

Egocentric, Ethnocentric, and Worldcentric

To show what is involved with levels or stages, let's use a very simple model possessing only 3 of them. If we look at moral development, for example, we find that an infant at birth has not yet been socialized into the culture's ethics and conventions; this is called the **preconventional stage**. It is also called **egocentric**, in that the infant's awareness is largely self-absorbed. But as the young child

begins to learn its culture's rules and norms, it grows into the **conventional stage** of morals. This stage is also called **ethnocentric**, in that it centers on the child's particular group, tribe, clan, or nation, and it therefore tends to exclude those not of one's group. But at the next major stage of moral development, the **postconventional stage**, the individual's identity expands once again, this time to include a care and concern for all peoples, regardless of race, color, sex, or creed, which is why this stage is also called **worldcentric**.

Thus, moral development tends to move from "me" (egocentric) to "us" (ethnocentric) to "all of us" (worldcentric)—a good example of the unfolding stages of consciousness.

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

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

Stage 2 is the "mind" stage, where identity expands from the isolated gross body and starts to share relationships with many others, based perhaps on shared values, mutual interests, common ideals, or shared dreams. Because I can

use the mind to take the role of others—to put myself in their shoes and feel what it is like to be them—my identity expands from "me" to "us" (the move from egocentric to ethnocentric).

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

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

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

higher, deeper, wider potentials.

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

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Lines of Development: I'm Good at Some Things, Not-So-Good at Others . . .

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

Howard Gardner made this concept fairly well known using the idea of **multiple intelligences**. Human beings have a variety of intelligences, such as cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, musical intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence, and so on. Most people excel in one or two of those, but do poorly in the others. This is not necessarily or even usually a bad thing; part of integral

wisdom is finding where one excels and thus where one can best offer the world one's deepest gifts.

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

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

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

Likewise with the other intelligences. Emotional development to stage 1 means that you have developed the capacity for emotions centering on "me," especially the emotions and drives of hunger, survival, and self-

protection. If you continue to grow emotionally from stage 1 to stage 2—or from egocentric to ethnocentric—you will expand from “me” to “us,” and begin to develop emotional commitments and attachments to loved ones, members of your family, close friends, perhaps your whole tribe or whole nation. If you grow into stage-3 emotions, you will develop the further capacity for a care and compassion that reaches beyond your own tribe or nation and attempts to include all human beings and even all sentient beings in a worldcentric care and compassion.

And remember, because these are stages, you have attained them in a permanent fashion. Before that happens, any of these capacities will be merely passing states: you will plug into some of them, if at all, in a temporary fashion—great peak experiences of expanded knowing and being, wondrous “aha!” experiences, profound altered glimpses into your own higher possibilities. But with practice, you will convert those states into stages, or permanent traits in the territory of you.

The Integral Psychograph

There is a fairly easy way to represent these intelligences or multiple lines. In [figure 1](#), we have drawn a simple graph showing the 3 major stages (or **levels** of development) and 5 of the most important intelligences (or **lines** of

development). **Through the major stages or levels of development, the various lines unfold.** The 3 levels or stages can apply to any developmental line—sexual, cognitive, spiritual, emotional, moral, and so on. The level of a particular line simply means the “altitude” of that line in terms of its growth and consciousness. We often say, “That person is highly developed morally,” or “That person is really advanced spiritually.”

In [figure 1](#), we have shown somebody who excels in cognitive development and is good at interpersonal development, but does poorly in moral and really poorly in emotional intelligence. Other individuals would, of course, have a different “psychograph.”

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

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

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

Thus, to be “**integrally informed**” does not mean you have to master all lines of development, just be aware of them. If you then choose to remedy any unbalances, that is part of Integral Life Practice (ILP), which actually helps to increase levels of consciousness and development through an integrated approach. (We will be discussing ILP in detail in chap. 10.)

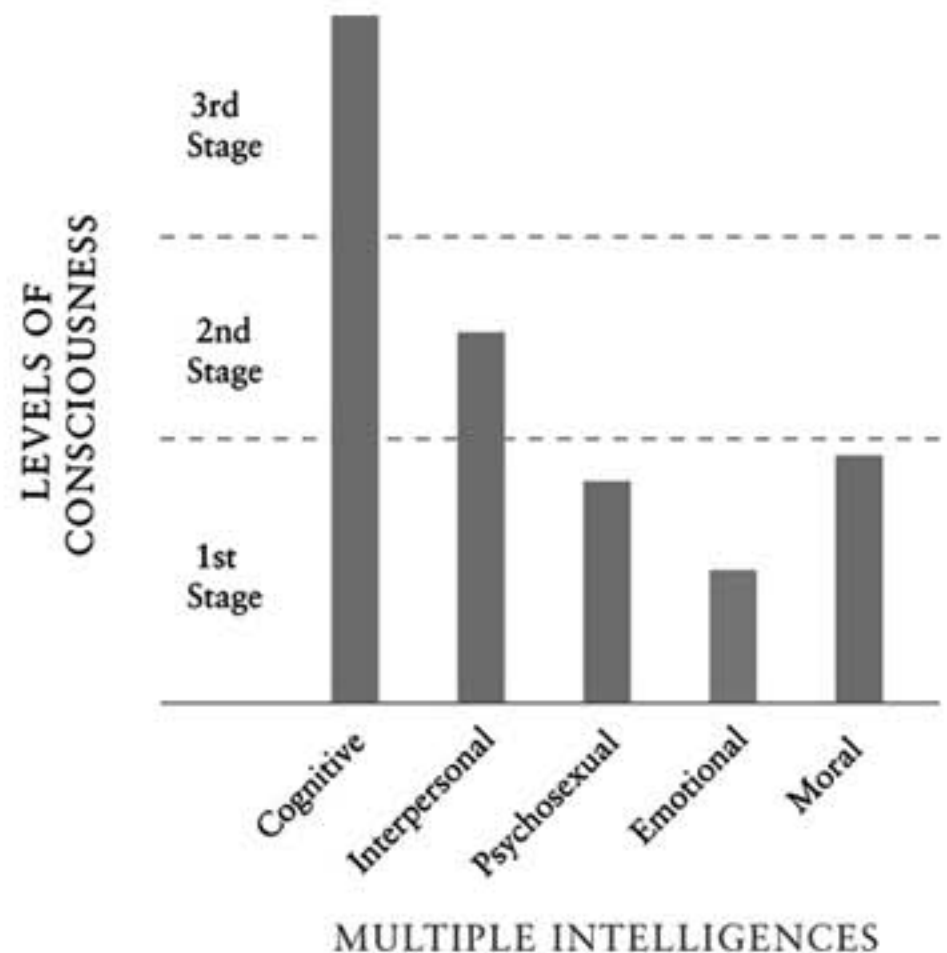


Figure 1. Psychograph.

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

present possibilities. So you can very quickly be introduced to many **higher states** of consciousness.

You cannot, however, be introduced to all the qualities of **higher stages** without actual growth and practice. You can have a peak experience of higher *states* (like seeing an interior subtle light or having a feeling of oneness with all of nature), because many states are ever-present, and so they can be “peek”-experienced right now. But you cannot have a peak experience of a higher *stage* (like being a concert-level pianist), because stages unfold sequentially and take considerable time to develop. Stages build upon their predecessors in very concrete ways, so they cannot be skipped: like atoms to molecules to cells to organisms, you can't go from atoms to cells and skip molecules. This is one of the many important differences between states and stages.

However, with repeated practice of contacting higher states, your own stages of development will tend to unfold in a much faster and easier way. There is, in fact, considerable experimental evidence demonstrating exactly that. The more you are plunged into authentic higher *states* of consciousness—such as meditative states—the *faster* you will grow and develop through any of the *stages* of consciousness. It is as if higher-states training acts as a lubricant on the spiral of development, helping you to disidentify with a lower stage so that the next higher stage

can emerge, until you can stably remain at higher levels of awareness on an ongoing basis, whereupon a passing state has become a permanent trait. These types of higher-states training, such as meditation, are a part of any integral approach to transformation.

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

What Type: Boy or Girl?

The next component is easy: each of the previous components has a masculine and feminine type.

There are two basic ideas here: one has to do with the idea of *types* themselves; and the other, with masculine and feminine as one example of types.

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

“feminine.”

Carol Gilligan, in her enormously influential book *In a Different Voice*, pointed out that both men and women tend to develop through 3 or 4 major levels or stages of moral development. Pointing to a great deal of research evidence, Gilligan noted that these 3 or 4 moral stages can be called *preconventional*, *conventional*, *postconventional*, and *integrated*. These are actually quite similar to the 3 simple developmental stages we are using, this time applied to moral intelligence.

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

integrated, then . . .

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

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

Little boys don’t like girls around when they are playing games like baseball, because the two voices clash badly, and often hilariously. Some boys are playing baseball, a kid takes his third strike and is out, so he starts to cry. The

other boys stand unmoved until the kid stops crying; after all, a rule is a rule, and the rule is: three strikes and you're out. Gilligan points out that if a girl is around, she will usually say, "Ah, come on, give him another try!" The girl sees him crying and wants to help, wants to connect, wants to heal. This, however, drives the boys nuts, who are doing this game as an initiation into the world of rules and male logic. Gilligan says that the boys will therefore hurt feelings in order to save the rules; the girls will break the rules in order to save the feelings.

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

So, integrated or stage 4—what is that? At the 4th and highest stage of moral development, according to Gilligan, the masculine and feminine voices in each of us tend to become integrated. This does not mean that a person at this

stage starts to lose the distinctions between masculine and feminine, and hence become a kind of bland, androgynous, asexual being. In fact, masculine and feminine dimensions might become more intensified. But it does mean the individuals start to befriend both the masculine and feminine modes in themselves, even if they characteristically act predominantly from one or the other.

Have you ever seen a *caduceus* (the symbol of the medical profession)? It's a staff with two serpents crisscrossing it, and wings at the top of the staff (see [fig. 2](#)). The staff itself represents the central spinal column; where the serpents cross the staff represents the individual *chakras* moving up the spine from the lowest to the highest; and the two serpents themselves represent solar and lunar (or masculine and feminine) energies *at each of the chakras*.

That's the crucial point. The 7 *chakras*, which are simply a more complex version of the 3 simple levels or stages, represent 7 levels of consciousness and energy available to all human beings. (The first three *chakras*—food, sex, and power—are roughly stage 1; *chakras* 4 and 5—relational heart and communication—are basically stage 2; and *chakras* 6 and 7—psychic and spiritual—are the epitome of stage 3.) The important point here is that, according to the traditions, **each of those 7 levels has a masculine and feminine** aspect, type, or "voice." Neither masculine nor

feminine is higher or better; they are two equivalent types at each of the levels of consciousness.



Figure 2. Caduceus.

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

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

compassion, justice and mercy, masculine and feminine.

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

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

Sick Boy, Sick Girl

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

For example, if each stage of development has a

masculine and feminine dimension, each of those can be healthy or unhealthy, which we sometimes call “sick boy, sick girl.” This is simply another kind of horizontal typing, but one that can be extremely useful.

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

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

Using IOS, you will find ways to identify both the healthy and unhealthy masculine and feminine dimensions

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