, color, sex, or creed (world-centric). And if I develop even further, at stage-4 moral development, which Gilligan calls **integrated**, then...

Well, before we look at the important conclusion of Gilligan’s work, let’s first note her major contribution. Gilligan strongly agreed that women, like men, develop through those 3 or 4 major hierarchical stages of growth. Gilligan herself correctly refers to these stages as *hierarchical* because each stage has a *higher* capacity for care and compassion. But she said that women progress through those stages using a different type of logic – they develop “in a different voice.”

Male logic, or a man’s voice, tends to be based on terms of autonomy, justice, and rights; whereas women’s logic or voice tends to be based on terms of relationship, care, and responsibility. Men tend toward agency; women tend toward communion. Men follow rules; women follow connections. Men look; women touch. Men tend toward individualism, women toward relationship. One of Gilligan’s favorite stories: A little boy and girl are playing; the boy says, “Let’s play pirates!” The girl says, “Let’s play like we live next door to each other.” Boy: “No, I want to play pirates!” “Okay, you play the pirate who lives next door.”

Little boys don’t like girls around when they are playing games like baseball, because the two voices clash badly, and often hilariously. Some boys are playing baseball, a kid takes his third strike and is out, so he starts to cry. The other boys stand unmoved until the kid stops crying; after all, a rule is a rule, and the rule is: three strikes and you’re out. Gilligan points out that if a girl is around, she will usually say, “Ah, come on, give him another try!” The girl sees him crying and wants to help, wants to connect, wants to heal. This, however, drives the boys nuts, who are doing this game as an initiation into the world of rules and male logic. Gilligan says that the boys will therefore hurt feelings in order to save the rules; the girls will break the rules in order to save the feelings.

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In a different voice. Both the girls and boys will develop through the 3 or 4 developmental stages of moral growth (egocentric to ethnocentric to world-centric to integrated), but they will do so in a different voice, using a different logic. Gilligan specifically calls these hierarchical stages in women **selfish** (which is egocentric), **care** (which is ethnocentric), **universal care** (which is world-centric), and **integrated**. Again, why are they hierarchical? Because each stage is a higher capacity for care and compassion. (Not all hierarchies are bad, and this a good example of why.)

So, integrated or stage 4 – what is that? At the 4th and highest stage of moral development that we are aware of, the masculine and feminine voices in each of us tend to become integrated, according to Gilligan. This does not mean that a person at this stage starts to lose the distinctions between masculine and feminine, and hence become a kind of bland, androgynous, asexual being. In fact, masculine and feminine dimensions might become more intensified. But it does mean the individuals start to befriend both the masculine and feminine modes in themselves, even if they characteristically act predominantly from one or the other.

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Have you ever seen a *caduceus* (the symbol of the medical profession)? It's a staff with two serpents crisscrossing it, and wings at the top of the staff. The staff

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itself represents the central spinal column; where the serpents cross the staff represents the individual chakras moving up the spine from the lowest to the highest; and the two serpents themselves represent solar and lunar (or masculine and feminine) energies *at each of the chakras*.

That's the crucial point. The 7 chakras, which are simply a more complex version of the 3 simple levels or stages, represent 7 levels of consciousness and energy available to all human beings. (The first three chakras – food, sex, and power – are roughly stage 1; chakras four and five – relational heart and communication – are basically stage 2; and chakras six and seven – psychic and spiritual – are the epitome of stage 3). The important point here is that, according to the traditions, **each of those 7 levels has a masculine and feminine** aspect, type, or “voice.” Neither masculine nor feminine is higher or better; they are two equivalent types at each of the levels of consciousness.

This means, for example, that with chakra 3 (the egocentric-power chakra), there is a masculine and feminine version of the same chakra: at that chakra-level, males tend toward power exercised autonomously (“My way or the highway!”), women tend toward power exercised communally or socially (“Do it this way or I won't talk to you”). And so on with the other major chakras, each of them having a solar and lunar, or masculine and feminine dimension; neither is more fundamental, neither can be ignored.

At the 7th chakra, however, notice that the masculine and feminine serpents both disappear into their ground or source. Masculine and feminine meet and unite at the crown – they literally become one. And that is what Gilligan found with her stage-4 moral development: the two voices in each person become integrated, so that there is a paradoxical union of autonomy and relationship, rights and responsibilities, agency and communion, wisdom and compassion, justice and mercy, masculine and feminine.

The important point is that whenever you use **IOS**, you are automatically checking any situation – in yourself, in others, in an organization, in a culture – and making sure that you include both the masculine and feminine types so as to be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible. If you believe that there are no major differences between masculine and feminine – or if you are suspicious of such differences – then that is fine, too, and you can treat them the same if you want. We are simply saying that, in either case, make sure you touch bases with both the masculine and feminine, however you view them.

But more than that, there are numerous other “horizontal typologies” that can be very helpful when part of a comprehensive **IOS**, and the Integral Approach draws on any or all of those typologies as appropriate. “Types” are as important as quadrants, levels, lines, and states.

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## **Sick Boy, Sick Girl**

There's an interesting thing about types. You can have healthy and unhealthy versions of them. To say that somebody is caught in an unhealthy type is not a way to judge them but to understand and communicate more clearly and effectively with them.

For example, if each stage of development has a masculine and feminine dimension, each of those can be healthy or unhealthy, which we sometimes call "sick boy, sick girl." This is simply another kind of horizontal typing, but one that can be extremely useful.

If the healthy masculine principle tends toward autonomy, strength, independence, and freedom, when that principle becomes unhealthy or pathological, all of those positive virtues either over- or under-fire. There is not just autonomy, but alienation; not just strength, but domination; not just independence, but morbid fear of relationship and commitment; not just a drive toward freedom, but a drive to destroy. The unhealthy masculine principle does not transcend in freedom, but dominates in fear.

If the healthy feminine principle tends toward flowing, relationship, care, and compassion, the unhealthy feminine flounders in each of those. Instead of being in relationship, she becomes lost in relationship. Instead of a healthy self in communion with others, she loses her self altogether and is dominated by the relationships she is in. Not a connection, but a fusion; not a flow state, but a panic state; not a communion, but a melt-down. The unhealthy feminine principle does not find fullness in connection, but chaos in fusion.

Using **IOS**, you will find ways to identify both the healthy and unhealthy masculine and feminine dimensions operating in yourself and in others. But the important point about this section is simple: various typologies have their usefulness in helping us to understand and communicate with others. And with any typology, there are healthy and unhealthy versions of a type. Pointing to an unhealthy type is not a way to judge people but a way to understand and communicate with them more clearly and effectively.

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## Element #4



### Many Bodies

Let's return now to states of consciousness in order to make a final point before bringing this all together in an integral conclusion.

States of consciousness do not hover in the air, dangling and disembodied. On the contrary, every mind has its body. For every state of consciousness, there is a felt energetic component, an embodied feeling, a concrete vehicle which provides the actual support for any state of awareness.

Let's use a simple example from the wisdom traditions. Because each of us has the 3 great states of consciousness – waking, dreaming, and formless sleep – the wisdom traditions maintain that each of us has 3 bodies, which are often called the **gross body**, the **subtle body**, and the **causal body**.

3 bodies? Are you kidding me? Isn't one body enough? But keep in mind a few things. For the wisdom traditions, a "body" simply means a mode of experience or energetic feeling. So there is coarse or gross experience, subtle or refined

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experience, and very subtle or causal experience. These are what are philosophers would call “phenomenological realities,” or realities as they present themselves to our immediate awareness. Right now, you have access to a gross body and its gross energy, a subtle body and its subtle energy, and a causal body and its causal energy.

What’s an example of these 3 bodies? Notice that, right now, you are in a *waking state* of awareness; as such, you are aware of your **gross body** – the physical, material, sensorimotor body. But when you dream at night, there is no gross physical body; it seems to have vanished. You are aware in the dream state, yet you don’t have a gross body of dense matter but a subtle body of light, energy, emotional feelings, fluid and flowing images. In the dream state, the mind and soul are set free to create as they please, to imagine vast worlds not tied to gross sensory realities but reaching out, almost magically, to touch other souls, other people and far-off places, wild and radiant images cascading to the rhythm of the heart’s desire. When somebody like Martin Luther King says, “I have a dream,” that is a good example of tapping into the great potential of visionary dreaming, where the mind is set free to soar to its highest possibilities.

As you pass from the *dream state* with its **subtle body** into the deep-sleep state, even thoughts and images drop away, and there is only a vast emptiness, a formless expanse beyond any individual “I” or ego or self. The great wisdom traditions maintain that in this state – which might seem like merely a blank or nothingness – we are actually plunged into a vast formless realm, a great Emptiness or Ground of being, an expanse of consciousness that seems almost infinite. Along with this almost infinite expanse there is an almost infinite body or energy – the **causal body**, the body of the finest, most subtle experience possible, a great formlessness out of which creative possibilities can arise.

Of course, many people do not experience that deep state in such a full fashion. But again, the traditions are unanimous that this *formless state* and its *causal body* can be entered in full awareness, whereupon they, too, yield their extraordinary potentials for growth and awareness.

The point, once again, is simply that whenever **IOS** is being utilized, it reminds us to check in with our waking-state realities, our subtle-state dreams and visions and innovative ideas, as well as our own open, formless ground of possibilities that is the source of so much creativity. The important point about the Integral Approach is that we want to touch bases with as many potentials as possible so as to miss nothing in terms of possible solutions.

## Consciousness and Complexity

Perhaps 3 bodies are just too “far out”? Well, remember that these are phenomenological realities, or experiential realities, but there is a simpler, less far-out way to look at them, this time grounded in hard-headed science. It is

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this: *every level of interior consciousness is accompanied by a level of exterior physical complexity.* The greater the consciousness, the more complex the system housing it.

For example, in living organisms, the **reptilian brain stem** is accompanied by a rudimentary interior consciousness of basic drives such as food and hunger, physiological sensations and sensorimotor actions (everything that we earlier called “gross,” or centered on the “me”). By the time we get to the more complex **limbic system**, basic sensations have expanded and evolved to include quite sophisticated feelings, desires, emotional-sexual impulses and needs (hence, the beginning of what we called the subtle body, which can expand from “me” to “us”). As evolution proceeds to even more complex physical structures, such as the **triune brain** with its **neocortex**, consciousness once again expands to a world-centric awareness of “all of us” (and thus even begins to tap into what we called the causal body).

That is a very simple example of the fact that increasing interior consciousness is accompanied by increasing exterior complexity of the systems housing it. When using **IOS**, we often look at both the interior levels of consciousness and the corresponding exterior levels of physical complexity, since including both of them results in a much more balanced and inclusive approach. We will see exactly what this means in a moment.

# What Is the Integral Approach?

## Element #5



### How it All Fits Together: The Four Quadrants

**IOS** – and the Integral Model – would be merely a “heap” if it did not suggest a way that all of these various components are related. How do they all fit together? It’s one thing to simply lay all the pieces of the cross-cultural survey on the table and say, “They’re all important!” and quite another to spot the patterns that actually connect all the pieces. Discovering the profound **patterns that connect** is a major accomplishment of the Integral Approach.

In this concluding section, we will briefly outline these patterns, all of which together are sometimes referred to as **A-Q-A-L** (pronounced *ah-qwal*), which is shorthand for “all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types” – and those are simply the components that we have already outlined (except the quadrants, which we will get to momentarily). **AQAL** is just another term for **IOS** or the **Integral Model**, but one that is often used to specifically designate this particular approach.

# What Is the Integral Approach?

At the beginning of this introduction, we said that all 5 components of the Integral Model were items that are available to your awareness right now, and this is true of the quadrants as well.

Did you ever notice that major languages have what are called first-person, second-person, and third-person pronouns? **First-person** means “the person who is speaking,” so that includes pronouns like *I, me, mine* (in the singular), and *we, us, ours* (in the plural). **Second-person** means “the person who is spoken to,” which includes pronouns like *you* and *yours*. **Third-person** means “the person or thing being spoken about,” such as *he, him, she, her, they, them, it, and its*.

Thus, if I am speaking to you about my new car, “I” am first person, “you” are second person, and the new car (or “it”) is third person. Now, if you and I are talking and communicating, we will indicate this by using, for example, the word “we,” as in, “We understand each other.” “We” is technically first-person plural, but if you and I are communicating, then your second person and my first person are part of this extraordinary “we.” Thus second person is sometimes indicated as “you/we,” or “thou/we,” or sometimes just “we.”

So we can therefore simplify first-, second-, and third-person as “I,” “we,” and “it.”

That all seems trivial, doesn't it? Boring maybe? So let's try this. Instead of saying “we,” “it,” and “I,” what if we said the **Good**, the **True**, and the **Beautiful**? And what if we said that the Good, the True, and the Beautiful are dimensions of your very own being at each and every level of growth and development? And that through an integral transformative practice, you can discover deeper and deeper dimensions of your own Goodness, your own Truth, and your own Beauty?

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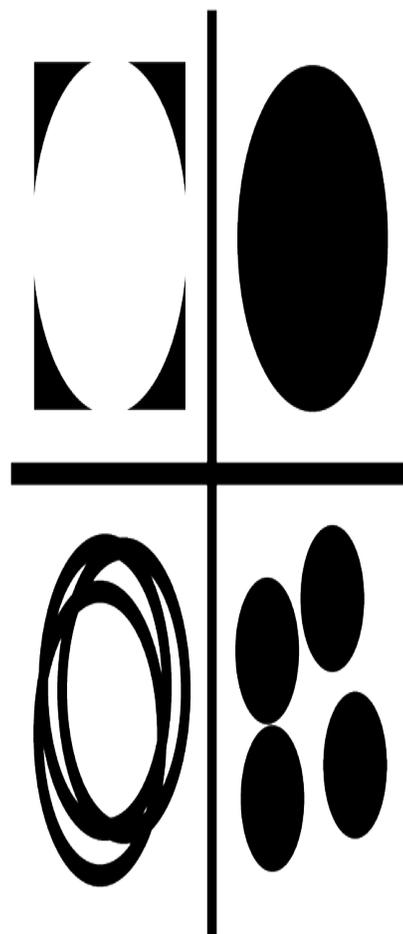
Hmm, definitely more interesting. The Good, the True, and the Beautiful are simply variations on first-, second-, and third-person pronouns found in all major languages, and they are found in all major languages because Truth, Goodness, and Beauty are very real dimensions of reality to which language has adapted. Third-person (or “it”) refers to objective truth, which is best investigated by science. Second-person (or “you/we”) refers to Goodness, or the ways that we – that you and I – treat each other, and whether we do so with decency, honesty, and respect. In other words, basic morality. And first-person deals with the “I,” with self and self-expression, art and aesthetics, and the beauty that is in the eye (or the “I”) of the beholder.

So the “I,” “we,” and “it” dimensions of experience really refer to: **art, morals, and science**. Or **self, culture, and nature**. Or the Beautiful, the Good, and the True.

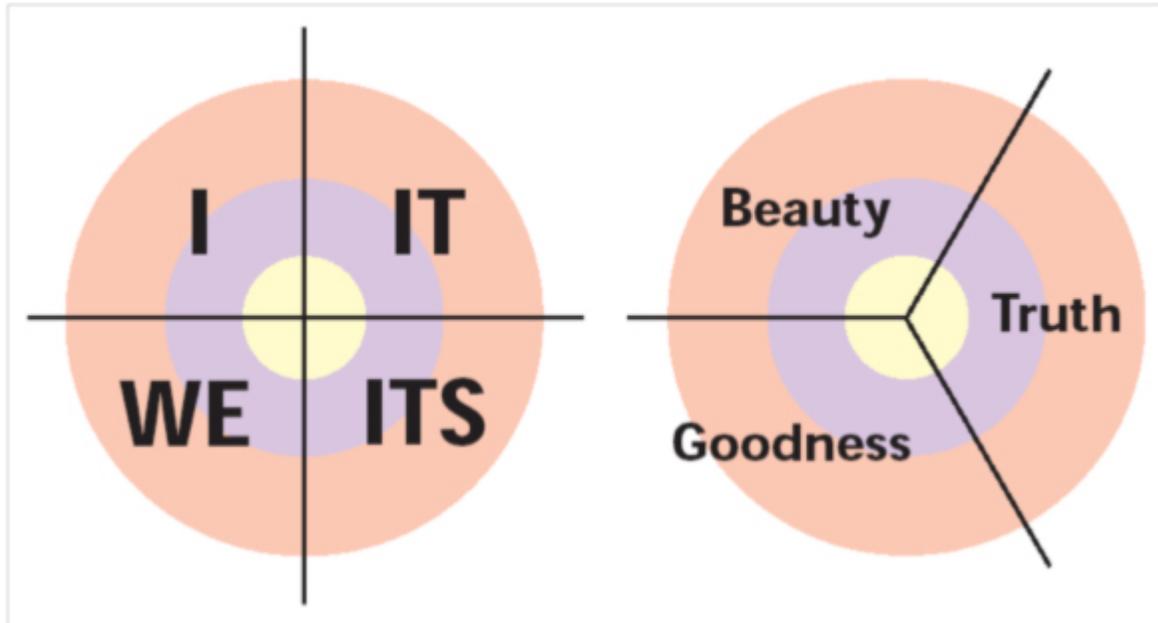
And the point is that every event in the manifest world has all three of those dimensions. You can look at any event from the point of view of the “I” (or how I personally see and feel about the event); from the point of view of the “we” (how not just I but others see the event); and as an “it” (or the objective facts of the event).

Thus, an integrally informed path will therefore take all of those dimensions into account, and thus arrive at a more comprehensive and effective approach – in the “I” and the “we” and the “it” – or in self and culture and nature.

If you leave out science, or leave out art, or leave out morals, something is going to be missing, something will get broken. Self and culture and nature are liberated together or not at all. So fundamental are these dimensions of “I,” “we,” and “it” that we call them the four quadrants, and we make them a foundation of the integral framework or **IOS**. (We arrive at “four” quadrants by subdividing “it” into singular “it” and plural “its,” as we will see.) A few diagrams will help clarify the basic points.



# What Is the Integral Approach?



**Figure 1: The Four Quadrants**

Figure 1 is a schematic of the four quadrants. It shows the “**I**” (the *inside* of the *individual*), the “**it**” (the *outside* of the *individual*), the “**we**” (the *inside* of the *collective*), and the “**its**” (the *outside* of the *collective*). In other words, the four quadrants – which are the four fundamental perspectives on any occasion (or the four basic ways of looking at anything) – turn out to be fairly simple: they are the **inside** and the **outside** of the **individual** and the **collective**.

Figures 2 and 3 show a few of the details of the four quadrants. (Some of these are technical terms that needn’t be bothered with for this basic introduction; simply look at the diagrams and get a sense of the different types of items you might find in each of the quadrants.)

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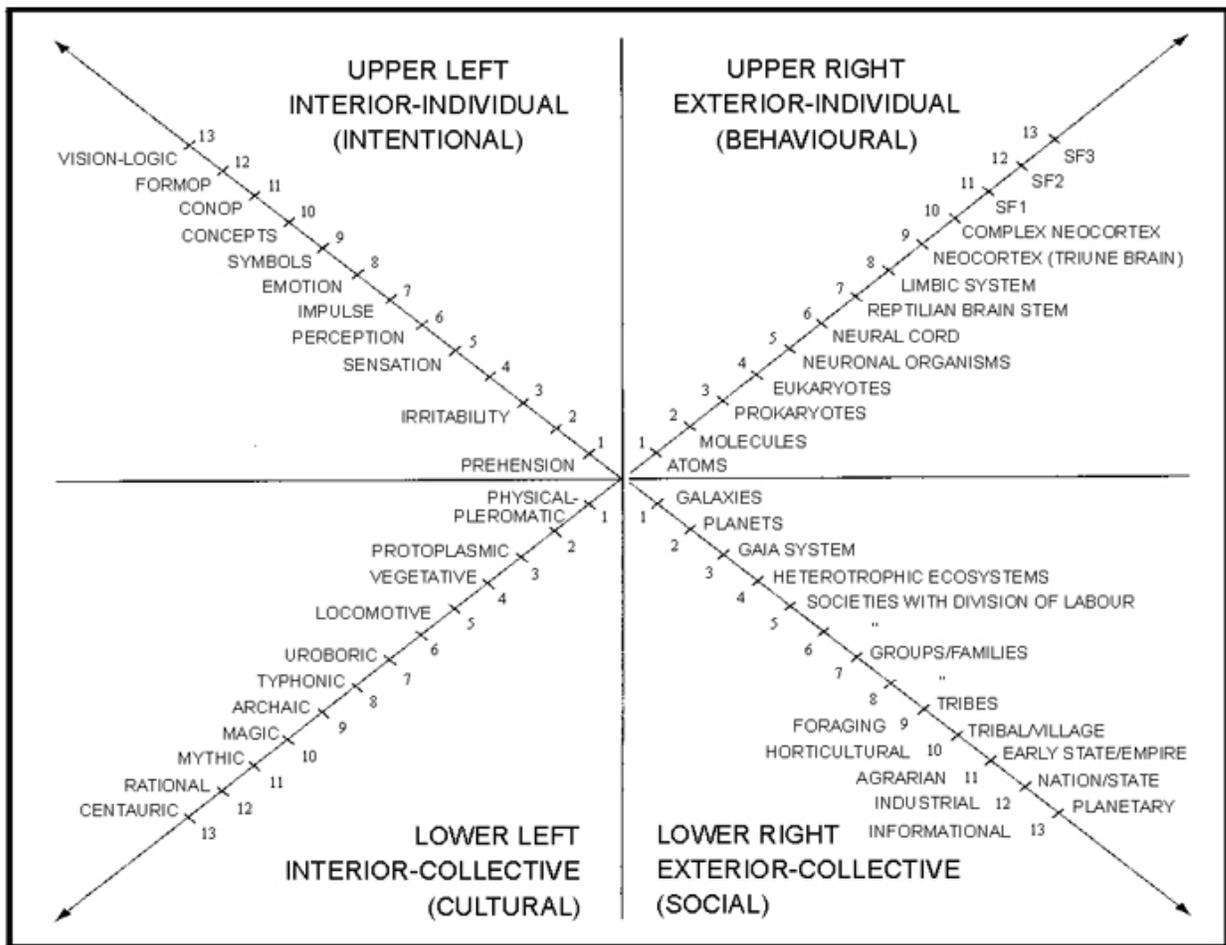
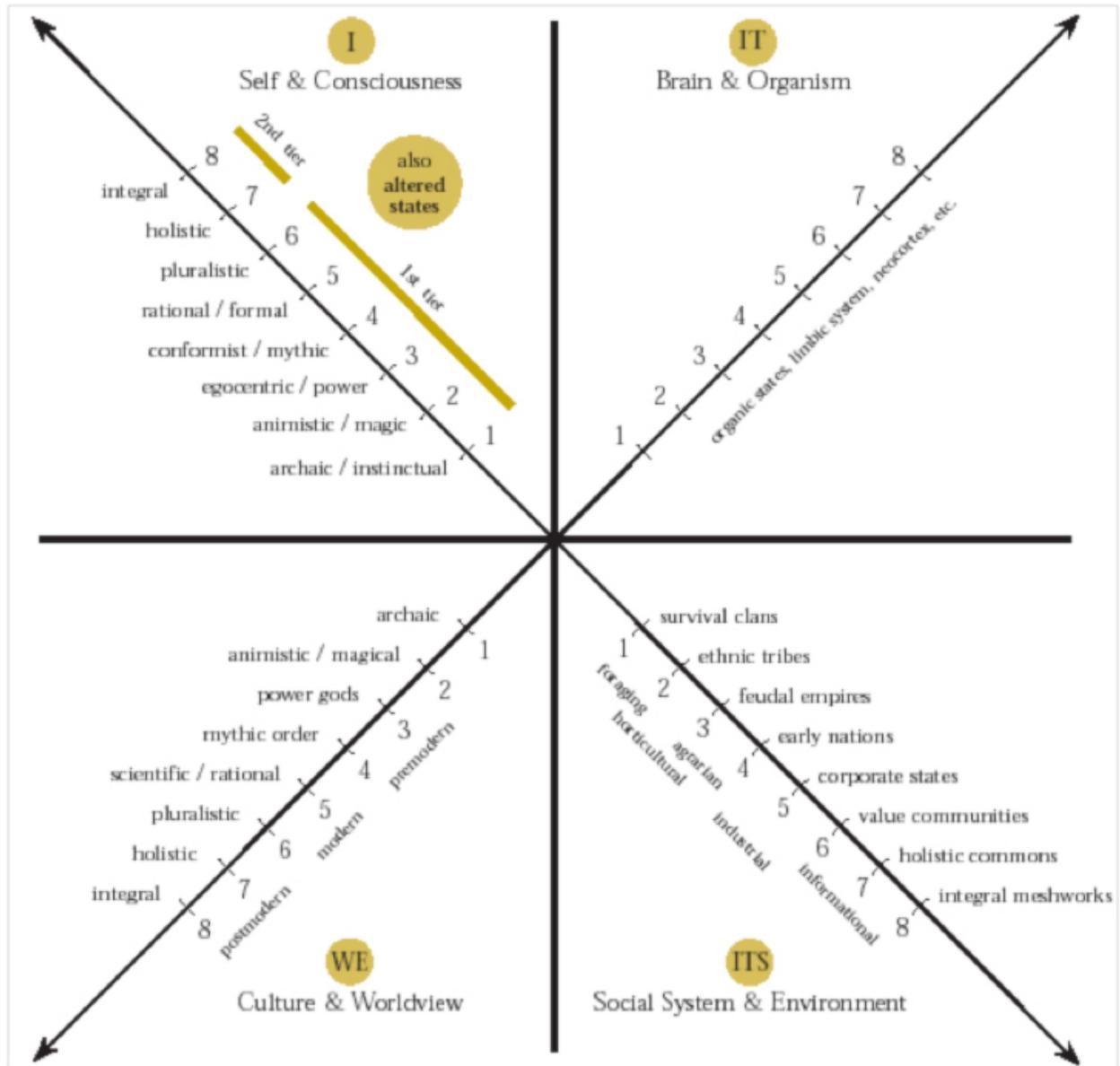


Figure 2: Some Details of the Quadrants

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**Figure 3. Quadrants Focused on Humans**

For example, in the Upper-Left quadrant (the interior of the individual), you find your own immediate thoughts, feelings, sensations, and so on (all described in first-person terms). But if you look at your individual being from the outside, in the terms not of subjective awareness but objective science, you find neurotransmitters, a limbic system, the neocortex, complex molecular structures, cells, organ systems, DNA, and so on – all described in third-person objective terms (“it” and “its”). The Upper-Right quadrant is therefore what any event looks like from the outside. This especially includes its physical behavior; its material components; its matter and energy; and its concrete body – for all those

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are items that can be referred to in some sort of objective, **third-person**, or “it” fashion.

That is what you or your organism looks like from the outside, in an objective-it stance, made of matter and energy and objects; whereas from the inside, you find not neurotransmitters but feelings, not limbic systems but intense desires, not a neocortex but inward visions, not matter-energy but consciousness, all described in **first-person** immediateness. Which of those views is right? Both of them, according to the integral approach. They are two different views of the same occasion, namely you. The problems start when you try to deny or dismiss either of those perspectives. All four quadrants need to be included in any integral view.

The connections continue. Notice that every “I” is in relationship with other I’s, which means that every “I” is a member of numerous we’s. These “we’s” represent not just *individual* but *group* (or *collective*) consciousness, not just subjective but intersubjective awareness – or **culture** in the broadest sense. This is indicated in the Lower-Left quadrant. Likewise, every “we” has an exterior, or what it looks like from the outside, and this is the Lower-Right quadrant. The Lower Left is often called the **cultural** dimension (or the inside awareness of the group – its worldview, its shared values, shared feelings, and so forth), and the Lower Right the **social** dimension (or the exterior forms and behaviors of the group, which are studied by third-person sciences such as systems theory).

Again, the quadrants are simply the **inside** and the **outside** of the **individual** and the **collective**, and the point is that all four quadrants need to be included if we want to be as integral as possible.

We are now at a point where we can start to put all the pieces together. The major components we previously examined were states, levels, lines, and types. Let’s start with **levels** or **stages**.

*All four quadrants show growth, development, or evolution.* That is, they all show some sort of stages or levels of development, not as rigid rungs in a ladder but as fluid and flowing waves of unfolding. This happens everywhere in the natural world, just as an oak unfolds from an acorn through stages of growth and development, or a Siberian tiger grows from a fertilized egg to an adult organism in well-defined stages of growth and development. Likewise with humans in certain important ways. We have already seen several of these stages as they apply to humans. In the Upper Left or “I,” for example, the self unfolds from *body* to *mind* to *spirit*. In the Upper Right, bodily energy phenomenologically expands from *gross* to *subtle* to *causal*. In the Lower Left, the “we” expands from *egocentric* to *ethnocentric* to *world-centric*. This expansion of group awareness allows social systems – in the Lower Right – to expand from simple groups to more complex systems like nations and eventually even to global systems. These 3 simple stages in each of the quadrants are represented in Figure 4.

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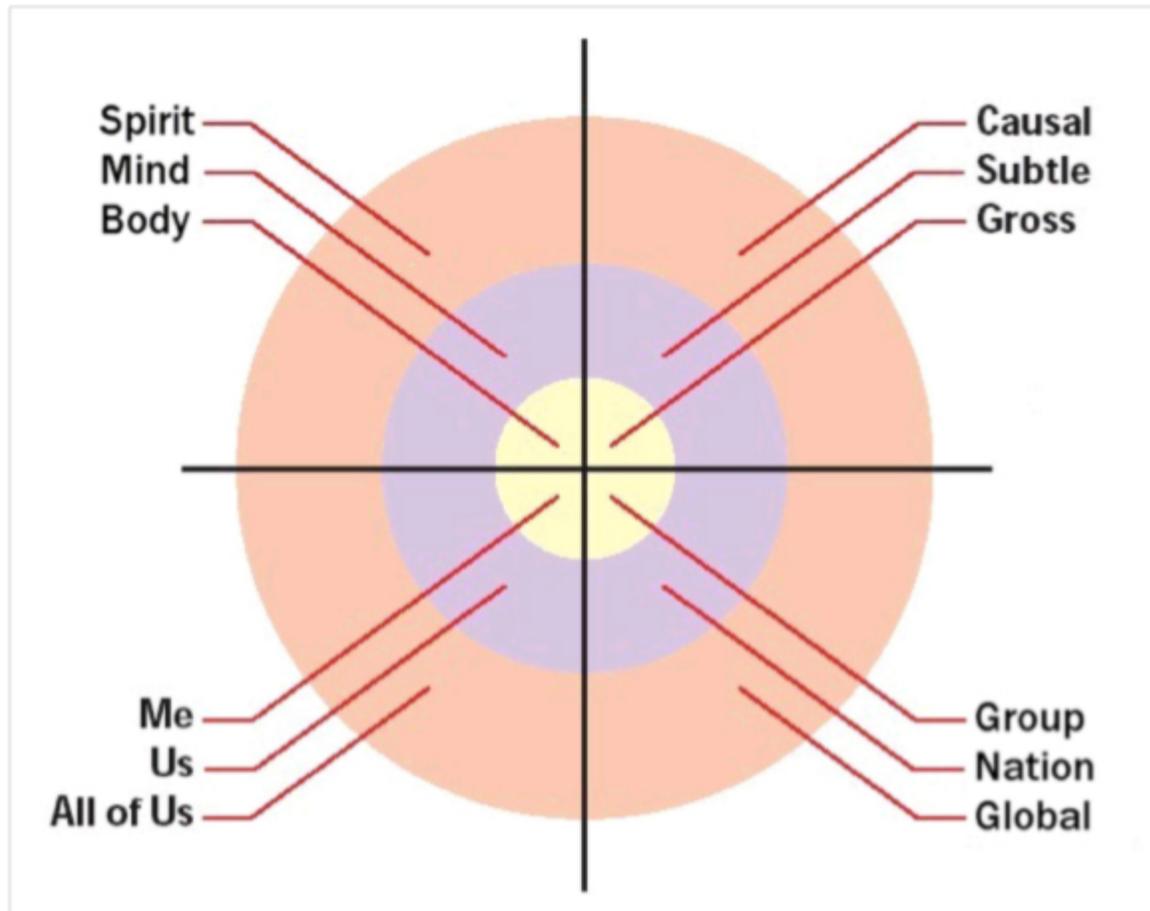


Figure 4: AQAL

Let's move from **levels** to **lines**. Developmental lines occur in all four quadrants, but because we are focusing on personal development, we can look at how some of these lines appear in the Upper-Left quadrant. As we saw, there are over a dozen different multiple intelligences or developmental lines. Some of the more important include:

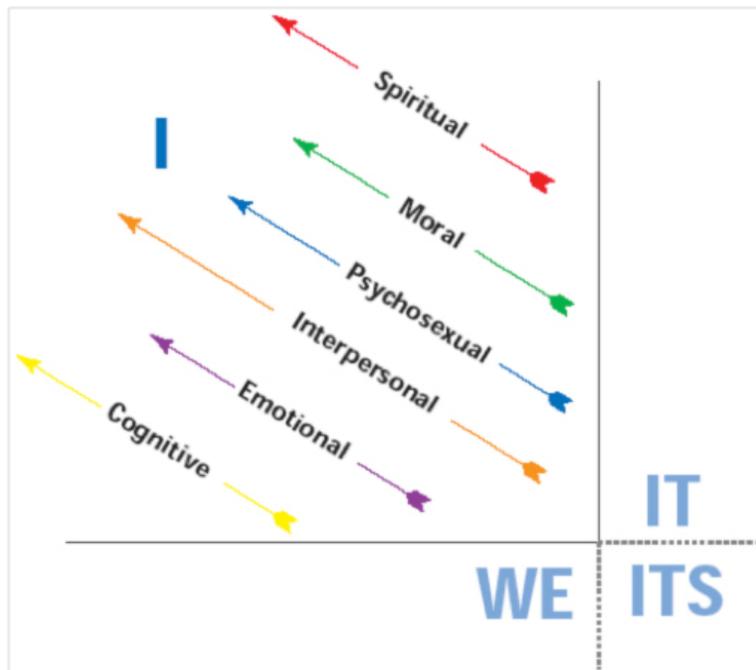
- the **cognitive** line (or awareness of what is)
- the **moral** line (awareness of what should be)
- **emotional** or **affective** line (the spectrum of emotions)
- the **interpersonal** line (how I socially relate to others)
- the **needs** line (such as Maslow's needs hierarchy)
- the **self-identity** line (or "who am I?," such as Loevinger's ego development)
- the **aesthetic** line (or the line of self-expression, beauty, art, and felt meaning)
- the **psychosexual** line, which in its broadest sense means the entire spectrum of Eros (gross to subtle to causal)
- the **spiritual** line (where "spirit" is viewed not just as Ground, and not just as the highest stage, but as its own line of unfolding)

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- the **values** line (or what a person considers most important, a line studied by Clare Graves and made popular by Spiral Dynamics)

All of those developmental lines can move through the basic stages or levels. All of them can be included in the psychograph. If we use stage or level conceptions such as Robert Kegan's, Jane Loevinger's, or Clare Graves's, then we would have 5, 8, or even more levels of development with which we could follow the natural unfolding of developmental lines or streams. Again, it is not a matter of which of them is right or wrong; it is a matter of how much "granularity" or "complexity" you need to more adequately understand a given situation.

We already gave one diagram of a psychograph. Figure 5 is another, taken from a Notre Dame business school presentation that uses the AQAL model in business.



**Figure 5: Another Version of the Psychograph**

As noted, all of the quadrants have developmental lines. We just focused on those in the Upper Left. In the Upper-Right quadrant, when it comes to humans, one of the most important is the bodily matter-energy line, which runs, as we saw, from gross energy to subtle energy to causal energy. As a developmental sequence, this refers to the permanent acquisition of a capacity to consciously master these energetic components of your being (otherwise, they appear merely as states). The Upper-Right quadrant also refers to all of the exterior **behavior**, actions, and movements of my objective body (gross, subtle, or causal).

In the Lower-Left quadrant, cultural development itself often unfolds in waves, moving from what the pioneering genius Jean Gebser

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called archaic to magic to mythic to mental to integral and higher. In the Lower-Right quadrant, systems theory investigates the collective social systems that evolve (and that, in humans, include stages such as *foraging* to *agrarian* to *industrial* to *informational* systems). In figure 4, we simplified this to “group, nation, and global,” but the general idea is simply that of unfolding levels of greater social complexity that are integrated into wider systems. Again, for this simple overview, details are not as important as a general grasp of the unfolding nature of all four quadrants, which can include expanding spheres of consciousness, care, culture, and nature. In short, the I and the we and it can evolve. Self and culture and nature can all develop and evolve.

We can now quickly finish with the other components. **States** occur in all quadrants (from weather states to states of consciousness). We focused on **states of consciousness** in the Upper Left (waking, dreaming, sleeping), and on **energetic states** in the Upper Right (gross, subtle, causal). Of course, if any of those become permanent acquisitions, they have become stages, not states.

There are **types** in all of the quadrants, too, but we focused on *masculine* and *feminine* types as they appear in individuals. The masculine principle identifies more with agency and the feminine identifies more with communion, but the point is that every person has both of these components. Finally, as was saw, there is an **unhealthy type** of masculine and feminine at all available stages – sick boy and sick girl at all stages.

Seem complicated? In a sense it is. But in another sense, the extraordinary complexity of humans and their relation to the universe can be simplified enormously by touching bases with the **quadrants** (the fact that every event can be looked at as an I, we, or it); **developmental lines** (or multiple intelligences), all of which move through **developmental levels** (from body to mind to spirit); with **states** and **types** at each of those levels.

That **Integral Model** – “all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types” – is the simplest model that can handle all of the truly essential items. We sometimes shorten all of that to simply “all quadrants, all levels” – or **AQAL** – where the quadrants are, for example, self, culture, and nature, and the levels are body, mind, and spirit, so we say that the Integral Approach involves **the cultivation of body, mind, and spirit in self, culture, and nature**. The simplest version of this is shown in figure 4, and if you have a general understanding of that diagram, the rest is fairly easy.

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## **Integral Applications**

Let's conclude this Introduction to IOS Basic by giving a few quick examples of its application or "apps."

### **INTEGRAL MEDICINE**

Nowhere is the Integral Model more immediately applicable than in medicine, and it is being increasingly adopted by health care facilities around the world. A quick trip through the quadrants will show why an integral model can be helpful.

Orthodox or conventional medicine is a classic Upper-Right quadrant approach. It deals almost entirely with the physical organism using physical interventions: surgery, drugs, medication, and behavioral modification. Orthodox medicine believes essentially in the physical causes of physical illness, and therefore prescribes mostly physical interventions. But the Integral Model claims that every physical event (UR) has at least four dimensions (the quadrants), and thus even physical illness must be looked at from all four quadrants (not to mention levels, which we will address later). The integral model does not claim the

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Upper-Right quadrant is not important, only that it is, as it were, only one-fourth of the story.

The recent explosion of interest in alternative care – not to mention such disciplines as psychoneuroimmunology – has made it quite clear that the person's *interior states* (their emotions, psychological attitude, imagery, and intentions) play a crucial role in both the *cause* and the *cure* of even physical illness. In other words, the Upper-Left quadrant is a key ingredient in any comprehensive medical care. Visualization, affirmation, and conscious use of imagery have been shown to play a significant role in the management of most illnesses, and outcomes have been shown to depend on emotional states and mental outlook.

But as important as those subjective factors are, individual consciousness does not exist in a vacuum; it exists inextricably embedded in shared cultural values, beliefs, and worldviews. How a culture (LL) views a particular illness – with care and compassion or derision and scorn – can have a profound impact on how an individual copes with that illness (UL), which can directly affect the course of the physical illness itself (UR). The Lower-Left quadrant includes all of the enormous number of *intersubjective* factors that are crucial in any human interaction – such as the shared communication between doctor and patient; the attitudes of family and friends and how they are conveyed to the patient; the cultural acceptance (or derogation) of the particular illness (e.g., AIDS); and the very values of the culture that the illness itself threatens. All of those factors are to some degree causative in any physical illness and cure (simply because *every* occasion has four quadrants).

Of course, in practice, this quadrant needs to be limited to those factors that can be effectively engaged – perhaps doctor and patient communication skills, family and friends support groups, and a general understanding of cultural judgments and their effects on illness. Studies consistently show, for example, that cancer patients in support groups live longer than those without similar cultural support. Some of the more relevant factors from the Lower-Left quadrant are thus crucial in any comprehensive medical care.

The Lower-Right quadrant concerns all those material, economic, and social factors that are almost never counted as part of the disease entity, but in fact – like every other quadrant – are *causative* in both disease and cure. A social system that cannot deliver food will kill you (as famine-racked countries demonstrate daily, alas). In the real world, where every entity has all four quadrants, a virus in the UR quadrant might be the focal issue, but without a social system (LR) that can deliver treatment, you will die. That is not a separate issue; it is central to the issue, because all occasions have four quadrants. The Lower-Right quadrant includes factors such as economics, insurance, social delivery systems, and even things as simple as how a hospital room is physically laid out (does it allow ease

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of movement, access to visitors, etc.)—not to mention items like environmental toxins.

The forgoing items refer to the “all-quadrant” aspect of the cause and management of illness. The “all-level” part refers to the fact that individuals have—at least—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels in each of those quadrants (see fig. 6). Some illnesses have largely physical causes and physical cures (get hit by a bus, break your leg). But most illnesses have causes and cures that include *emotional*, *mental*, and *spiritual* components. Literally hundreds of researchers from around the world have added immeasurably to our understanding of the “multi-level” nature of disease and cure (including invaluable additions from the great wisdom traditions, shamanic to Tibetan). The point is simply that by adding these levels to the quadrants, a much more comprehensive—and effective—medical model begins to emerge.

In short, a truly effective and comprehensive medical plan would be all-quadrant, all-level: the idea is simply that each quadrant or dimension (fig. 3)—I, we, and it—has physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels or waves (fig. 6), and a truly integral treatment would take all of these realities into account. Not only is this type of integral treatment more *effective*, it is for that reason more *cost-efficient*—which is why even organizational medicine is looking at it more closely.

## INTEGRAL BUSINESS

Applications of the Integral Model have recently exploded in business, perhaps, again, because the applications are so immediate and obvious. The quadrants give the four “environments” or dimensions in which a product must survive, and the levels give the types of values that will be both producing and buying the product. Research into the values hierarchy—such as Maslow’s and Graves’s (e.g., Spiral Dynamics), which has already had an enormous influence on business and “VALS”—can be combined with the quadrants (which show how these levels of values appear in the four different environments)—to give a truly comprehensive map of the marketplace (which covers both traditional markets and cybermarkets).

Moreover, *leadership training* programs, based on an integral model, have also begun to flourish. There are today four major theories of business management (Theory X, which stresses individual behavior; Theory Y, which focuses on psychological understanding; cultural management, which stresses organizational culture; and systems management, which emphasizes the social system and its governance). These four management theories are in fact the four quadrants, and that an integral model would necessarily include all four approaches. Add levels and lines, and an incredibly rich and sophisticated model of leadership emerges, which is easily the most comprehensive available today.

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## RELATIONAL AND SOCIALLY ENGAGED SPIRITUALITY

The major implication of an all-quadrant, all-level approach to spirituality is that physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels of being should be simultaneously exercised in self, culture, and nature (i.e., in the I, we, and it domains). There are many variations on this theme, ranging from Integral Transformative Practice to socially engaged spirituality to relationships as spiritual path. The implications of an integral spirituality are profound and widespread, and just beginning to have an impact.

## INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

Integral or AQAL ecology has already been pioneered by several associates at Integral Institute, and promises to revolutionize both how we think about environmental issues and how we pragmatically address and remedy them.

The basic idea is simple: anything less than an integral or comprehensive approach to environmental issues is doomed to failure. Both the interior (or Left-Hand) and the exterior (or Right-Hand) quadrants need to be taken into account. **Exterior** environmental sustainability is clearly needed; but without a growth and development in the **interior** domains to world-centric levels of values and consciousness, then the environment remains gravely at risk. Those focusing only on exterior solutions are contributing to the problem. Self, culture, and nature must be liberated together or not at all. How to do so is the focus of Integral Ecology.

## Summary & Conclusion

Those are a few of the “applications” or apps of the Integral Model. We can now conclude with a brief summary of the main points of the model itself.

**AQAL** is short for “**all quadrants, all levels**” – which itself is short for “all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types,” which are simply 5 of the most basic elements that need to be included in any truly integral or comprehensive approach.

When **AQAL** is used as a guiding framework to organize or understand any activity, we call it an **Integral Operating System**, or simply **IOS Basic**. More advanced forms of IOS are available, but **IOS Basic** has all of the essential elements to get anybody started toward a more comprehensive, inclusive, and effective approach.

Of course, **IOS** is just a map, nothing more. It is not the territory. But, as far as we can tell, it is the most comprehensive map that we possess at this time. Moreover – and this is important – the Integral Map itself insists that we go to the real territory and not get caught in mere words, ideas, or concepts.

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Remember that the quadrants are just a version of first-, second-, and third-person realities? Well, the **Integral Map** and **IOS** are just third-person words, they are abstractions, a series of “it” signs and symbols. But those third-person words insist that we also include first-person direct feelings, experiences, and consciousness as well as second-person dialogue, contact, and interpersonal care. The Integral Map itself says: *this map is just a third-person map, so don't forget the other important realities, all of which should be included in any comprehensive approach.*

Here's one other important conclusion. **IOS** is a neutral framework; it does not tell you what to think, or force any particular ideologies on you, or coerce your awareness in any fashion. For example, to say that human beings have waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states is not to say what you should think while awake or what you should see while dreaming. It simply says, if you want to be comprehensive, be sure and include waking and dreaming and sleeping states.

Likewise, to say that all occasions have four quadrants – or simply “I,” “we,” and “it” dimensions – is not to say what the “I” should do, or the “we” should do, or the “it” should do. It simply says, if you are trying to include all the important possibilities, be sure to include first- and second- and third-person perspectives, because they are present in all major languages the world over.

Precisely because **IOS** is a neutral framework, it can be used to bring more clarity, care, and comprehensiveness to virtually any situation, making success much more likely, whether that success be measured in terms of personal transformation, social change, excellence in business, care for others, or simple happiness in life.

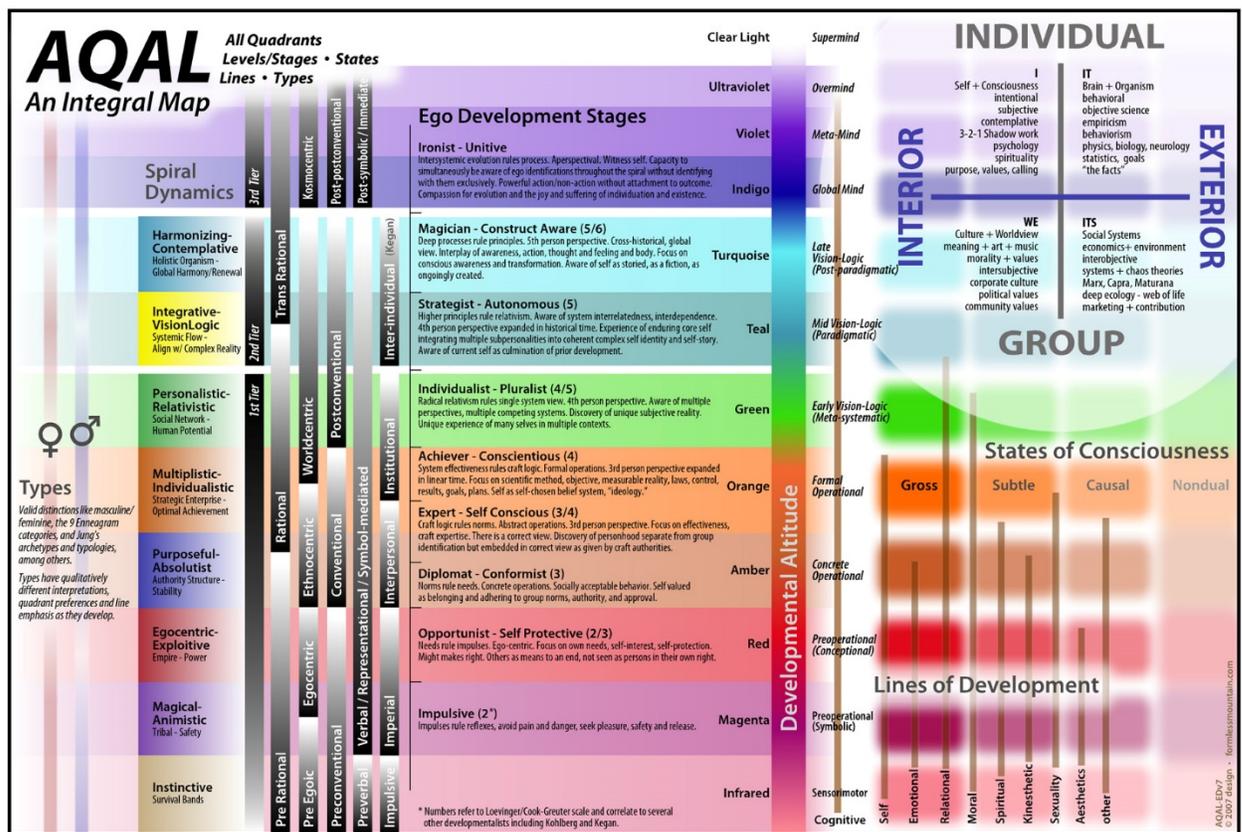
But perhaps most important of all, because **IOS** can be used by any discipline – from medicine to art to business to spirituality to politics to ecology – then we can, for the first time in history, begin an extensive and fruitful dialogue between all of these disciplines. A person using **IOS** in business can talk easily and effectively with a person using **IOS** in poetry, dance, or the arts, simply because they now have a common language – or a common operating system – with which to communicate. When you are using **IOS**, not only can you run hundreds of different programs on it, all of those programs can now communicate with each other and learn from each other, thus advancing an evolutionary unfolding to even greater dimensions of being and knowing and acting.

**This is why Integral Life represents the world's first integral learning community.** Because all of the various human activities, previously separated by incommensurate languages and terminologies, can in fact begin to effectively communicate with each other by running an Integral Operating System, each of those disciplines can begin to converse with, and learn from, the others. This has never effectively happened anywhere in history, which is why, indeed, the Integral adventure is about to begin.

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However we look at it, it all comes down to a few simple points. In your own growth and development, you have the capacity to take self, culture, and nature to increasingly higher, wider, and deeper modes of being, expanding from an isolated identity of “me” to an fuller identity of “us” to an even deeper identity with “all of us” – with all sentient beings everywhere – as your own capacity for Truth and Goodness and Beauty deepens and expands. Ever-greater consciousness with an ever-wider embrace, which is realized in self, embodied in nature, and expressed in culture.

Thus, **to cultivate body, mind, and spirit in self, culture, and nature.** This is the extraordinary aim and goal of Integral Life, and we would love to have you join us in this exciting adventure.



# What Is the Integral Approach?



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A beautifully illustrated, 232 page eBook, Ken Wilber's *The Integral Vision* is one of the finest introductions to Integral thought and practice you can find. Using all the known systems and models of human growth, from the ancient sages to the latest breakthroughs in cognitive science, this book distills all their major components into five simple elements – ones that you can verify in your own experience right now. This digital eBook is not available anywhere else, so get your free copy by signing up for an annual membership today!