

2 – The Map and the Territory

Ok, let's recap. Three points you should have taken from the first article in this series on Vertical Development:

- **Vertical development adds needed dimension:** Vertical Development refers to a path of increasing our capacity to see, understand, and respond to ourselves, to others, and to our world. Increasing capacity comes from changing how we make sense of ourselves and what happens, and how we act in relation to that way of sense making.
- **Complexity demands expanded capacity:** Complexity includes different ideas, emotions, relationships and options for operating within multiple (and sometimes competing) systems. As we develop new dimensions of sense making, we can access increased degrees of freedom in how we respond and lead.
- **Horizontal and Vertical Development work in tandem:** Skill and knowledge from Horizontal Development leads to practice. Practice with reflection and feedback leads to increased awareness. Combining this with a willingness to be changed by awareness and experience (critical to Vertical Development) can transform how we come to know ourselves and influence our world.

Did you get it? If you did, then you will likely have many questions at this point.

This next article will attempt to answer the BIG question ... what is the map for the Vertical Development path? Put simply, *how* do I mature as a leader?

Just as the structure of a window both frames and limits our view of the outside, our frame of mind both clarifies and limits what we can imagine, consider, and interact with. Susanne Cook-Greuter, Bill Torbert, Bob Kegan, and others, through their significant empirical research and practical applications, have identified several stages that map out how our frames of mind evolve in adulthood.

As with all models, this is a map that must be integrated with real life territory to be truly useful. The stage models provide powerful and cutting edge clarity to how leaders can mature to the next level. In his article, **The How-To of Vertical Development**, Nick Petrie identifies what he calls the “Primary Colors” of Vertical Development which work in tandem with the stage models. The “Primary Colors” are “heat” or life-altering experiences, and an environment that not only supports but encourages the risk-taking and perspective-shifting fundamental to vertical growth. Petrie suggests these “Primary Colors,” along with the map outlined in Adult Stage models, can greatly contribute to Vertical Development efforts.

The Map and the Territory, page 2

Stages of Vertical Development

Stage Number	Kegan <i>Form of Mind</i>	Cook-Greuter <i>Sense Making</i>	Rooke & Torbert <i>Action Logic</i>	Percentage of Adult Population
2/3	Socialized (3)	Opportunist	Opportunist	4%
3		Conformist	Diplomat	11%
3/4	Self-Authoring (4)	Expert	Expert	37%
4		Achiever	Achiever	30%
4/5	Self-Transforming (5)	Individualist/Pluralist	Re-defining/Catalyst	11%
5		Strategist	Strategist	5%
5/6		Magician/Construct-Aware	Alchemist	2%
6		Unitive	Ironist	<1%

Figure 1: Stages of Vertical Development

Figure 1 provides an overview of the three commonly used Adult Stage models.

Though the stage names vary, the models share the following:

- A stage is based on one’s “center of gravity” or how one tends to make sense.
- Each stage includes and transcends the sense making and behaviors of earlier stages.
- Higher or “later” is not better; there are pluses and minuses with each stage.
- As stages advance so does the capacity for handling complexity, nuance, and difference in thought, emotions, and relationships.
- We are all limited by what we can see and experience from our own stage-defined worldview.

Figure 1 adapted from Rooke & Torbert and from Ego Development: Nine Levels of Increasing Embrace.

The Map and the Territory, page 3

Think of what happens when you move to a new town. With the onset of relocation, you collect information about the neighbors, referrals for doctors, handymen and lawn care, car pools, grocery stores, different routes to work, and of course—the most essential—the nearest Starbucks.

This input leads to patterns of behavior and interaction with the environment, resulting in specific and most likely new connections and focus, shaping your day-to-day choices and actions, and eventually making your new town start to feel like home.

The process of transformational growth progresses in much the same way. It involves differentiation and integration. Differentiation and integration is a process by which we see, experience, and understand things, and then incorporate that information into our day-to-day capacity as we see, experience, understand, and consequently interact with the world. New ways of interacting with the world have the potential to change what we get back through our actions, as well as our structure of interpretation and sense making, which includes how we see ourselves, others, and the world.



Image courtesy of Keerati
at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

The Map and the Territory, page 4

The rest of this article focuses on the stages as defined by Cook-Greuter and Rooke and Torbert, focusing on those stages most commonly seen in leadership roles. For more on Kegan's work, check out Jennifer Garvey-Berger's book ***Changing on the Job***.

Diplomat

Characteristics:

- Pleasant
- Identify with the group
- Not a clear independent self
- Prefer not to stand out as different

Form of thinking:

- Easily understand the tangible, concrete, obvious, external presentation, and cliché
- Feel things are good if accepted by others

What they can't see:

- Internal experience, feelings, and shadow
- Cannot easily put self in the place of others
- Dependent on others for self-definition so not aware of authentic self

Coaching opportunity:

Support Diplomats to become aware

of their own emotions, ideas, and contribution.

Expert

Characteristics:

- Can see self as separate from rather than subjected to group's perception of them
- Increased focus on individual differences, specialties and contribution, and desire to stand out as competent in own way

Form of thinking:

- Tend toward the pragmatic and clear, concrete distinctions created by words such as 'should,' 'ought to,' 'yes, but,' 'right and wrong'
- Strive towards the right answer and, in that sense, tend to assign either blame or victory to one individual

What they can't see:

- Shades of gray and interdependencies that contribute to success or system failure
- Inner experience and shadow
- Validity of others' points of view and feelings
- Human dimension of work and importance of relationships to effectiveness
- The big picture

The Map and the Territory, page 5

Coaching opportunity:

Build confidence in Experts' particular expertise and areas of specialization. Support them to elicit, receive, and implement feedback. Encourage reflection on their impact and effectiveness in addition to accuracy and correctness. Support them to recognize their own emotions and the emotions of others; emotional intelligence models and competencies are a good focus here, especially listening.

Achiever

Characteristics:

- Busy and often overwhelmed with all they want to accomplish
- Balance is a common concern
- Can be highly self-critical and driven
- "Goals," "values," "purpose" are commonly used words

Form of thinking:

- Highly value self-efficacy and agency
- Structure of interpretation is often shaped by scientific thinking, truth seeking, and self-defined pictures of success

What they can't see:

- That not everything can be controlled or self-determined
- The constructed nature of goals, values, and reality

Coaching opportunity:

Support Achievers to explore the distinction between achievement and fulfillment. Explore the impact of their actions on others and the dynamics between tasks, goals, and relationships. Support them in cultivating balance in their work and lives by clarifying and centering around what is most important.

Individualist-Pluralist

Characteristics:

- Can seem lost, adrift, and not directed despite achievement and goal attainment
- Increased focus on questioning of the "why" underneath their choices and actions
- Contemplative and questioning

Form of thinking:

- Less interest and dependence on scientific certainty and judgment
- Curiosity about the inner experience as well as subjective and alternative perspectives

The Map and the Territory, page 6

- Can see systemic elements, impact, and implications, including shadow and own contribution to situations
- Relativistic worldview becomes predominant, as in “it depends...”

What they can't see:

- How a relativistic view is also just another perspective and comes with its own set of elements, impact, and implications
- Can be adverse to choice

Coaching opportunity:

Support Individualist-Pluralists in exploring and being in the present. Help them to identify and challenge long-held assumptions about themselves, others, and the world. And, as the hold on those assumptions loosens, create new narratives that better fit with who they are becoming. Help them establish support in their life for their evolving sense of being and new choices. Encourage contemplative practices that build in opportunities to connect with both their inner purpose and the larger context or spiritual awareness.

Strategist

Characteristics:

- Able to own and integrate disparate elements of own awareness and actions, including shadow
- Not easily “grabbed” by their own emotions or conflict with others
- Able to not only see but work with different perspectives
- Come across as competent, reasonable, and sometimes even cold or distant
- Can be in ambiguity and hold paradox

Form of thinking:

- Recognize that story and narrative are continuously changeable and that they have the power to shift the narrative when needed
- Think in systems and in terms of how one thing affects another
- Can consider both the big picture and the pragmatic elements

What they can't see:

- How ego is also a construct
- Limitations of striving for self-actualization and understanding others

The Map and the Territory, page 7

- There is an inherent aloneness at the Strategist stage that can come through in a subtle, barely acknowledged need for self-affirmation

Coaching opportunity:

Support Strategists in clarifying and defining interdependencies and how that awareness contributes to the greater good. Help them find language to describe what they see from the balcony and how that translates into pragmatic action and relationships. Encourage them to find others they can relate to. Support contemplative practices and maintenance of space to be, appreciate what is, and attune to intuition and subtle experience. Work with them to build capacity to observe their own meaning making/ narratives in real time.

Magician/Alchemist

Characteristics:

- Can see how ego focus can also limit development
- Development seen as a construct
- Feel alone often
- Hold experience lightly while also deeply in it
- Have capacity to live with paradox and uncertainty and see them as the way things are

- Authenticity that comes through in easy presence

Form of thinking:

- Think beyond the here and now to beyond own lifetime to include global, historic, and future perspectives
- Aware of limitations of language
- Aware of non-duality of nature and their own separation from it

What they can't see:

- Attachment to the idea of non-attachment
- How desire to be released of their own ego is a trap in and of itself
- Staying grounded in reality (or the constructed reality of the moment) can be an effort

Coaching opportunity:

Support Magicians/Alchemists in accepting the aloneness they feel and in finding ways to connect with others that are satisfying. Explore means of creative expression that connect with inner and bigger picture experiences and to be with their own waves of thought, emotion, and experiences. Support them to build structure that keeps them grounded in reality.

The Map and the Territory, page 8

Unitive

Characteristics:

- Accepting and unassuming presence
- There is a sense of interconnectedness and oneness with all beings that is at once calming to be around and inspirationally affirming
- Able to witness and be in flow of experience
- Can also seem chaotic and not able to fit in easily in the day-to-day

Form of thinking:

- Time is expansive and cannot be contained in action and words
- Everything is a construct and constructs are immediately disposable and replaceable
- Have little need to make sense of things as they see how everything is made up anyway

What they can't see:

- Subtle bias towards bliss, beauty, and out-of-mind/body states
- Slight attachment to spiritual perspectives, belief that spiritual or a particular school of thought is better or "the way"

Coaching opportunity:

Unitives usually will not seek coaching. Also, it is rare to have a coach who is at this level of sense making necessary to coach someone at this stage. Coaching at this stage might look more like a spiritual partnering or simply joining them in a collective practice of witnessing and deepening contact with the non-dual in day-to-day life.

For more insights and examples of what these stages look like in real life and leadership practice, check out **Susanne Cook-Greuter** in her paper **Nine Levels of Increasing Embrace**, David Rooke and Bill Torbert in their article **Seven Transformations of Leadership**, and Barrett Brown in his white paper on **Conscious Capitalism**.

The Map and the Territory, page 9

And, lastly,... some words from our old friend Carl Jung:

“Learn your theories as well as you can, but put them aside when you touch the miracle of the living soul. Not theories but your creative individuality alone must decide.”

This is a model and all models are constructs.... To be used responsibly.

Tune in for our next article in this series on Vertical Development to learn about how Vertical Development and the path to leadership maturity involves much more than our heads alone.



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