

EXECUTIVE COACHING IN STRATEGIC HOLISTIC LEADERSHIP

THE DRIVERS AND DYNAMICS
OF VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT

ANTOINETTE BRAKS



“This is a much-needed, research-based book that shares crucial tools and techniques for coaches that are proven to move clients through the levels of developmental maturity. This book has already helped me refine my coaching!”

—Maureen Metcalf, Founder & CEO, Innovative Leadership Institute

“If executive coaching can support the alteration from Achiever to Synergist as this book lays out, it will become much more than the support towards achieving the next goal on the career ladder, and will instead become a transformational dialogue; a holistic path that can humanise our world.”

—Reinhard Stelter, Professor of Coaching Psychology, University of Copenhagen

“In these trying times of an unprecedented global health crisis, the smooth day-to-day running of civic affairs is disrupted. Thus, it is more urgent than ever that mature leaders and visionaries are at the helm of societies and corporations. They are most likely to be able to creatively adapt strategies to the drastically changed contingencies and life circumstances. As the speed and reach of global change and challenge in all areas of life is increasing, it becomes vital that more people develop postconventional capacities: The ability to take multiple perspectives, think systemically, consider the long-term effects of decisions and base them on the best of available scientific evidence. This book offers a path to help leaders acquire these later stage characteristics.”

—Susanne Cook-Greuter, Strategic Advisor and Research Director, Vertical Development Academy

“Braks’ brilliant work, supported by her research, has focused on a pivotal arc in the developmental spectrum – the capacity of our leaders and coaches to take a mature, fourth person perspective. She has accessed the most salient aspects of different developmental models to create an effective, practical and grounded approach for guiding those who are ready, opening their eyes to the next generation of coaching and leading. This is badly needed in our troubled world – a world that is hungry for new eyes that will see what is not yet seen, and heal hidden dilemmas that have not yet been identified.”

—Terri O’Fallon, Founder and Partner of STAGES International

Annie, nog heel speciale dank voor alles! Door bij je te blijven in je mooie en vredige huis, werd dit boek mogelijk. Ik zal altijd heel dankbaar zijn dat het universum ons samenbracht. Je bent geweldig!

Annie, a very special thanks for everything! Staying with you in your beautiful and peaceful home made this book possible. I’ll always be so grateful that the universe brought us together. You’re totally awesome!

Open University Press McGraw-Hill Education 8th Floor, 338 Euston Road London England NW1 3BH

email: enquiries@openup.co.uk world wide web: www.openup.co.uk

Two Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10121-2289, USA First edition published 2020

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Head of Publishing: Laura Pacey Associate Editor: Clara Heathcock Content Product Manager: Ali Davis

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 9780335249114 ISBN-10: 0335249116 eISBN: 9780335249121

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data CIP data applied for

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Executive Coaching in Strategic Holistic Leadership

The Drivers and Dynamics of Vertical Development

Antoinette J. Braks

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Preface

From work to play, grow to flow, calm to care, and free to love.

Many years ago when I first embarked on my career as an executive coach, I began to discern a series of mindsets or perspectives as executives developed their leadership capacity. I started out with: *from work to play, grow to flow to calm*. 'Work' was all about turning up for work and following instructions; 'play' concerned taking the initiative and the risk to experiment; 'grow' involved developing the confidence to make decisions, set priorities, and take charge; 'flow' related to trusting in the emergence of solutions as we navigate the adventure we call life; and 'calm' was a sort of arrival in a calm, clear, open, and collaborative state of mind.

Little did I know that I had happened on vertical stage development. I had always been a fan of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – the shifts from physical safety, to economic security, a sense of belonging to a community, the development of self-esteem, and moving onto self-actualising in terms of realising more and more of our human potential. I was preoccupied with personal power – how could we best use our power to shape our lives and serve others?

I became an accredited coach with The Leadership Circle and developed an interest in the shift we make from being reactive to becoming more creative as leaders in organisations, as well as Richard Barrett's work that differentiated values by stage of development based on Maslow's Hierarchy. He identified a key turning point in personal power from focusing on meeting our survival needs to attending to our growth needs. I also led organisation transformations along the evolutionary arc from red, amber, and orange to green and teal (Laloux) to increasingly liberate more of our creative talents so we could serve life in more meaningful, purposeful, and fulfilling ways.

In the last decade, my persistent interest in evolution led to studying stage development with Susanne Cook-Greuter, Bill Torbert, and Terri O'Fallon. I began to read a book every Saturday to better understand leadership development and effectiveness, and organisational development and performance. My reading extended to many spiritual teachers who enriched my own journey in self-actualisation. I added: *from calm to care and free to love*, in honour of what I had come to understand as transpersonal stages. I certainly believed in a higher spiritual reality that underpinned life itself.

My personal purpose was to enable people to realise their potential, and organisations their aspirations, through conscious evolution. This was the evolution from reactive to creative, and more profoundly, from scared to sacred. It is simply the placement of the 'c' that changes the meaning of both sets of letters we refer to as words. By 'c-ing' the world with a higher, broader, and deeper perspective at a later stage of human development, we can evolve as spiritual beings.

I believe that the more we evolve, the better we are able to demonstrate integrity and inspire others as leaders, as well as enjoy increasing health, wellbeing, and prosperity and leave the world a better place for future generations. This series of steps: *from work to play, grow to flow, calm to care, and free to love*, represent the stages of vertical evolutionary development.

The higher our self-expression and the deeper our self-awareness, the richer our life experience and the greater our soul evolution.

Antoinette J. Braks

PART 1

The Stages of Leadership Transformation

The stages of leadership development provide an evolutionary perspective on adult development and leadership transformation. As adults, instead of being fixed, immutable identities or personalities when we physically mature, we can evolve further in terms of psychological maturation. The more we mature psychologically, the more empowered and liberated we become to lead our lives with greater wisdom and compassion.

Moreover, the further we progress through these psychological stages of development as we mature, the more effective we become as leaders. As we transform through the stages of development, we become more able and interested in taking responsibility for the care, development, and wellbeing of the people in our charge. This sense of responsibility later extends to wider communities of people, the economy and society as a whole, the health and sustainability of the environment and planet, and current and future generations.

There are five chapters in Part I, the first of which introduces you to the theoretical foundations of the stages of development. The second outlines the strengths and shadows, needs and values, of an executive prototype at each stage. Chapter 3 then zooms in on the distinctions between the predominant conventional leader at the stage of *Achievist* and the much rarer yet urgently needed postconventional leader termed *Synergist*, and otherwise more commonly known as *Strategist*. However, 'strategist' is a term that has a commonplace definition in the corporate world associated with intellectual agility in the development of strategy, whereas the stage of *Synergist* incorporates significantly greater leadership presence and substance.

Chapter 4 sets out the research project to discover if and how executive coaching could enable the transformation from *Achievist* to the intervening stage of *Catalyst* (also called *Individualist* and *Pluralist* by others) and onto *Synergist*. The surprising and inspiring results of the research project are revealed in Chapter 5. It also sets out the key themes in the coaching approach that led to the transformative shifts in stage leadership development.

Chapter 1	Introduction to the Stages of Transformation
Chapter 2	Strengths and Shadows of Executive Prototypes
Chapter 3	The Transformation from <i>Achievist</i> to <i>Synergist</i>
Chapter 4	The Executive Coaching Research Study
Chapter 5	The Key Themes of Transformative Coaching

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STAGES OF TRANSFORMATION

Both humanistic psychology and constructive developmental psychology are concerned with evolutionary development. Abraham Maslow was the founder of humanistic psychology. He was concerned with realising our potential in terms of our motives and outcomes, while Robert Kegan, the founder of constructive developmental psychology, explored the inner capacity to see and understand more of the complexities and subtleties of life as we evolve.

After reviewing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Kegan's constructive developmental psychology, we will look at the stages of development based on the research of three of the most eminent female social scientists of our time: Jane Loevinger, Susanne Cook-Greuter, and Terri O'Fallon. Their breakthrough findings lead us to critical insights into the nature and process of stage leadership development.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The concept of adult human development began with Abraham Maslow (1908– 1970). He focused on how people achieved individual wellbeing and personal fulfilment in contrast to the majority of psychologists at the time such as Freud (1856–1939) and Jung (1875–1961), who were focused on the sources and symptoms of psychological dysfunction, the shadow of the human soul. Maslow preferred to give his attention to the inspiring, self-actualising lives led by some of society's most respected leaders.

Based on an empirical study of positive adult development, he identified a staged progression of growth in adulthood, which came to be widely known as the 'Hierarchy of Needs'. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs comprised:

- 1 Survival needs for air, water, food, rest, shelter, and clothing;
- 2 Security needs for physical safety, good health, and economic security;
- 3 Belonging needs for family, friends, intimacy, colleagues, and community;
- 4 Self-esteem needs to feel confident, valuable, and worthy of respect; and
- 5 Self-actualising needs to be authentic, creative, and enjoy a purposeful, aspirational, and meaningful life.

Maslow determined that as each progressive need was met, the following need would demand a person's attention. For instance, once a person's ordinary physical and emotional needs were largely satisfied, they could lean towards spiritual growth with altruistic motives focused on the common good and become self-actualising. He argued that self-actualisation involved a range of distinctive perceptions and perspectives that I have clustered as becoming more aware, accepting, authentic, and astute in relation to our understanding of self and life:

More aware

- More perceptive of reality and more comfortable with it;
- More comfortable with detachment, and more interested in privacy and solitude;
- More able to appreciate freshly what one has experienced before;
- More frequently open to peak experiences.

More accepting

- More accepting of self, others, and nature;
- More deeply and profoundly experiencing of interpersonal relationships;
- More possessed of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* (a feeling for the family-hood of humanity);
- More democratic.

More authentic

- More spontaneous, simple, and natural;
- More autonomous, independent of culture and environment, more active as an agent;
- More creative;
- More resistant to enculturation, transcendent of a particular culture.

More astute

- More problem centring;
- More discriminating of the differences between means and ends, good and evil;
- More resolving of dichotomies; and
- More philosophical.

These qualities reflect characteristics observed in the later stages of vertical development that I am concerned with here. Maslow suggested that self-actualisation was the pinnacle of psychological health. Later in life, Maslow added a further element, self-transcendence, to reflect the wisdom advanced by psychologist Viktor Frankl (1946), author of *Man's Search for Meaning*.

Based on his experience as a Nazi prisoner-of-war, Frankl found that the prisoners who held onto hope and consistently applied their minds to imagining a better life in the future were more likely to survive incarceration than those who did not. He concluded that people are able to transcend any situation they find themselves in, no matter how bleak, by using the power of the mind and heart. Maslow encapsulated this concept as self-transcendence, the ability to transcend one's situation in honour of the power and grace of self.

Constructive Developmental Psychology

While humanistic psychology focuses on the self in terms of motives, i.e. the 'what' – meeting one's needs in life and later maturing to realise personal growth aspirations and transcending reality – constructive developmental psychology is concerned with the means of construction of our experience of life, i.e. the 'how'. Rather than seeing life as an objective external reality, it is subjective. How we view life depends on *how* we interpret and thereby construct our life experience. We are able to do this with greater subtlety at later stages of development.

Constructive-developmental theory thus takes as its subject the growth and elaboration of a person's ways of understanding the self and the world. (McCauley et al., 2006: 635)

Constructive developmental psychology is concerned with developing the constructive lens through which we view our world (Kegan, 1982). It explains that our capacity to perceive and interpret what we see (i.e. our meaning-making capacity) depends on the scope of our lens, on what we are able to see. The more we can perceive and interpret as objective reality, rather than part of our subjective identity, the greater our personal power to influence and effect our life experience. The scope of our lens develops as we consciously expand our perspective to appreciate increasing subtleties and complexities such as underlying systemic dynamics.

Kegan labels the series of lenses or meaning-making systems as Levels of Mind: the Sovereign Mind, the Socialised Mind, the Self-Authoring Mind, and the Self-Transforming Mind. The Sovereign Mind is focused on ‘me’, being self-willed and egotistical. The Socialised Mind is dependent on authority figures such as parents and teachers, and the rules and norms according to which we lead our lives. The Self-Authoring Mind is independent, deciding for oneself what to focus on and pursue, while the Self-Transforming Mind shifts from being concerned with self to developing interdependence with autonomous others.

What we mean by maturity in people’s thinking is not a matter of how smart they are, but it is a matter of the order of consciousness in which they exercise their smartness or lack of it. (Kegan, 1995: 130)

The level of mind contains our perception of what we can see, how we interpret what we see by way of storytelling, and thereby construct our reality. Because we have the power to develop our capacity to construct this reality, this came to be called constructive developmental psychology. It was a major departure from seeing life as an objective reality to a new understanding of human capacity in that our perception of life is a subjective reality.

Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, life is in the mind of the perceiver.

Kegan used this subject/object paradigm to explain progression through the Levels of Mind. What was subject at one level (i.e. part of a person’s identity and therefore apparently fixed) became object at a later level, separated from the self where it could be influenced, adapted, and reframed. For instance, at the level of the Socialised Mind, the work we do forms part of our identity: we are a doctor, a teacher, a lawyer, a plumber. Therefore, at this stage, we take any feedback about our work extremely personally. However, once we shift to Self-Authoring, our work becomes something objective that we do, that we have charge of, and can influence and change at will. Feedback then becomes useful in order to realise better results.

Other scientists also adopted the evolutionary pathway in human consciousness in relation to cultural memes and values development (Graves and Beck), faith development (Fowler), moral development (Kohlberg and Gilligan), and development of worldview (Gerber). All showed significant congruence identifying four substantial phases of adult development from pre-conventional to conventional, post-conventional, and the transpersonal. These overlapped with Kegan’s Levels of Mind and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Early evolutionary framework

Hierarchy of Needs Maslow	Levels of Mind Kegan	Phases of Development Kohlberg
Transcendent		Transpersonal
Self-Actualizing	Self-Transforming Mind	Postconventional
Self-Esteem	Self-Authoring Mind	
Belonging	Socialised Mind	Conventional
Security	Sovereign Mind	Pre-Conventional
Survival	Impulsive Mind	

The Stages of Development

Distinct from other lines of development, such as morals, values, and faith, Jane Loevinger's scientific research focused on the broader concept of ego development. The ego is a holistic construct of a person's identity, their inner psyche or way of being in the world. She found that ego development involved a continuous evolution of this personal holistic intrinsic frame of reference, a lens or mind-view, through a series of qualitatively distinctive stages that are imposed on life experiences to make sense of them, to create meaning.

To calibrate the stages of ego development, Loevinger set up an assessment exercise, the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT). It was designed to invite a person to share their thoughts on a set of 36 sentence prompts. She analysed thousands of responses and identified a more calibrated series of qualitatively distinctive stages through the generic phases of development. She found that these perspectives were not just about more complex meaning-making in relation to cognition, but also included the affective (emotions and feelings), relational, and spiritual domains of ego development.

Loevinger found that the stages within each more expansive phase of development were sequential. It was not possible to skip a stage, and everyone followed the same stages of adult development or maturity in the same sequence. The series is also a holarchy. As we progress through the stages, our perspective expands to include our previous mind-views, strengths we have developed, and shadows not yet navigated. We raise our perspective to see more broadly through space and time and deepen our perspective to appreciate greater subtlety and the systemic nature of iterative patterns. Our identity expands to include more of our whole selves, from our egoic self to our holistic self and onto our universal self.

For each level of mind in Kegan's framework, there are two stages of development. And for each phase of development in Kohlberg's framework, there are three stages of development in Loevinger's evidence-based framework. The stages of development did come under some criticism as fuzzy prototypes. However, they constituted a quantum leap to a more precise, sequential, and holarchic way of understanding adult human development.

Susanne Cook-Greuter, a Harvard researcher who studied with Kegan, continued Loevinger's research into ego development. She added further structural understanding to the stages of ego development. Cook-Greuter identified the specific shifts from first person to second person, third person, fourth person, fifth person, and so on, as we move through the stages. We begin with the first person perspective at the early stages preoccupied with self: 'me', the Sovereign Mind. Then we shift to the second person perspective and see the other: 'you', congruent with the Socialised Mind. The third person perspective is more objective, and work becomes separate from self: 'it', and we become Self-Authoring.

The fourth person perspective of 'we' coincides with our embrace of humanity at the Self-Transforming Mind. It includes people such as cousins, immediate past and future generations, and in organisations, the levels beyond our immediate team. On this perspective we embrace diversity, psychodynamics, and inter-systemic dynamics. The fifth person perspective takes this further into several generations, civilisations, and into the transpersonal realm where space and time become increasingly boundless. The sixth person incorporates fourth dimensional reality reaching out to the cosmic transpersonal dimensions of infinite space and eternal time, emptiness of reality, and fullness of possibility.

Cook-Greuter also found that the two stages in each person perspective were quite distinctive. The first stage in each person perspective is an individuation stage and the second, an integration stage. Individuation involves discovering the new terrain, seeing things that were previously imperceptible, experimenting, and learning to navigate and influence what we begin to see more clearly. As a person gradually gains familiarity with their new subtleties of perception, they shift into integration mode and become able to apply their learning by influencing their environment and demonstrating more confident leadership. They become able to act on their world rather than be embedded in it.

This is similar to Kegan’s shift from subject to object. It can be compared to shifting from seeing decisions in black and white, either/or, terms in the third person perspective to seeing decision-making in all colour variations at the fourth person perspective. At first, we see colour as separate hues as in the rainbow, as a symbol of diversity. When we start working with the expanse of colours, we learn that combining variations of blue and yellow, for instance, form multiple distinctive hues of green.

It is more comfortable to be in the secondary integration mode, as this phase denotes familiarity with one’s surroundings and the capacity to prioritise, structure, integrate, resolve, and expand what is first encountered and perceived as disconnected, random data. A growing sense of mastery and self-assurance to exercise leadership manifests at the integration stage. Thus, a person ‘anchors’, i.e. feels comfortable and confident, in the integration phase of each couplet and may require more support and guidance during the individuation phase and into the integration phase to sustain their sense of wellbeing on their journey.

Cook-Greuter identified these two-step shifts with numerics for the stages – that is, x/y is an individuation stage from x person perspective to y person perspective, and y is the following integration stage at the y person perspective. Loevinger and Cook-Greuter also named the stages of development. These terms continue to evolve today as various researchers and practitioners select the terms that resonate with their own understanding and application of the stages of human development.

Cook-Greuter also advised that the use of more sophisticated language and sentence construction is transformed significantly through the stages of ego development. As we mature vertically, we also increase our capacity to integrate polarities, see both/and as well as either/or ends of the spectrum, and interweave complex ideas in original, multifaceted ways. She also gave a more holistic orientation to the stages of development beyond Kegan’s. Cook-Greuter developed our awareness of the importance of the ever-expanding heart and higher realm of spirit in our evolution as human beings as well as expansiveness of the mind.

Figure 1.2 provides an outline of the phases, needs, and levels of development in relation to the early work on the stages of development, including that of Maslow, Kegan, Kohlberg, Loevinger, and Cook-Greuter, alongside my own phraseology (Preface). The individuation stages are shown in light grey and the integration stages in darker grey. Note that the research by Loevinger and Cook-Greuter divided the Hierarchy of Needs and Levels of Mind into these two-step stages of individuation followed by integration. The new level of need or mind is congruent with the next stage of integration.

Figure 1.2 Phases and early stages framework

Hierarchy of Needs Maslow	Levels of Adult Development Kegan	Phases of Development Kohlberg	Ego Development Loevinger	Ego Development Cook-Greuter	Self Evolution Braks
Transcendent		Transpersonal		6/7 Transpersonal	<i>love</i>
				6 Unitive	<i>free</i>
Self-Actualizing	Self-Transforming Mind	Post-conventional	Integrated	5/6 Magician	<i>care</i>
			Autonomous	5 Strategist	<i>calm</i>
Self-Esteem	Self-Authoring Mind		Individualist	4/5 Individualist	<i>flow</i>
			Conscientious	4 Achiever	<i>grow</i>
Belonging	Socialised Mind	Conventional	Self-Aware	3/4 Expert	<i>play</i>
			Conformist	3 Diplomat	<i>work</i>
Security	Sovereign Mind	Pre-conventional		2/3 Rule-Oriented	
			Self-Protective	2 Opportunist	
Survival	Impulsive Mind		Impulsive	1/2 Impulsive	

Tiers and Learning Sequence

Our understanding of stage development has benefited enormously in recent years as a result of the valuable scientific research undertaken by Terri O'Fallon. She offers a ground-breaking structural framework that strengthens the systemic robustness of the vertical stages of ego development.

For decades, the stages had been viewed in the context of pre-conventional, conventional, post-conventional, and transpersonal phases of development. This placed the distinctive stages of development into groups of three as shown in Figure 1.2, albeit Cook-Greuter had pierced through this to identify the person perspectives and the two-step dance process through the stages of individuation and integration.

Through her own empirical research from an integrally informed transcendent perspective, O'Fallon re-engineered the underpinnings of stage development. By viewing the stages in groups of four set out in Tiers, she has revolutionised our understanding of the stages of development as well as the process of development through the stages.

O'Fallon offered the realisation that the trajectory of stage development involves the perception of different types of objects through the evolutionary process. At the early stages we are concerned with Concrete or physical objects – toys, clothes, possessions, houses, and buildings. Then we shift to the world of Subtle or intangible objects – goals, processes, values, relationships, systems, principles, and aspirations as we become more aware of our own identity and the unfolding adventure of life.

This is followed by what O'Fallon calls the MetAware Tier, the transpersonal, where we are aware of awareness. At this point, we have not only become self-aware and socially aware, we have developed a cosmic witnessing perspective. From here we can see and understand not only what is taking place in a situation before us but we have an awareness of the awareness of the individuals operating within a more cosmic universal frame. This enables us to inform and influence the nature of that awareness. The final Unified Tier represents the universe.

Furthermore, O'Fallon discerned a common cyclical learning sequence within each Tier, expanding on Cook-Greuter's discernment of the two-step process of individuation and integration. To explain her revelation, it is important first to have an elementary understanding of the Integral AQAL Model of All Quadrants, All Levels, designed by Ken Wilber, the founder of Integral Theory.

Wilber has undertaken the most extensive cross-cultural research of maps of evolving consciousness to date by reviewing hundreds of premodern, modern, and postmodern cultures. All Levels of individual development are represented by the stages of development described here. All Quadrants of development represent the playing fields of our life expression and experience.

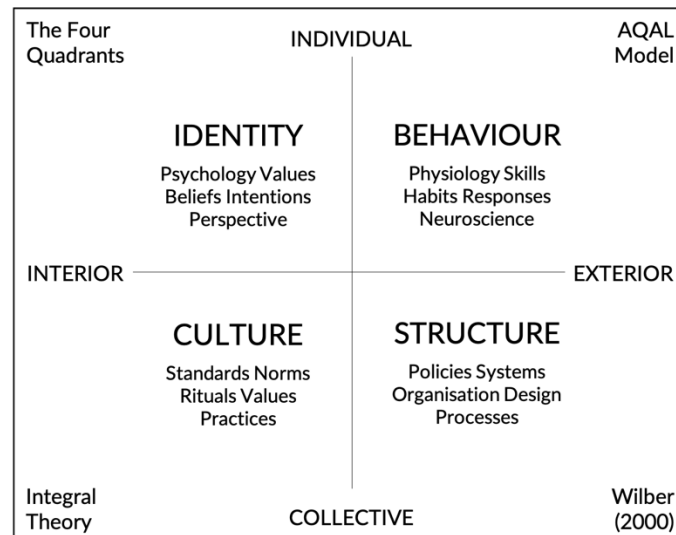
The Levels you are already familiar with. They are the stages of development. However, they apply to both the Individual, as portrayed by Kegan, Loevinger, Cook-Greuter, and O'Fallon, and the Collective, as portrayed by Beck and Cowan in *Spiral Dynamics* (1996) and more recently by Laloux in *Reinventing Organizations* (2014). Just as individuals shift from Opportunist to Conformist, Achievist, Catalyst and Synergist (my selection of terms), organisations shift from tribal to institutional, machine, empowered, and organic emergence (red, amber, orange, green, and teal).

In the AQAL Model, the four quadrants form a matrix. The two upper quadrants relate to the Individual and the two lower quadrants relate to the Collective. In addition, the two left-hand quadrants relate to the Interior, and the two right-hand quadrants relate to the Exterior. The Interior of the Individual therefore represents Identity, and the Exterior, Behaviour. The Interior of the Collective is symbolised by Culture, and the Exterior by Structure (see Figure 1.3).

The upper-left Individual Interior forms our inner Identity: our psychology, values, beliefs, intentions, worldview and perspective, that which is not visible to others. The upper-right Individual Exterior incorporates our Behaviour: physiology, skills, habits, responses, demonstrable capabilities, competencies, and neuroscience, elements that can be observed.

The lower-left Collective Interior forms our inner Culture, including invisible elements such as standards, norms, rituals, symbols, values, and practices. The lower-right Collective Exterior represents the Structure or the contextual framework within which we operate. It is made up of policies, laws, processes, systems, organisational design, and regimented pathways.

Figure 1.3 Adapted from the AQAL Model of Integral Theory



The quadrants are best understood as the terrains in which our self-expression, self- and other-awareness, and our life experience take place. As we explore new terrains at consecutively higher, deeper and broader levels followed by new dimensions of spacetime, our consciousness expands to interpret, integrate, and understand more over longer time horizons and on deeper soul dimensions.

O’Fallon’s point was that the stages of leadership development also move through these quadrants in successive fashion. While all four quadrants are in play at any one time, our primary preoccupation shifts from the Individual to the Collective through each Tier. The first two individuation and integration stages in each Tier have a primary focus in the Individual Quadrants of self-development. The subsequent two individuation and integration stages in the Tier primarily focus on the Collective Quadrants of mutual development.

O’Fallon terms the two stages of individuation and integration in the Individual Quadrants as Receptive and Active. At the Receptive stage, we take in all that we see and feel, hear and touch, sense and discern. At the Active stage, we develop the agility and dexterity to work with these objects and perceptions. Thus, as a *Specialist* at the Receptive stage we learn about and become skilled in our craft. As an *Achievist*, we can actively use this knowledge and our new skills to meet other people’s needs and achieve specific desired results. Both these stages focus on individual development.

The next two stages in the two-step dance of individuation and integration in the Collective Quadrants are termed Reciprocal and Interpenetrative. They focus on mutual, collective, social, or organisational development. The Reciprocal learning style of the first Collective stage is where we are in relationship with others and with the system. At *Catalyst*, for instance, we begin to appreciate the dynamics of the system we occupy and the emergence that flows from the interactions within the collective. The Interpenetrative learning style of the second stage in the Collective Tier is where we have integrated much of the elements, aspects, and objects within that tier. At *Synergist* in the Subtle Tier, we realise that self and life are inevitably intertwined – i.e. that thoughts become things, that feelings have meaning, that self and other are invariably interconnected, that we play support roles in each other’s life stories, and that the microcosm and macrocosm are interwoven beyond our conscious awareness of emergence.

To understand interpenetration, you might consider the move from either/or to both/and consciousness. In the latter, two aspects remain distinct but are understood to be in a deeper kind of relationship, more interdependent. Interpenetration is the next step in this process, to a recognition of 'one within the other.' The implication of this leads to an understanding of unity beyond distinctions; one is many and many is one. Understanding subtle interpenetration, for example, one can see that, because no one is truly independent of the collectives in which they appear, they cannot truly change without a change in their relationships; likewise, no social system can transform without a transformation of the individuals involved.

(Geoff Fitch, in Gunnlaugson and Brabant, 2016: 81)

Thus O'Fallon's process of stage development fine-tunes the two-step process of individuation and integration that Cook-Greuter identified through each person perspective. The two-step process becomes more of a square dance. First, we dance in the Individual Quadrants of the Concrete Tier with two steps in the first person perspective and then we add the Collective Quadrants of the Concrete Tier with two steps in the second person perspective. Now we have all four quadrants within our spectrum of stage evolution, two Individual and two Collective Quadrants.

As we step into the Individual Quadrants of the Subtle Tier to individuate and integrate the third person perspective, we retain the Concrete Collective as a backdrop while transcending our original first person perspective. Our next evolution to the Collective Quadrants of the Subtle Tier transcend and transform the Concrete Collective as we progressively master the Subtle Collective. We take our evolutionary journey onwards shifting the Individual and Collective developmental stages from primary to secondary relative to the growth edge of our developmental spectrum.

O'Fallon adapted Cook-Greuter's numbering system by identifying the individuation stage as x.0 and the integration stage as x.5, indicating the integration of the new person perspective. This numbering system confirms that the individuation stage is not just an in-between stage between stages x and y as indicated by Cook-Greuter as x/y, but the beginning of a new adventure into the next person perspective of x commencing at x.0 and consolidating at x.5.

O'Fallon's research has transformed our understanding of the stages of development and illuminated our understanding of the evolutionary process through the stages. We now appreciate the shifts through the Tiers of objects, the shifts from the Individual to the Collective, and the distinctive two-step process of individuation and integration as an iterative learning sequence within the Individual and Collective Quadrants in each Tier. Evolutionary development is a two-step square dance across a spectrum of stages through which we express ourselves and experience life simultaneously. Figure 1.4 sets out the stages as understood from earlier research through to O'Fallon's latest breakthrough insights into stage development.

To be clear in relation to the later stages of development this book is most concerned with, I would like to draw your attention to the positioning of O'Fallon's *Pluralist* (Cook-Greuter: *Individualist*; Joiner and Josephs: *Catalyst*), between *Achievist* and *Synergist*. In Kegan's framework, the *Pluralist* is consumed within the Self-Authoring Mind followed by the *Synergist* invoking the much rarer Self-Transforming Mind.

Because of this, I suggest that Kegan's framework is not as conducive to leadership development as O'Fallon's Tier-based STAGES model due to the concealment of the individuation developmental stage within the prior Level of Mind. The individuation stage is the stepping-off point that is ideally explicitly demarcated so that it is clearly seen and understood to both attract and expedite the consequent two stages of development.

Kohlberg's demarcation between Conventional and Post-conventional phases of development is more useful yet also misleading. While it marks the new adventure in post-conventional that begins at *Catalyst* and continues through to *Synergist*, it then includes and thereby conceals the next point of departure into the MetAware Tier at *Constructivist*. Thus, while the beginning of the Post-conventional phase of development coincides with the shift to the Subtle Collective, the Post-conventional phase of development also unwittingly subsumes the first stage of the MetAware Tier, hiding its significance.

Figure 1.4 From phases to tiers in stage development

Adult Development Kegan	Phases Kohlberg	Tiers O'Fallon	Quadrants O'Fallon	Learning Styles O'Fallon	Stages O'Fallon	Braks
	Trans-personal	MET-AWARE	Collective	Interpenetrative	6.5 Illumined	Holist
				Reciprocal	6.0 Universal	<i>Ironist</i>
Self-Transforming Mind	Postconventional		Individual	Active	5.5 Transpersonal	Alchemist
				Receptive	5.0 Construct-Aware	<i>Constructivist</i>
Self-Authoring Mind	Conventional	SUBTLE	Collective	Interpenetrative	4.5 Strategist	Synergist
				Reciprocal	4.0 Pluralist	<i>Catalyst</i>
Socialised Mind			Individual	Active	3.5 Achiever	Achievist
				Receptive	3.0 Expert	<i>Specialist</i>
Sovereign Mind	Preconventional	CONCRETE	Collective	Interpenetrative	2.5 Conformist	Conformist
				Reciprocal	2.0 Rule-Oriented	<i>Rule-based</i>
Impulsive Mind			Individual	Active	1.5 Egocentric	Opportunist
				Receptive	1.0 Impulsive	Impulsivist

A note on the term *Constructivist*, equivalent to O'Fallon's *Construct-Aware* stage, the first Receptive stage in the MetAware Individual Quadrants. Here you may encounter some confusion with previous texts as *Alchemist* is often shown as the stage following *Synergist*. However, O'Fallon's four-step approach through each tier suggests that the Active nature of the *Alchemist* must follow an interceding Receptive MetAware stage to reflect the initial evolutionary process of an individuation stage in the MetAware Tier.

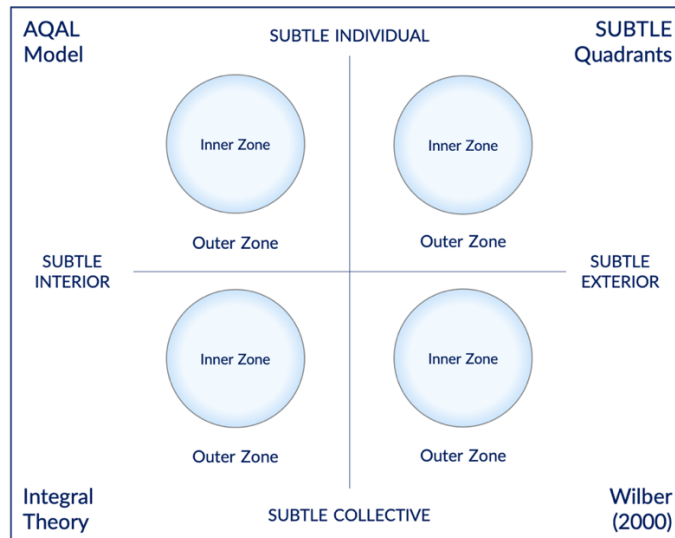
In O'Fallon's Tier-based structure, the shift from *Achievist* to *Catalyst* and *Synergist* is explicit. It is marked by the shift from the Individual Quadrants to the Collective Quadrants in the Subtle Tier. This is a two-parameter stage shift in terms of Quadrant and Learning Style, i.e. from the Individual to the Collective and from Active to Reciprocal.

While you might assume, as I did at first, that O'Fallon's Learning Sequence follows each of the four quadrants, the interesting thing is that they do not. This is particularly important if we are to better understand development through the stages. To confirm, the first two stages of Receptive and Active in each Tier are set in the upper Individual Quadrants and the second set of two stages in each tier, Reciprocal and Interpenetrative, are set in the lower Collective Quadrants. However, I now invite you to take a moment to pause and open your mind for another layer of complexity.

There are zones within each quadrant, an Inner Zone of developing awareness and an Outer Zone of embodied manifestation. O'Fallon identified that the individuation stage is set in the Inner Zones of the two relevant Quadrants, and the integration stage is set in the Outer Zones in the two relevant Quadrants. The terrain of understanding, our Interior and Exterior, are interlinked. It is our agility and dexterity in the broader terrain which changes from a process of absorption, Reception and Reciprocity, in the Inner Zones of the Individual and Collective Quadrants, to a process of engagement, Active and Interpenetrative, in the Outer Zones of the Individual and Collective Quadrants, respectively (Figure 1.5).

During the individuation stages we look within. We are developing awareness of our inner world in relation to perceiving a new layer of subtle complexity in relation to the source of our Identity: our values, beliefs, and psychology, and our Behaviour: our actions, responses, and capabilities. During the individuation phase we are attempting to make sense of what we think and believe, and what we see and do. During the integration phase, we've made a lot of progress in sense-making and can act much more influentially in the Outer Zone – as leaders! This understanding is critical to understanding the developmental process from *Achievist* to *Catalyst* and onto *Synergist*.

Figure 1.5 The Zones adapted from the AQAL Model



The Spectrum Stage Shift

The latest advances in constructive developmental psychology suggest that we evolve through distinctive stages of development that form a sequential holarchy, i.e. each stage follows an explicit order and is included in the following stage. Rather than form a staircase, the stages can be pictured as a trajectory on an expanding 3D spiral within a widening sphere of leadership capacity. The stages shift through the Concrete, Subtle, and MetAware Tiers and onto the Unified Tier, transitioning from the Individual to the Collective Quadrants in each Tier. The implication of this is that we each carry a spectrum of stages with us, both Individual and Collective, as we are always operating as individuals with others in a given social context as part of our self-expression and life experience.

Amongst this spectrum of stages in a profile, Cook-Greuter calibrated a person's stage of development by nominating their primary stage and secondary stage. The primary stage was where most responses were scored in the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT) based on a weighted average, with later stages attracting increasingly higher weightings. The WUSCT was first developed by Loevinger and later enhanced by Cook-Greuter to incorporate more later stages. The secondary stage was where the next largest weighted average of responses were scored. Almost always, these were neighbouring stages: a primary and a secondary stage.

Bill Torbert, a one-time colleague of Cook-Greuter and exponent of stage development redefined as the same series of action-logics, identified three key stages in a person's profile, their Centre of Gravity, Trailing Edge, and Leading Edge. A person moves into their leading edge when they have the support and encouragement of others and may default to their trailing edge when under stress or encountering foreign situations. This led to a three-dimensional approach to comprehending a person's stage development.

O'Fallon's breakthrough research suggests that we are composed of a wider spectrum of four neighbouring stages, including both Individual and Collective Quadrants. Indeed, O'Fallon advised in one of her webinars on stage development that the average stages profile comprises four stages, which I have also found to be the case after reviewing 50+ client profiles. While profiles may also become truncated or extended at any one moment of time, it seems wise to recognise that at all times we are operating with both an Individual and Collective context in mind, one in the foreground and the other emergent.

Given the nature of individuation and integration being two steps on the one journey, it seems to me that it is not really possible to ground ourselves in an individuation stage. We remain grounded in the prior integrated stage as the individuation stage is a learning phase in the Inner Zones of the next Individual or Collective Quadrants. Thus, in my view, a person can anchor themselves i.e. have their Centre of Gravity in an integration stage (i.e. *Conformist*, *Achievist* or *Synergist*) but not in an individuation stage (i.e. *Specialist*, *Catalyst* or *Constructivist*).

The interesting thing therefore for the shift from *Achievist* to *Catalyst* and onto *Synergist*, is that, even at *Catalyst*, we are still oriented to the Concrete Collective as we have still not yet learned how to manifest in the Outer Zones of the Subtle Collective. This holds us along the four-stage spectrum axis of *Conformist–Specialist–Achievist–Catalyst*, anchored in the integration zone of *Achievist*. Our growth is stalled until we develop the capacity to transcend the Concrete Collective and co-create a new Subtle Collective at the final Interpenetrative stage and integrate our new identity totally within the Subtle Tier as *Achievist–Catalyst–Synergist–Constructivist*.

Further to the spectrum of stages within a person's profile, O'Fallon and psychotherapist colleague, Barta, also identify peak experiences to later stages and shadow crashes to earlier stages as part of our stages repertoire. Peak experiences such as a sense of unified blissful wonder with the cosmos, perceiving 4D reality or experiencing transcendent enlightenment, can arise during meditation or during normal waking life if a person is accustomed to undertaking lengthy meditations.

Shadow crashes occur when the underlying foundations of a new stage of development are insufficient to sustain further vertical development, e.g. a shadow crash from growth in the Subtle Reciprocal stage of *Catalyst* to the Concrete Reciprocal stage of *Rule-based* occurs when earlier life experiences at that stage have yet to be fully integrated. This is absolutely normal as we pass through the Concrete Tier as children and simply do not have the cognitive or emotional awareness to process or understand our life experiences at this first Tier of consciousness.

Thus, a person's stage of development is really a spectrum of developmental stages. From the above account, it could be said that we operate largely from a primary integrated stage, default to a secondary stage immediately following or preceding that stage if feeling supported or stressed respectively, a leading edge and a trailing edge that falls beyond and before these two stages, as well as a cornucopia of peak experiences and shadow crashes to fully constitute our human experience.

Chapter 1: Key Points

The world we each perceive is a subjective reality based on the lens through which we view it. The stronger and wider the lens, the more we see. This progressive series of lenses has been articulated as stages of ego or leadership development that enable us to realise our full human potential. The following key points elaborate on this.

- 1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs involves self-actualising our human potential to become more aware, accepting, authentic, and astute, and then move onto self-transcendence.
- 2 The trajectory towards self-actualisation is supported by constructive developmental psychology, which articulates our capacity to increasingly construct our world through distinctive and progressive stages of adult development.
- 3 Our capacity to construct our world by perceiving and interpreting what we see (i.e. our meaning-making capacity) depends on the scope of our lens to appreciate increasing interpersonal subtleties and complex inter-systemic dynamics.
- 4 Kegan articulated the progression in meaning-making capacity in terms of shifts from the Sovereign Mind, Socialised Mind, and Self-Authoring Mind to the Self-Transforming Mind.
- 5 Loevinger refined his progression into more discrete stages of ego development, a holistic construct incorporating cognitive, affective, relational, and spiritual domains.
- 6 Cook-Greuter advised that the stages are sequential and holarchic through a two-step process of individuation and integration to realise progressive person perspectives.
- 7 O'Fallon identified a systemic framework that underpins the stages of development incorporating four learning styles: Receptive, Active, Reciprocal and Interpenetrative, spread across four quadrants: the first two Individual and the next two Collective, in each of three tiers: Concrete, Subtle, and MetAware followed by the Unified Tier.
- 8 The shift from *Achievist* to *Synergist* involves a shift from the Self-Authoring to the Self-Transforming Mind, from Conventional to Postconventional, from the third person "it" perspective to the fourth person "we" perspective, and from the Outer Zones of Individual manifestation to the Outer Zones of Collective transformation in the Subtle Tier.
- 9 A person's stage-spectrum includes a primary integrated stage, a secondary neighbouring stage, a leading edge, and a trailing edge, as well as peak experiences into later stages and shadow crashes into earlier stages to gradually build and strengthen a robust character where we can demonstrate consistent integrity.
- 10 The shift from *Achievist* to *Synergist* involves a Spectrum Stage Shift from *Conformist-Specialist-Achievist-Catalyst* to *Achievist-Catalyst-Synergist-Constructivist* -the anchoring point in each stage-spectrum being the later stage of integration in each spectrum.

Next Chapter

This chapter has introduced the theoretical foundations of stage development to provide you with a conceptual overview. In the following chapters, I offer you a synopsis of each of the distinctive stages of development, describing the parameters, strengths and shadows, and the needs and values that become important at each stage. You will gain a good understanding of the executive prototypes at each of the stages that are evident in the workplace.

2 STRENGTHS AND SHADOWS OF EXECUTIVE PROTOTYPES

Executives operate from a distinctive mindset at each stage of development. At earlier stages, leaders are more self-oriented, concerned with their personal insecurities and concerns, risk-averse, fear-based, and full of self-doubt. At later stages, leaders become more confident and increasingly oriented to the common good and the wellbeing of the broader community. This represents a shift from ego-centric to eco-centric.

I explain the strengths that executives develop at each stage of development and the types of role and role levels where a person can excel at each stage. Later stages of development have been repeatedly correlated to increased leadership responsibilities and effectiveness (Kuhnert and colleagues).

Another aspect explored at each stage are the shadow aspects. These may relate to strengths taken to excess or aspects of identity that render a person short-sighted or limited in their capacity to see and overcome personal challenges. Often they relate to the degree of emotional and spiritual intelligence of the person at each stage of development.

The following provides an outline of the needs and values of a person at each stage of development, their strengths and shadows, and a general description of a typical executive prototype with their centre of gravity at that stage.

OPPORTUNIST

The *Opportunist* is congruent with Kegan's Sovereign Mind and, in O'Fallon's framework, is the first Active driver in the Concrete Tier. It literally describes the toddler who declares 'Mine' in respect of everything that appeals to them and steals from the cookie jar. Even with crumbs on their face, they will deny that they stole anything as everything belongs to them. This is the first person perspective: life revolves around me.

Needs/Values

The *Opportunist* is concerned with survival and security, Maslow's first two needs. They are self-interested, relatively isolated, and will try to get away with whatever they can. They operate on a day-by-day or minute-by-minute basis without care for the consequences. Their view of the world is that it is unsafe, and everyone is assumed to be an enemy. They play only to their own advantage based on their impulses. Their language repertoire is very limited and polarised.

Kegan cited the example of a person who was in court for not paying their bill in a restaurant. His answers were very straightforward. Why did he do this? He dined at the restaurant because he was hungry and he was shown to a table. He didn't pay because he didn't have the money. This is an *Opportunist* perspective without the deceit that often accompanies it in adults.

Strengths

Opportunists quite simply see opportunities. They are able to scan their immediate environment and find and/or steal a good deal or a good idea. This talent is well-developed by traders, agents, and pickpockets! If they're acting on your behalf and the role does not require a lot of subtlety or nuance, then they're equipped for the role.

Shadow

The adult *Opportunist* lives in fear, trusts no one, and operates largely in fight, flight or freeze mode. However, when our safety or security is threatened by a restructure or insolvency, or we fear not getting what we want or need such as a promotion during a time when we are dealing with emotional or economic pressures, it is relatively easy to regress back to the level of the *Opportunist* as a shadow crash, and resolve our situation based on self-interest alone.

Executive Prototype

In 1995, some 4% of the executive population were anchored at *Opportunist* (Cook-Greuter, 1999), although this proportion has since fallen to 1% (PwC, 2015). In the corporate workplace, the *Opportunist* is often deceptive and manipulative. They are the executives who steal your ideas without recognising their source, who always blame others when things go wrong, and seem to be unavailable when immediate help is needed. They will attack in self-defence when feeling threatened and are completely averse to feedback. They will go behind your back to advance their own agenda and annihilate yours. They play win-lose power politics. They believe they are on their own in the world and must protect their own interests at all times.

CONFORMIST

work

Conformists correlate with Maslow's (1962) need to belong. They also correlate with the final Interpenetrative stage in O'Fallon's (2011) Concrete Tier. At this stage, teenagers often dress alike or portray physical symbols to identify with a certain clique. Families, clubs, gangs, churches, armies, and tribes fall within the *Conformist* mentality.

They are good citizens, loyal friends, and amenable family members. Their interpenetrative sense is seen in externally visible style choices, especially as teenagers and young adults, or when they join an organisation that requires a specific uniform or style of dress. They will use their physical appearance and habits, vocabulary, and tone to look the same as the people they identify with, first their family, then their friends, and later the larger clubs, organisations or movements they become members of.

Needs/Values

The *Conformist* decides to play it safe. While they still view the world as a very challenging place to inhabit, they believe that if they abide by all the rules and do what people in higher authority ask or tell them to do, they will be safe. Therefore, they conform. They hold a fully formed second person perspective and are aware of me and you as separate people, and also very much resonate with "us and them" i.e., people like us, and them, people who look and sound different and therefore are not to be trusted.

Strengths

The *Conformist* is superb with day-to-day familiar routines and processes that require little customisation or adaptation. They enjoy the sameness and gain in self-confidence from their ability to execute or implement the same processes effectively to their manager's satisfaction. Provided they do not need to negotiate their manager's time or navigate people concerns, the *Conformist* can be a superb executive assistant, coordinator, or administrator.

Shadow

Conformists use reactive emotional strategies to get what they want. The three key strategies are appeasing others by being nice to them and bending over backwards to fit in – usually in relation to more senior people; controlling others by criticising, berating, and offending others – usually in relation to more junior people; or otherwise withdrawing from people altogether by avoiding all communication and even eye contact. If a *Conformist* does not feel accepted, they will generally react in one of these ways in an attempt to stay safe.

All of these are unconscious, emotionally manipulative techniques that produce workplace drama in the form of passive-aggressive behaviour manifesting in bullies and victims. We subconsciously base our boss-subordinate and peer-based interpersonal strategies on those we employed to get what we wanted as a child within the comparable context of parent-child and sibling dynamics. By unravelling the psychodynamics of past family-based relationships, it is possible to source and resolve the cause of a person's fears and concerns.

Executive Prototype

As executives, *Conformists* are risk-averse and will only take action if instructed to do so. Most will need a step-by-step approach mapped out for them so that there are no surprises. Voluntary participation will be relatively limited but they will put the effort in during work hours.

In complying, *Conformists* give away their personal authentic power to positional authority. This leads to a sense of personal ineptitude that moves them to complain. In other words, when we give our personal power away to comply with others, we address this imbalance by complaining about others. If you know anyone in your workplace who complains a lot, they will be operating from a *Conformist* mindset.

Around 10% of the executive population were anchored at *Conformist* in 1995 (Cook-Greuter, 1999), but this has now fallen to just 1% (PwC, 2015). It is a common fall-back position when executives are uncertain about the integrity of their managers. They become obliging and obedient to remain safe and sure, keeping evidence of their compliance to stay out of trouble.

SPECIALIST

play

The *Specialist* is a novice. Based on O'Fallon's STAGES model (2011), this is a three-parameter quantum shift into a completely new worldview. It is an entirely new orientation from the Concrete to the Subtle Tier, from the prior Collective to the new Individual, and from the predictability and mastery of Interpenetrative to the unknown and uncertainty at Receptive.

The *Specialist* embarks on their individual development emerging from the rules-based, authoritarian Collective of the *Conformist*. They experience the desire to develop their own independent identity and role in life beyond the group or groups to which they belong. It can be quite a disorienting period, as much of everything that is now perceived is new, intangible, and barely distinguishable.

Needs/Values

At this stage, the *Specialist* develops their own craft or expertise, often working with lots of data and detail, techniques and processes to gain a better understanding of how things work. The focus is on developing excellence in their domain of interest, work or study that facilitates the emergence of their own competence and self-esteem. This stage develops post-secondary school as young adults take up their first job, undertake an apprenticeship or internship, or move into tertiary education. All their traditional and comforting structures such as home, school, and local community often fall away.

There is significant neurological development at this time in that a person begins to experience beta brain wave activity – commonly described as ‘busy beta’. The average age for this brain wave change is 19 (Amen, 1998). This stage can continue well into a person’s twenties and beyond as they polish and perfect their skills and capabilities. Many *Specialists* are in specialist, technical, and functional roles.

Strengths

The *Specialist* develops a third person perspective that enables them to observe others in transactional relationships with each other, as well as look at information objectively and critically. While a second person perspective can stand alongside another person and explain what they might do in their situation, a third person perspective enables a person to look objectively at a situation and view multiple options for decision-making in a rational way.

They are able to argue their own position, sometimes in oppositional fashion dismissing others’ views and concerns. The *Specialist* prides themselves on being ‘right’, having the last word and standing out from others. They seek and enjoy recognition from highly respected subject matter experts for their individual talents and accomplishments, and no longer gain as much satisfaction from the approval of those in authority. They want to be seen and respected for their differences and special talents that set them apart rather than for what they have in common with others.

Shadow

Specialists taken to extreme can become argumentative, opinionated, and oppositional. ‘Yes, but’ is a common phrase used by *Specialists*. They can show contempt for the views of those perceived to be less expert and may even ridicule them to feel ‘better than’. This can lead to a distancing from others and arrogance. Logic rules. They hold high ethical and moral standards in relation to rules and responsibilities, and will label non-compliant behaviours as simply ‘wrong’.

However, when their work or behaviour fails to meet their own exacting standards, they are just as critical of themselves. The universal shadow of being ‘not good enough’ is found here. It is a psychological response related to the fact that the *Specialist* identifies with their work. If their work falls short, they feel that they are personally falling short.

In other words, in Kegan’s subject/object framework, they are ‘subject’ to their work, while rules and norms have become ‘object’. This leads to many *Specialists* becoming perfectionists, constantly striving for higher standards of excellence. The mantra ‘do your best’ is symbolic of the *Specialist*.

Executive Prototype

In an organisational setting, the *Specialist’s* focus on continuous improvement and finding alternative solutions is an asset in relation to the enhancement of standard business operating processes. Their logical presentation based on scientifically rigorous evidence enables them to gain consensus and win approval for business proposals. This preoccupation with perfection can also become a flaw. Their endless pursuit of micro improvement leads to missed deadlines, higher costs, and potentially unneeded or impractical additions.

As leaders, they can become micro-managers as they are so focused on the details and doing things the ‘one, right way’, they can take a ‘my way or the highway’ type of approach. This leads to many a frustrated employee also wishing to find their own ‘best way’ to carry out a particular activity.

Because a person is Receptive at this point, providing a range of options instigates the empowering process of making one’s own choices and then seeing how they pan out. However, this is not easy for *Specialists*. They only learn to categorise, sort, and prioritise as they progress towards the next integration stage of *Achievist*. It helps to set priorities for them and then with them as they develop their self-esteem and learn to become more objective and decisive.

Their sense of time is moment-by-moment. *Specialists* can easily be pulled in multiple directions at once, maintaining a smiling exterior while struggling to work out what to do next and for whom. They have not yet developed a sense of priorities. Unless these are identified for them and they are visually and clearly articulated, a *Specialist* can easily become overwhelmed and very confused as to what their role really is. Some cut themselves off from all the disruptive noise and continue to work on the one thing that most interests them.

A key challenge for the *Specialist* is their relationship with time. At this stage of their development, timeliness is less important than the excellence and completeness of their work. Thus, while they may juggle many tasks, they will not necessarily complete them on time, or indeed appreciate any deadlines or milestones that they are actively working towards. Their awareness of time is still very much the same day, week or perhaps month, so they are very focused on what is current and their need to perfect their work.

Today, *Specialists* comprise some 10% of the executive population (PwC, 2015), at least from among those who are investing in stage leadership development. In 1995, they made up the majority of executives at around 38% (Cook-Greuter, 1999), just prior to the *Achievist* orientation becoming prevalent.

ACHIEVIST

grow

The *Achievist* represents the final stage in the conventional world. It is a consolidation mode where the person feels comfortable, a sense of having arrived and pride in having developed a certain mastery of life. In O'Fallon's Tier model, the *Achievist* moves into the Active modality within the Subtle Tier still focused largely on themselves as an individual contributor, team, or divisional or organisational leader.

Regardless of their relationships and responsibilities, their view of the world is largely still constituted by 'me' and my team, division, business, or organisation. This stage of development is their opportunity to find out what they can achieve in the world. From Kegan's (1982) perspective, the *Achievist* is Self-Authoring for the first time. They feel confident setting goals, making decisions, and directing others.

Needs/Values

The *Achievist* sets specific goals and strives to achieve the results they want. Time horizons open up for them into the future in that they are able to set goals three to five years hence and create a specific step-by-step action plan as to how those goals will be achieved. Their mature third person perspective enables them to prioritise both goals and activities, and create feedback loops by way of milestones, deadlines, and key performance indicators that enable them to measure and monitor performance over time.

While the *Specialist* was able to work towards a blurry possible future, the *Achievist* begins to envisage their most desired future outcomes and can contrast this with the past. They learn to understand and appreciate more why things went the way they did historically and what to do differently in the time ahead to create a better future. They are active learners and agile doers.

Strengths

Achievists work incredibly hard to achieve their goals. Their developing ability to set goals, make plans, focus attention, juggle priorities, create strategies, implement initiatives, take risks, and monitor progress enables many *Achievists* to become high performers in their industry. The *Achievist* can manage the downside of things going wrong, resolve problems as they arise, and anticipate rival activities that might threaten their own success. This enables them to become effective and efficient competitors. The *Achievist* competes side by side with others to win market share. They are happy to play win-lose. 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going' is an apt representation of the *Achievist*.

They focus on effectiveness rather than excellence, and fit for purpose rather than perfection. Efficiency becomes important and 'good enough' is indeed good enough if the work meets clearly set expectations. Their best work is not defined by its high quality but by realising a competitive standard on time within budget that ensures client and customer satisfaction. Time is money. The audience, not the author, is the arbiter, after clarifying set goals and expectations from the outset in the form of informal or contractual agreements.

This is the first stage at which the feedback loop on work quality and output by both customers and managers is not taken personally. The *Achievist* no longer identifies with their work; their work is now 'object'. Feedback on their work is gratefully received and valued by the *Achievist* with a view to responding actively to better match expectations and agreed performance outcomes in the future.

The *Achievist's* ability to take an objective third person perspective on their work also applies to their thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and impulses. This meta-cognitive facility that emerged at *Specialist* is mastered by the *Achievist*. They come to realise that their thoughts, feelings, actions, and impulses form a linear causal thread and, most importantly, that they can intervene and rearrange or reconstitute their thoughts, feelings, and impulses to realise better outcomes.

Cognitive behaviour coaching approaches are therefore highly effective. Affirmations, thinking through their emotional responses to emotions they have experienced, also become tools and techniques *Achievists* can learn and activate to generate higher individual performance. Their perspective lifts from a downward blinkered silo focus to a forward-looking goal focus.

Shadow

The *Achievist* is driven to succeed and gives everything they have to their work. Their identification with the results they achieve and the fact that there are more targets next week, next month, and next year sets them on a trajectory of enterprise, creativity, and ongoing compulsion to achieve and do more. They can easily become bound up into being continuously and frantically busy on the treadmill of work and become a workaholic.

This form of addiction is very typical of the *Achievist*. Their constant wish is to do more, achieve more, have more, and give more. 'More' shouts loud and clear. This is particularly so if there is little sense of completion or celebration following lots of effort for the sometimes worn out, and occasionally burnt out, high-performing *Achievist*.

The *Achievist's* relationships are transactional. They will bring people along through what is appropriately called 'buy-in'. This means that people will generally have the opportunity to share their views but will nevertheless be unilaterally told what is going to happen and given limited choices either to get on board with the new plan or to get off the bus. Profits, market share, technology shifts, and other new threats and opportunities will take priority over people, whether it be their livelihood, family, health, or wellbeing.

At some point, some *Achievists* wonder if there might be more to life than more material goods and better results. They begin to feel burnt out, dissatisfied with their most intimate relationships, and consider taking time-out to relate genuinely to others. Sometimes they experience a mid-life crisis, a serious set-back, divorce, or health issue. At this point, they question life and begin to look for new answers.

However, there are also many *Achievists* who enjoy their dominance in the corporate landscape and world affairs. They prefer to protect their positional authority and maintain the status quo as it serves them well, at least on the surface.

Executive Prototype

Achievists form the largest proportion of the executive population: close to 33% in 1995 (Cook-Greuter, 1999) and 60% in 2005, and still over 50% in 2015 (PwC, 2015). They are the archetypal hunter and committed capitalist.

They are very happy to work with others and their team members, and they can lead divisions and organisations extremely effectively and efficiently although not always ethically. *Achievists* focus on creating a positive atmosphere contrasting a positive outlook with the ‘not good enough’ worldview of the *Specialist* and leveraging people’s strengths with a keen eye on deliverables and results.

In discussing issues with their peers or other stakeholders, *Achievists* are happy to ‘agree to disagree’ rather than take time to explore the concerns of others. They are in charge and enjoy controlling others by giving directions and advice. There is no need to compromise unless the other person happens to be an important customer who could move to a competitor, or a more senior executive who has the power to impact their career.

Achievists tend to be strong negotiators and highly commercially focused. In counterpoint, when *Achievists* realise that a conflict will inhibit progress, they can and do engage with others with some sensitivity and endeavour to influence them in positive ways to overcome the current obstacle and realise the desired results (Rooke and Torbert, 2005). However, this is still largely a rational response to the extent necessary to break through a business challenge. Genuine mutual relationships only emerge at the next stage of Reciprocity.

Achievists make great project managers, change managers, salespeople, and sales managers; they are the quintessential manager extraordinaire. Their decision-making, planning, and delegating skills become finely tuned at this stage of development.

CATALYST

flow

The *Catalyst* is the first post-conventional individuation stage and, in O’Fallon’s model, is moving from the Individual Active phase into the Collective domain of Reciprocity, a two-parameter shift. It represents a leap into a new growth zone and another unfamiliar world. The *Catalyst* is focused on understanding their inner world: their thoughts and feelings, motives and fears, reactions and responses, and their deepest desires and aspirations in relationship with others.

By exploring their inner world, and inquiring into others’ experiences and perceptions, they become more intuitive and understanding, more insightful and purposeful. *Catalysts* ask existential questions: ‘Why?’, ‘Why am I here?’, ‘Who am I?’, and ‘What is the meaning of life?’

Needs/Values

The *Catalyst* is no longer driven by deficiency needs but by growth needs. A person at *Catalyst* moves into their personal growth zone where growing and evolving becomes their natural way of being. Even though the challenges they encounter along the way may be unfamiliar and disconcerting, for the participant, life is forever enriched.

A person shifts from being satisfied with a life based on cause and effect to feeling their way forward in the world despite uncertainty and adversity in order to lead a more purposeful and fulfilling life based on conscious intention, committed action, and ethical considerations. The implications of commercial results are considered more broadly beyond shareholder returns in terms of their impact on health and wellbeing, environmental sustainability, social impact, and community interests.

The *Catalyst* wishes to explore different ways of living life with reference to values, morals, and ethics. They become concerned about others and the environment. Their interest in others and appreciation of the value of others’ perceptions enables them to recognise the uniqueness of others and the importance of diversity. They advocate for human rights in all forms.

With their new fourth person perspective, *Catalysts* can see into the dynamic interplay of people as an objective bystander. They see the dynamics across different generations and across many levels within the organisation. They begin to tune into the systemic context at work and learn to appreciate the normative effect of culture. They come to see how the past influences the present with repeating patterns of behaviour and interpersonal dynamics.

Strengths

Awareness is a key word for the *Catalyst*, as is respect: both self-respect and respect for others. This is a key shift from implementing the transactional means to achieve specific ends to ensuring that the means employed are mutually respectful and appreciative of others, regardless of their capabilities. Their attention extends from 'what', to 'how' and 'why'. Their focus expands from forward to inward.

In their view, everyone is entitled to a voice, and they realise that collaboration – thinking together, learning together, exploring together, and then deciding together – is essential to generate new solutions and accomplish mutually beneficial outcomes. The *Catalyst* talks 'with' people rather than 'at' them, sees assumptions that others are making, and is cognisant of the defensive behaviours that people adopt to avoid emotional issues. However, they have yet to realise the extent of their influence and power in shaping the collective. This only emerges at the next stage. For now, they learn to navigate.

Shadow

The shadow of the *Catalyst* is in their uncertainty and confusion. They can still adopt the forward propulsion of the *Achievist*, but they are becoming much more mindful of 'how' work is accomplished rather than driving for results. At this first post-conventional stage they break out of the conventional capitalist model of the world and seek to develop personal alignment with values that they are only beginning to understand the impact and implications of.

This makes a *Catalyst* more of an inquirer and facilitator, rather than a manager. They will now be bored as project managers yet adept as change leaders but not yet ready to become divisional, organisational, industry or socially transformative leaders. At early *Catalyst* they are very self-preoccupied and then gradually lean into genuine emotionally intimate relationships in order to better understand differences amongst self and others. As a leader they can therefore be best charged with cross-boundary engagement processes and cross-sector discovery projects rather than typical results-oriented workplace assignments.

Catalysts enjoy bringing about change as change leaders – in contrast to change managers who model *Achievists*. *Catalysts* are focused on genuinely engaging others, getting and using their input, igniting change, and working across boundaries. Their focus turns from the impact of their work on customers and clients to the input into the design and nature of the work itself through active early and continuous engagement with all stakeholders. Empowering processes are extremely important to them. They are attuned to leveraging strengths, investing in personal growth, and collaborating with others to begin to exercise mutual power to co-create the best possible outcomes for the whole community. This aspect matures further at the next stage.

Catalysts are the fastest growing proportion of the executive population. The inward focus of authentic leadership programs are geared to develop *Catalyst* capacity. While comprising just 10% of the executive population in 1995 (Cook-Greuter, 1999), they increased to 23% in 2005 and reached 33% in 2015 (PwC, 2015). This reflects the need for organisations to collaborate more across boundaries, innovate across product and service categories, and shift beyond shareholders to the conscious capitalist mindset of meeting the needs of multiple diverse stakeholders.

The capacity to genuinely innovate and collaborate is initiated at *Catalyst*. With this mindset, the inner world of the individual becomes more important than the external world within which they operate. In other words, they heed their intuition and feelings to make decisions and generate new insights and ideas. They begin to think more radically and gradually feel their way into confidently taking inspired action rather than relying purely on their rational logic.

They also listen from a much deeper place of inquiry and can therefore create a deeper connection with others and develop the ability to build genuine trust with others. This authentic way of relating initiates change in the Collective context they engage in. Many words beginning with 'in' are associated with the *Catalyst* worldview as they begin to explore their inner world: insight, innovation, intrinsic, innate, inquiry, introspection, intricate, inclusive, inquisitive, interest, intimacy, intuition, interweaving, interpretation and inspiration. They experiment with the value and opportunity of interdependence.

SYNERGIST

calm

The *Synergist* consolidates their journey through the Subtle Tier. They integrate their identity at the new inter-systemic, interpenetrative collective and are now able to transcend and transform the previous Concrete collective. This is a significant culmination of deep personal work in relation to cultivating their identity and integrity. They have developed an expanded capacity to integrate the broader organisational and industry context they are surrounded by and yet an integral part of.

Once the many experiences and objects in the Subtle Tier are categorised, prioritised, and situated in the wider mind-space, the *Synergist* becomes very agile at zooming-in and zooming-out on situations to interpenetrate them and choose the right action in the moment, perceptively appreciating the opportunity, subtlety, systemic complexity, and wider context simultaneously.

The *Synergist* has adopted the Self-Transforming Mind defined by Kegan. They are a masterpiece-in-progress, in every moment understanding how they need to be to accommodate yet influence and advocate the diverse needs and goals of all people involved in any given situation. Thus, they are transforming their intention and attention to generate increasing alignment amongst multiple interests and different time horizons. Their broader, deeper, and longer-term perspective, along with higher aspirations enables them to bring many people together to gain and build momentum towards realising synergistic outcomes.

Needs/Values

The *Synergist* is defined by their capacity to engage more collaboratively, think more systemically, demonstrate more curiosity in relation to other people's viewpoints, actively step in to resolve conflict more readily, and look into situations with greater insight and discernment. They show a genuine interest in developing others and capitalising on the interconnections across situations, regions, and cultures.

Brown's (2012) research illustrated that the new and enhanced capacities that emerge from the broader and deeper post-conventional mindset enable leaders to better appreciate, resolve, and transcend sophisticated, ambiguous, and complex challenges during volatile, uncertain times in sustainable, successful ways.

The post-conventional stages are less and less implicit frames that limit one's choices, and more and more become explicit frames that highlight the multiplicity of action-logics and the developing freedom and what we call the response-ability to choose one's action-logic on each occasion (Torbert et al., 2004: 93).

Synergists develop the capacity to think inter-systemically in relation to how the multiple stages and their implicit strengths and shadows mutually influence one another in action. Causation is recognised as circular, relational, and systemic. The interpenetrative nature of life is perceived through projections, transference, and psychodynamics. The Subtle Interpenetrative realisation is that people share a common humanity, the same breadth and depth of emotions, dreams, hopes, and fears within, that make us a single human community.

Strengths

At this point in their journey of increasing expanding consciousness, Synergists have become self-aware and other-aware and have the ability to be discerning and self-validating. They do not seek approval or permission from others. They have developed strength of character and their integrity is evident. *Synergists* have the vision, conviction, and presence to generate and sustain transformative change by standing up for what they believe in and articulating their perspective graciously and wisely. They have adopted the mantle of personal authentic power and integrated this with their positional authority in the interests of serving their community as a whole in the decades ahead and not just selected interest groups.

The *Synergist* adopts a late fourth person perspective. In addition to seeing through the interconnections of system dynamics, they are also able to discern these interactions through multiple generations, past and future. This makes them incredibly adept at understanding the intangible and emotional contextual implications of human growth and social evolution. Most of this is simply unconscious to others and therefore out of their scope. However, for the *Synergist*, this is their opportunity to illuminate, transcend, and even heal past patterns in families over generations and for organisations, in relation to their history of mergers and acquisitions, lineage of CEOs, and corporate cultures.

Shadow

The shadow of the *Synergist* reflects their expanding leadership capacity. While they can be seen to demonstrate a shared humanity and embrace diversity, they are not yet renowned for their humility. That doesn't emerge until a leader embarks on their voyage into the MetAware Tier. Instead, they have a tendency towards being directive and even arrogant as they bring people together. Their generosity can dissipate when they become exasperated by their own impatience with others as they learn to develop the patience of timelessness.

Synergists learn to appreciate the organic stretch and collapse of time and to trust in their inner guidance system. This process can make the *Synergist* appear to be a little other-worldly occasionally, although the evident strength of their leadership integrity generally wins them much support, admiration, and respect.

Executive Prototype

Executives anchored at *Synergist* remain rare. They comprised just 5% of the executive population in 1995 (Cook-Greuter, 1999), 7% in 2005, and 8% in 2015 (PwC, 2015). The proportion of *Synergists* is increasing at a snail's pace at the rate of 1% in each of the last two decades. The fact that the development of executive leaders seems to be stalled at *Catalyst* is one of the key motives to undertaking my research study to discover the developmental drivers to *Synergist*.

The collective perspective is fully manifested at *Synergist* when the leader acts to transform the previous conventional collective based on rules and authority to a post-conventional collective based on shared eco-centric values, respect for personal autonomy, equity and diversity, and the intention and capacity to re-engineer the collective to organically generate greater community wellbeing and shared prosperity.

When led by a *Synergist*, the organisation shifts from being customer-centric to community-centric, that is, eco-centric. It succeeds in achieving medium- to long-term sustainable outcomes that make a real, significant, and beneficial impact on the people they serve and affect now and in future generations. They generate a new world through their convictions and intentions, living by their principles and high ethical standards, in tune with their life purpose while embracing others with compassion and enthusiasm.

The mature *Synergist* is an inspiring, collaborative, visionary leader. They lead confidently from the 'inside out'. They are able to consistently stand and hold their ground in the moment while holding a nurturing space for the emergence of a transformed world. They are extremely mindful, highly considered, and passionately articulate in their advocacy for a better world. They are able to take purposeful action over the long term to raise conscious awareness and keep everyone on course and in meaningful relationship with each other.

CONSTRUCTIVIST

care

The next stage is another quantum shift of all three parameters into a new Tier, a Tier that is unknown to 99% of people today. The MetAware Tier is awareness of awareness, a metacognition that begins to identify with source, or cosmic energy forces. The first stage in this tier is of course an individual receptive stage where a person once again encounters an entirely new world of energy dynamics and perceptible dimensions of reality.

Needs/Values

This stage encounters the loss of identity and surrender of self. After investing significant time, energy, and commitment to defining and understanding self and other, the step into MetAware is to step into the void of emptiness and fullness, where nothing is and all is possible.

While the journey through *Catalyst* and *Synergist* can be compared to the archetypal Hero's Journey, the transition through *Constructivist* and *Alchemist* is akin to a voyage to the bottom of the sea. There is a sense of immersion in a wholeness that cannot yet be understood or fathomed.

Strengths

There is a new perception of time and space, or spacetime evolves as being boundaryless, eternal, and infinite, the power of now. Patience and humility, tenderness and gentleness, acceptance and faith, modesty and selflessness, become embodied following an immersion into deep despair and disillusionment.

Shadow

This transition takes a deeper dive into emotions that have hitherto not been experienced in the same way. People are known to experience the dark night of the soul, a time of desolation, as their appreciation of century-old patterns of world evolution and regression can be seen and begin to be understood. The opportunity for humanity to retrieve light and love in the world suddenly becomes quite hopeless, even futile.

Collective shadow emerges. Experiences include encountering people from all walks of life who have suffered from tragic and abusive experiences in their lives; a complete reprieve from rational thought while reflecting on, learning from, and healing endemic regrets and the most incoherent human errors of judgment; and an immersion into grief and despair. This type of shadow experience leads to unconditional acceptance, endless patience, deep compassion, and a sense of surrender to cosmic evolution. Will is transmuted, and the mind becomes the instrument of spirit.

Executive Prototype

Executives at this stage would benefit most from a sabbatical! Any drive and commitment dissipate temporarily as the cosmic universe peers through into one's conscious awareness. It is a great time to rewind and reflect, ponder and wonder, and consider human evolution and devolution, involution and revolution.

ALCHEMIST

free

The *Alchemist* enjoys the 5th person perspective. In the MetAware Tier, they become Active and are aware of multi-generational, iterative individual and collective shadow through the ages and epochs of human civilisation. The final stage that can be observed in the post-conventional world is the *Alchemist*. They account for just 1% of the executive population.

Needs/Values

At the stage of *Alchemist*, the evolution of society to enable greater peace and goodwill becomes salient. The *Alchemist* embodies their own intuitive guidance and employs mutually collaborative power to generate transformative shifts in the world that lead to a more sustainable, healthy and equitable world where everyone, the planet and all of life is supported and nurtured to thrive and flourish, grow and evolve. Rather than carry this out through planning or stewardship, it is a matter of rising to the opportunity as it presents itself.

Alchemists are able to hold and embrace wonderful future possibilities while standing firmly in the present accepting and embracing all that is, and being cognisant of all that has preceded and led to the current situation. They look at events symbolically and value both the shadow and the light in the systemic psychodynamics of common human interactions.

Strengths

The *Alchemist* can have a far-reaching impact on their world. They feel free to be uniquely themselves, liberated from any social or cultural conventions, and can feel both delighted and tormented as they perceive, attend to, and process the vast cacophony of thought and emotion that swirls around them while their interior mind is quiet and still. They are able to be fully vulnerable yet vitally alive and vigorous as they give their conscious, compassionate attention to the dynamic interplay in each and every moment to exercise wisdom and compassion in action.

Shadow

The *Alchemist* has released the shadow of their ego through grief, understanding, and forgiveness and has surrendered their personal will to be an instrument in the divine orchestra on earth. They live to evolve in tune with the cosmos, listening into the dark and the deep recesses of their soul's voyage in life.

The shadow that manifests at *Alchemist* is the collective shadow of families, countries, regions, religions, cultures, societies, even civilisations. This is explored through energy dynamics such as constellation work.

Executive Prototype

Alchemists are the iconic leaders who ignite and generate social evolution as well as transform global industries. However, there are also many *Alchemists* who are amazingly effective behind the scenes in niche markets and uniquely tailored roles such as strategic consulting, brand design, sustainability initiatives, and executive coaching. They can juggle multiple responsibilities, intervene very briefly yet with significant strategic impact, and live their lives with passion and purpose.

Chapter 2: Key Points

While we are each a spectrum of neighbouring stages, we also each have a centre of gravity and accompanying stage that typify our leadership mindset and the qualities we bring to challenges and opportunities, dilemmas and possibilities. The following key points encapsulate each stage.

- 1 The *Opportunist* executive leader feels threatened by life, acts in self-interest, steals ideas, blames others, attacks to defend yet sees opportunities. (mature 1st person perspective)
- 2 The *Conformist* executive leader sees life as a struggle yet enjoys belonging to a specific collective. They follow directives, comply with people in authority, regularly complain about others, and distrust people who are unlike them. (mature 2nd person perspective)
- 3 The *Specialist* executive leader sees life as an effort and enjoys investing their efforts into developing technical and functional expertise and skills. They enjoy continuous improvement yet can be highly critical, perfectionist, and take feedback personally. (early 3rd person perspective)
- 4 The *Achievist* executive leader enjoys striving in life and reaping the results of their efforts. They are positive, pragmatic, and can juggle priorities to achieve team goals. They always want 'more' and wear being continuously busy as a badge of honour. (mature 3rd person perspective)
- 5 The *Catalyst* executive leader sees life as a journey. They are a collaborative change leader, reflective and insightful, innovative and intuitive, interweaving across stakeholders, boundaries, divisions, and sectors. (early 4th person perspective)
- 6 The *Synergist* executive leader sees the interpenetrative nature of life as a projection and reflection of self. They embrace diversity and conflicting perspectives to resolve issues and lead transformative and revolutionary change to usher in a new order. (mature 4th person perspective)
- 7 The *Constructivist* executive leader realises the futility of effort as generations of humanity evolve and devolve, progress and regress. They surrender to the shadow of the soul to embrace a MetAware cosmic perspective. (early 5th person perspective)
- 8 The *Alchemist* executive leader sees life as a theatre with an empty mind committed to social evolution integrating material and spiritual spheres. They can lead social evolution through symbolic actions. (mature 5th person perspective)

Next Chapter

This chapter has reviewed the emerging strengths, shadows, and idiosyncrasies of each stage of development. In the next chapter, we explore the distribution of the executive population based on their primary stage of development with reference to statistics based on WUSCT assessments. You will also gain a good understanding of the nature and validation of the assessment. Moreover, I will explore the features that distinguish the *Achievist* from the *Synergist* and why and how the latter have been found to be more effective leaders. We also review the factors that appear to prompt later stage development.