

# Integral Lifework Concepts, Tools & Assessments

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## Introduction

Integral Lifework aims to provide answers to life's most challenging and intriguing questions: Why do we suffer? How can we heal? What is love? What does healthy relationship look like? How can we feel more empowered? Where should we go for answers? How can we improve our discernment and skillfulness? Such questions are as endless as they are relevant. And when we turn away from external dependence, when we disrupt our habit of consuming answers from authorities and traditions outside ourselves, we can begin to look inward. There, in the depths of our being, is everything we need to soften our most potent fears, relinquish our most disruptive impulses, heal from our most jagged wounds, and actualize our most precious dreams. Why would we ever look elsewhere when such power and grace reside within?

However, the promise of external solutions erupts perpetually around us, and the impulse to worshipfully embrace them is often aggressively reinforced. The cultural and institutional pressures to rely on externals and motivate every action with dysfunctional dependence are as pervasive as they are resistant to change. But that way lies madness. External projections of hope are a tonic not for healing, but for a perpetuation of every known malady and the invention of new ones. Science and technology, for instance, cannot rescue us from ourselves but only replace one set of challenges with another. The free market may commoditize innovation and creativity, but it cannot solve any of our most difficult societal problems. Religious dogma cannot escape its orbit around dominant cultural memes, but instead conforms to them over time, no matter how revolutionary its foundations may have been. And the heady heights of acquired knowledge – even those insights that can truly set us free – are not the same as the deliberate, steady and disciplined effort of self-emancipation. There is in fact nothing completely outside of our fragile vessel that will deliver us from barriers to well-being or create a transformative existence on our behalf. We do not bear this burden alone, but we alone are accountable for our choice to heal, grow and evolve. The answers, resources and rewards are all within us.

A friend of mine recently asked: “Do people really change?” I think to answer this question we must first realize that many culturally sanctioned modes of being have conditioned us to live in contradiction to who and what we actually are. So what feels like positive change may really just be letting go of that conditioning, disabusing ourselves of a false identity, and disconnecting our ego and willfulness from those old habits. What can then draw us towards our genuine center is the discovery that gratitude and love are already there within us; they are part of our nature – *dominant* parts, in fact, that can govern most other aspects of our existence if we allow them to. Through mindful interior awareness we will find this truth and unveil an abiding connection with our ground of being, informing loving actions with insight and wisdom. Thus real, substantive transformation is mainly a returning to Self, a gradual *dis-illusionment* that discards substitutions in favor of authentic nourishment. Do people really change? Yes, absolutely. With true love as our compass, we can become more and more ourselves.

What is this critical aspect that resides within? What part of us promises real freedom, strength and transformation? It is our capacity to embody *agape*, to affectionately and compassionately care for all that we are – as individuals, as a collective, as part of the biology and energy systems of the Earth, and as part of the fabric of the Universe itself. Once we begin to embrace our own essential substance, turning away from the superficiality, conformity and half-truths of everything we think we want and everything we think we know, we can encounter the solid bedrock of our existence. And when we touch that solid ground, when we feel its boundless energy and concrete importance, there is no turning back. We can either attempt to deny our soul, or embrace the inevitable momentum of love-consciousness and its evolutionary consequences. This is the central purpose of Integral Lifework, and all of its concepts, tools and practices support that end.

The following are intended as quick references to such concepts, tools and practices. All of these plot along a dialectic arc where interior development is always accompanied by exterior actualization; they all radiate out from the same center and are bound together as inexorable progression, so that their interdependence becomes clear upon careful examination. That said, there isn’t much exposition on theory here, so the relevance and context for most of this would need to be understood from the books, essays and other resources developed around Integral Lifework over the last dozen years, and from which most of these tidbits are excerpted. You can access many of these resources, along with further explanations of Integral Lifework itself, at [www.integrallifework.com](http://www.integrallifework.com). Many other related writings, including those which address ethics, politics, economics, and many other topics inspired by my own Integral Lifework practice, can be found at [www.tcollinslogan.com](http://www.tcollinslogan.com). But as with any transformative practice, the most compelling validation will always be experiential rather than theoretical.

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## 1. Relationship Matrix

The following chart provides ways to evaluate existing relationships and understand the dynamics of new relationships as they are formed. The premise is simple: there are many different levels of attraction and involvement, and unless there is a transparent, mutual understanding of what specific combinations apply to any given relationship, we are liable to either be disappointed and frustrated with our experiences, or to inadvertently disappoint and frustrate others.

<p><b>Level of Commitment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. <b>Profound</b> (there has never been a question about this being a lifelong and mutually committed relationship)</li> <li>B. <b>Pronounced</b> (one of our closest and most important relationships)</li> <li>C. <b>Moderate</b> (social bonds like work relationships, those between doctors and patients, family members who aren't emotionally close to us, etc.)</li> <li>D. <b>Mild</b> (general commitment to social expectations, such as conforming to laws or traditions)</li> <li>E. <b>Dysfunctional</b> (obsessive, addictive, or compulsive)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Type of Affinity or Attraction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Spirit</b> (a inexpressible but deep attraction that shares a common understanding of events in the context of spiritual priorities)</li> <li>2. <b>Heart</b> (sharing mutually important values, goals and attitudes – including spiritual ones)</li> <li>3. <b>Mind</b> (intellectual affinity – thinking alike or understanding each other's thought process with surprising ease)</li> <li>4. <b>Physical</b> (enjoying how someone looks or moves, the sound of their voice, their smell, etc.)</li> <li>5. <b>Sexual</b> (sexual attraction)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Circle of Intimacy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. <b>Devotional</b> (wide open passionate worship that knows no bounds)</li> <li>II. <b>Soul Friends</b> (deep spiritual trust, openness, sharing, mutual support and inspiration)</li> <li>III. <b>Companionship</b> (a comfortable closeness, frankness and mutual trust)</li> <li>IV. <b>Compassionate</b> (an unconditional acceptance and desire to relieve suffering – often initially one-sided)</li> <li>V. <b>Convenience</b> (sharing common, cooperative goals for a limited duration)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level of Social Acknowledgement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Public</b> (everyone knows)</li> <li>b. <b>Immediate Community</b> (only our closest friends know)</li> <li>c. <b>Private</b> (i.e. "just us" – we only acknowledge it between ourselves)</li> <li>d. <b>Self</b> (we know, but we haven't shared with anyone else – even the other person with whom we feel a connection)</li> <li>e. <b>Unknown</b> (a relationship already exists, but we haven't consciously acknowledged it to ourselves)</li> </ul>

Consider the many flavors of emotion and intention represented in the chart, and reflect on past relationships that have failed in some way. Is there a correlation between the type of connection you anticipated and what you actually experienced? Would the relationship have recovered if either of you had been willing to accept what the other offered, without confining it to preconceived notions of what "should have been?" In

seeking out new friendships, have you been clear in your communication of the levels of connection you are willing to offer and receive? With this matrix in mind, what dynamics can you identify in your current relationships that might be the result of unexpressed or unclear valuations in each area?

This approach can be used for all kinds of interpersonal relationships, each with its unique combination of factors. For instance, one or more levels of Affinity may apply (i.e. we might share both a “Mind” and “Heart” Affinity with the same person). It then becomes that much more complex when one person feels multiple levels of Affinity or Attraction, while the object of their affection reciprocates on a different level. When two people have completely dissimilar understandings of what attracts them, what level of social acknowledgement exists, or what kind of intimacy is expected, the potential for disappointment, frustration and/or conflict is high.

### *Exercise*

Print out two copies of the Relationship Matrix chart, and invite one or more members of your closest relationships to “rate” each area of your relationship while you do the same on the second copy. Be honest and considerate in your assessment – perhaps spending a day or two contemplating it – then sit down together and compare your ratings. Be prepared for surprises. You may find your connection affirmed in new ways, or you may find an area of difference that requires more discussion – it is, in fact, very likely that such a difference has caused tension in the past.

## 2. Integral Lifework Nourishment Assessment

For all thirteen areas of essential self-care, there will be a range of what constitutes high quality nourishment in each dimension, a range that will change from person to person, and even for the same person over the course of their life. In order to measure this, I developed this simple self-assessment to create a discussion around self-care. There are many ways to evaluate how we are doing in these areas, but one way is to rate your level of satisfaction in each dimension, taking your time to observe and weigh your levels of skillful nurturing, satisfaction and contentment from day-to-day. What I've also found is that one of the best ways to gain insight into this area is to not only complete the Assessment yourself, but to have a couple of close friends or family members complete the Assessment on your behalf, offering their own opinions with honesty, humility and compassion. It is important to let each person finish the assessment independently before comparing or discussing them.

In the chart on the following page, consider the combination of intentions, practices, habits and natural rhythms in your life that contribute to the nourishment of each dimension, and rate them according to the following values:

1. Extremely dissatisfied, doing very poorly
2. Slightly dissatisfied or doing a bit poorly, below expectations
3. Satisfied, doing okay, though could still improve
4. Satisfied and content, meeting expectations
5. Extremely satisfied, doing very well, above expectations

When someone else is evaluating you, they will use the same values to indicate how well they feel you are doing in each area (I suppose you could say it will be their level of satisfaction, because they care about you). After everyone has completed the exercise, take some time to compare how you rated yourself in one dimension with how other people rated you there. Did the observations of others align with how you see yourself? If not, why do you think that is the case? Did all dimensions have fairly similar ratings – are they in balance with each other? Are there areas you would like to improve? If you discover one or more aspects of yourself that may be undernourished, consider giving them some special attention over the next week or two, providing targeted care, compassion and nurturing for those dimensions. Then, if you try this assessment again at a later date, you will be able to track how your self-care changes over time – and of course you can have others retry it as well.

	<i>Rate</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<b>Physical health and well-being</b> – consider diet, exercise, physical strength, energy, quality of sleep, chronic or recurring illness, managing weight, and overall sense of well-being. Are you happy with your body? Is your body happy with you?		
<b>Positive emotions, creativity and self-expression</b> – consider self-expression, honesty and authenticity in communication, regular creativity and imagination, overall happiness and contentment, sense of playfulness. Is there lots of joy?		
<b>Relationships and social acceptance</b> – consider quality of friendships, feeling appreciated and valued, regular expressions of affection between you and friends and family, overall sense of connectedness and intimacy, and sense of belonging.		
<b>Learning and intellectual stimulation</b> – consider regular exposure to new ideas and opinions, excitement about learning, diversity of interests, mental alertness, overall sense of intellectual curiosity and openness, and ability to think carefully and critically. Do new ideas and information excite you? Are you curious?		
<b>Accomplishment and fulfillment</b> – consider satisfaction over career, hobbies and life’s work, sense of overall purpose, excitement about plans and goals, strength of focus, and your endurance and follow-through. Do you feel purposeful each day?		
<b>Spiritual Ground</b> – consider the strength and consistency of connection and relationship with Inner Light, Divine Presence, Spirit, Spirit Guide(s), Soul, Spiritual Realm, Ground of All Being, Essence, Universal Consciousness or other spiritual dimension; consider ability to convert that into action, especially generosity of time, energy and resources, and regular gratitude. Is your spirit thriving?		
<b>Healing of the past</b> – consider level of peace, tranquility, forgiveness and healing around any past events, as well as the quality of relationships with all family members in the present. Do you get along well? Is there lots of love?		
<b>Legacy, pleasure and reproduction</b> – consider quality and character of what will be left behind after your death, the frequency of pleasurable experiences, and the sense of safety and stability in the home environment. Do you feel secure?		
<b>Ease of shifting between different modes of processing your experiences</b> – evaluate how easy it is to move from a logical, intellectual way of thinking to a felt or intuitive mode of being; or from being grounded in the body’s felt sensations and messages to analytical thought; or from any of these to a deeply spiritual space within; or from any one of these to any other. Do you feel flexible?		
<b>Self-concept</b> – consider self-confidence and possession of a clear and accurate awareness about your own strengths and weaknesses; consider compassionate acceptance of own faults and idiosyncrasies while at the same time being able to remain humble. Do you feel courageous? Do you respect yourself?		
<b>Sexuality</b> – consider level of satisfaction with sex life, level of genuine intimacy and sensitivity with your body and your partner, quality of physical openness, enjoyment of own body, and confidence with sexuality. Are you satisfied?		
<b>Integrity</b> – evaluate your ability to harmonize thoughts and intentions with words, words with actions, and actions with taking responsibility for the consequences of those actions. Do all of these align with each other?		
<b>Artful will</b> – consider how often you feel “in the flow,” where everything in your life feels like it is in harmony, where synchronicity happens and you sense you are moving in the right direction. Contrast that with how often you feel frustrated and “out-of-synch.” Do you feel like the stars are aligning for you (5), or do you feel thwarted (1)?		

### 3. Insight into “the Good of All” as Guiding Intentionality



If we allow responsible and skillful love to instruct and refine all other emotions, thoughts, behaviors and intentions – all impulses of consciousness, body and will – we begin to arrive at values hierarchies that are not only internally consistent, but energize a clearly defined nurturing and transformational process amid complex and competing priorities. To state this principle in another way: without the cofactor of love, the nutrients available to different dimensions of our being cannot be properly metabolized. You could even say that a paucity of love is our greatest barrier to wholeness and well-being. The felt experience of compassionate affection must develop in parallel with every other aspect of self; it is both a prerequisite and product of nurturing efforts. Authentic love is also the fullest expression possible of our particular level of moral development; it progressively defines what we value and encourages how courageously we act on those valuations. This leads to one way we can define love-consciousness: love that has become fully conscious within us, producing a sensitivity that is wholly infused with *agape* and invested in ever-expanding arenas of compassionate action. Another way to say this is that our moral development reflects the maturation of love within us, and this in turn defines how skillfully we can achieve multidimensional nourishment for ourselves and throughout all of our interactions. Our energy exchanges with others and our environment – at all levels – become the very currency of love and the evidence of its sovereignty in our life.

In this way all energy exchanges are framed within a broader context. A meal lovingly prepared for us by a friend is a lot more satisfying than a quick snack alone. Adorn that meal with a special occasion – a favorite holiday, a birthday, an anniversary – and it becomes memorable as well, nourishing our heart and spirit. In the same way, when we approach the thirteen nourishment dimensions of Integral Lifework with a consistent,



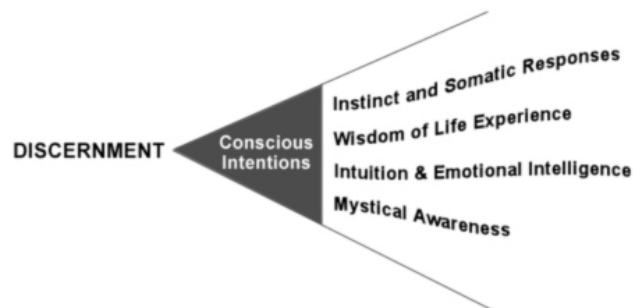
guiding intentionality behind our actions, we enhance the value of our practice. If we care about what we are doing because it supports a deeper conviction about why we should act, then we can make choices with more confidence and execute them with more zeal and perseverance. This is how intentions impact our nourishing style and capacity. In one way, love itself performs this supportive function, and when we are immersed in love-consciousness we tend to act from that state of being without calling upon anything greater. Love justifies itself. But what supports love? What is the governing intention behind the will to be caring and compassionate? Often we will find that the life purpose we identify for ourselves fulfills that function, acting as a backdrop against which all decisions can be measured. But what is the backdrop for our backdrop? What supports us when we temporarily lose our personal vision, or fall out of love for a while, or stumble across new barriers that seem intimidating or insurmountable?

One answer many traditions offer us is an overarching desire for the good of All. That is, what benefits everyone, including ourselves, to the greatest degree. Before making any major decision, if I ask myself “is this for the good of All?” I can begin aligning my intention with a higher stratum of moral valuation and a broader, more inclusive purpose. I may not always know for a certainty the answer to that question, but if I ask it, I am at least examining my own heart for any signs of willfulness, and offering up an eagerness to participate in something greater than my own ego-gratification. And creating that softness of heart, that willingness to align myself with a greater good, opens a channel to wisdom and insight.

You might be asking: “Wait a minute, how can we ever know for certain what the good of All really is? Isn’t that kind of bigheaded?” And of course that is one of the dangers. If we assert that we have been granted some special dispensation to stand for good in the world, and that therefore whatever we desire is for the good of All, then we can fall into a classic trap of willful ignorance amplified by unrepentant arrogance, and lose ourselves in megalomaniacal delusion. At the other extreme, if we deny our innate capacity for wisdom and discernment, submitting instead to a sense of helpless inevitability, we will annihilate our potential for conscious contribution to all-inclusive beneficial outcomes. So embracing a guiding intentionality requires just the right balance of courage and humility, relying on an inner conviction, a certainty of faith, that the good of All is possible – perhaps even inevitable – and that we can and will contribute to it. We are confident not in our having the perfect solution, but in our willingness and eagerness to be part of a solution. Our fundamental belief that the good of All deserves to be manifested and indeed cries out to be manifested is what calls us forth and draws us onward.

#### 4. Encountering Discernment in Neutral Awareness

Creating neutral awareness is a potent kind of watchfulness, because no one idea or experience is allowed to dominate, and competing convictions, emotions, and tendencies of will can be held simultaneously without anxiety or drama. There is no sense of conclusion, because we remove ourselves from direct contact with all these simultaneous considerations. We can calmly harness our thoughts, emotions, intuitions and sensations in a web of *seeming* incongruity and overwhelming information, and still be at peace. In fact, from this suspended state, we will often discover surprising interconnectedness. We can see patterns which unify, which show us how diverging ideas or evidences are not as mutually exclusive as they once appeared – for there is almost always interaction and overlap between all forces and fixed points, no matter how far apart they at first appear to be. We discern new relationships, harmonies and coalescences, and when we cannot immediately reconcile one observation with another, the uncertainty does not disturb us. I use the term “the art of suspension” to describe the cultivation of this neutral awareness. It welcomes us into this space of all-encompassing neutrality, conditioning our mind for a meta-cognitive process whereby everything can be definite, but nothing certain, thus providing us a powerful method of accessing wisdom and discernment.



One way to invite neutral awareness is through a kind of meditation that is, well, more like non-meditation. Just sit comfortably, close your eyes, and let yourself be still. For many of us, our thoughts, emotions and physical sensations will keep trying to overtake our attention. But if we free that attention entirely from any specific focus, and settle into a receptive quiet from which all stimuli – the chatter of our thoughts, the aching in our muscles, the sounds around us, the emotional tension of our day – fall away from our conscious focus, we can begin to intuit what really exists within the remaining silence. As with all forms of meditation, it is important to avoid willing our minds into or away from anything. Instead, we can begin by being attentive to each feeling, thought or sensation that arises, resting in them a while without reacting to them and just letting them be. Then, as naturally and effortlessly as they have arisen, we can let them go. A bird rises on invisible currents, its wings unmoving, then vanishes from sight. When held gently within our guiding intention to invite the good of All, such letting go is a returning to an emptiness that is neutral, acquiescent, and brimming with fullness at the same time.

## 5. Contemplative States & Emotional Transformation

Although various traditions of contemplation, meditation and prayer have different numbers of states, stations or stages, and uses different names and subsets of characteristics – emphasizing heart over mind, mind over heart, or transcendent sense over both heart and mind – I would hypothesize that the contemplative-emotive process outlined below occurs intuitively throughout all of them, even where it is not specifically identified. If this is indeed true, then the contemplative-emotive model can be used to design an integrated meditative practice. It can also be used gauge the aftereffects of our experiences and to measure our actualization of transformative insights. Without being distracted from a tranquil, compassionate and empowered existence, we can consider these states as we move forward, evaluating the impact they have on our life. But we must also remember a most important caveat in any meditative journey: if we are forever trying to pursue, interpret, define and compartmentalize “moments of enlightenment,” we will be preventing the enrichment of our being by holding on to such ideas. Instead, we can continually refresh the habit of letting go, and simply enjoy the indescribable Light that flourishes within and without.

“Just as catching a fish takes as long as it takes for the fish to bite, so it is with meditation. There is no guarantee the fish will bite today. We must simply work and accept the results when they come.” Tsung Hwa Jou, *Tao of Meditation*

Contemplative States	Cycle of Emotional Transformation
1. <b>Simple Reflection:</b> We become consciously aware of all phenomena and begin reflecting on them.	1. <b>Recognition:</b> We recognize and acknowledge our current emotional state.
2. <b>Contemplative Self-Awareness:</b> We become consciously aware of the process of <i>simple reflection</i> as it occurs in us from moment-to-moment, observing and evaluating the qualities of this process.	2. <b>Examination:</b> Without judgment or overreaction, we examine and accept our emotions.
3. <b>Suspended Valuation:</b> We consciously suspend valuation altogether, and just observe our experiences, thoughts, feelings and physical sensations without placing them in the context of our values, beliefs or assumptions.	3. <b>Admission:</b> We admit to ourselves that change would be beneficial – that having a different emotional state would be more healthy and productive.
4. <b>Non-Thought Awareness:</b> We let go of both valuations and any thought process, entering into a state of mental, emotional and sensory quiet – even though we may still be consciously observing this state in ourselves, we do not reflect on it.	4. <b>Detachment:</b> We let go of the counterproductive feelings – that is, relax our emotional state until is greatly diminished, or dissipates completely. We may also choose to relinquish some of the underlying beliefs or assumptions that brought this state about.
5. <b>Non-Thought Non-Awareness:</b> We stop acknowledging even the supersensory, just as we did the sensory, and directly experience the bedrock of our own existence – the foundations of our sense of self and our relationship to the Universe.	5. <b>Equilibrium:</b> We achieve a state of neutral and objective calm where we can decide in which emotional direction we wish to go next.
6. <b>Non-Being Awareness:</b> We cease to discriminate	6. <b>Commitment:</b> We choose a specific new emotional direction and begin to actuate that state.
	7. <b>Action:</b> We facilitate and support the newly chosen state with reinforcing actions, thoughts, beliefs, experiences, etc.

<p>between the state of non-thought non-awareness and any independently constructed sense of self – we come to identify ourselves with this state and thus develop a subjective submersion in “non-being.”</p> <p>7. <b>Non-Being Non-Awareness:</b> Where self-awareness and other-awareness – and any acknowledgement of subject and object – completely evaporate.</p>	<p>8. <b>Evaluation:</b> We review the efficacy of our patterns of thought, emotion and behavior to see if they actually reinforce our chosen state.</p>
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The tacit implication of meditation, contemplation and prayer is that clear targets for emotional transformation will arise as a natural course of practice. However, it is helpful to capture some of the themes and characteristics that frequently occur across many different traditions regarding a “Healthy Emotional State” or an “Unhealthy Emotional State.” From a purely evolutionary perspective, the prosocial benefits are fairly obvious, so these can also be appreciated in terms of psychological, social and moral development.

Healthy Emotional State	Unhealthy Emotional State
Courage to defend the well-being of Self and others, with patience and forbearance	Indignant, self-righteous rage, which is easily provoked and unconcerned about the damage it inflicts
Compassionate desire to nourish others with wisdom and kindness, while at the same time sustaining our own well-being	Compulsive need to rescue others without considering our own well-being or what is truly best for those being “rescued”
Love that has no conditions or expectations attached to it, and that patiently accepts another’s shortcomings	A desire to control disguised as attention and devotion, but which impatiently demands specific reciprocation
Self-controlled ordering of effort according to what supports our values system	Impulsive submission to every urgent or self-indulgent whim without a thought for what is important
Patience for, and an attempt to understand, those who oppose or antagonize us	Fear, paranoia and hatred of things we do not understand
Gratitude and forgiveness	Resentment and divisiveness
Acceptance and flexibility with whatever comes our way	Resistance to change and panic when things seem out of control
Honesty and openness	Avoidance, denial and deception
Peaceful and supportive internal dialogues	Chaotic and demeaning internal dialogues
Admiration and encouragement	Jealousy and criticism
Contentment in any situation, rich or poor, because our focus is on the quality of our relationships, operationalizing values and deepening our wisdom	Greed and avarice: a compelling desire to possess material power and wealth
Guilt and shame, which resolves into humility and a renewed commitment to growth and maturity	Perpetual, unresolved guilt and shame, which injures self-esteem and cripples any ability to change
Vulnerable and joyful sharing of sexual intimacy in the context of socially responsible, mutually considered relationships	Wanton lust: an immersion in carnality without considering emotional, interpersonal or societal consequences
Mutual inspiration to greater achievement through fair-spirited competition and/or cooperation	Egotistical competitiveness, which craves victory at any cost
Confidence with humility	Self-aggrandizing arrogance
Taking pleasure in the success of others	Taking pleasure in the suffering of others
Hope and faith in positive outcomes	Despair and pessimism: presuming doom

## 6. Foundational Meditation Exercises

### *Gratitude Meditation*

1. Objective: Between 15 and 75 minutes of continuous meditation each day. If you can, insulate this with a buffer of five minutes before and after so it doesn't feel rushed, and so you have time to reflect on your experiences.
2. Find a quiet place to sit and relax where you won't be interrupted or distracted, and begin your meditation with an inner commitment to a broader goal than just personal edification, i.e. "May this be for the good of All."
3. Relax every part of your body. Start with your hands and feet – perhaps moving them or shaking them a little to release tension – then your arms and legs, then your torso, head and neck.
4. Breathe deeply and evenly into your stomach, preferably in through the nose and out through the mouth, so that your shoulders remain still but your stomach "inflates." Practice this until you are comfortable with it.
5. In the middle of your chest, just above and behind your sternum, gradually fill your heart with gratitude. It need not be directed at anything or anyone, but you could shape this as an offering to the Source of Life, or Nature, or Deity, or simply to the present moment.
6. Begin with a small point of feeling, and allow it to slowly spread with each breath until it fills your whole being. For some, it may be helpful to visualize this spreading gratitude as light emanating from a point in the center of the chest. Maintain this state for as long as you can.
7. As other images, sensations, feelings, or thoughts arise, let them go and return to your offering of gratitude.
8. If you become disquieted, uncomfortable, jittery, or severely disoriented, try to relax through it. If the sensations persist or become extreme, cease all meditation for the day.
9. Afterwards, give yourself emotional space and time to process what you have experienced. Just *be* with what has happened without judgment or a sense of conclusion.

### *"Just for Today" Daily Reflections*

Another approach to interior discipline is to reflect in a structured way on concepts that commonly fall within mystical experience, or that frequently surface in mystical writings. To this end, I have provided a list of daily reflections below. Because these

can accompany other activities, they may be a helpful starting point for some. Pick two or three at random that appeal to you, copy them down to take with you, and try the “Just for Today” reflective practice on for size. Throughout the day, speak them aloud or silently as questions, as affirmations, as declarations. Apply them thoughtfully to your interactions and your responses in each new situation. Try to feel each of them in your heart as a hope, as a desire, as a belief, and as an acceptance of what already is.

As one example of practice, you might enjoy reciting them each morning while going for a walk – a continuous walking reflection of perhaps thirty minutes. After speaking each phrase aloud or silently, listen to the silence afterwards, noticing the reactions of your heart, mind, body and spirit. When finished, open yourself to whatever is around you and revel in the present. In the evening, try repeating this process as a reconsideration of your day. Each reflection can be directed toward ourselves, toward others, toward all that we understand to exist, toward Deity we worship, or even toward the unknown. There are therefore many implications for each phrase. Repeating the reflections, each time with a unique audience or objective in mind (or none at all) can evoke new meaning and have surprising impact on our lives even after years of repetition.

1. Just for today, patience and acceptance in all things
2. Just for today, nothing has to be wrong
3. Just for today, acknowledgment without prejudice in every situation
4. Just for today, courage to be compassionate and kind to all
5. Just for today, embracing the realm of Nature as part of Self, with honor and respect for All
6. Just for today, remembering the well-being of others, nourishing them through being well
7. Just for today, transforming all things into the good of All
8. Just for today, faith which far exceeds all hopes, desires and fears
9. Just for today, insight and understanding into fruitful conduct
10. Just for today, listening from stillness, and seeing what is
11. Just for today, confidence without arrogance, and humility without passivity
12. Just for today, clarity and sincerity in purpose and intentions
13. Just for today, balance in caring for the house of Self and all the selves within
14. Just for today, tranquility in relinquishing ego, and flowing with the Source of Life, Liberty, Love and Light
15. Just for today, a generous spirit, free from attachment and expectation

16. Just for today, being in the now, without illusions
17. Just for today, honesty and integrity in all situations
18. Just for today, thoughts and words that edify, encourage and inspire
19. Just for today, with each breath, breathing in wholeness and vitality
20. Just for today, diligence and mindfulness in every moment
21. Just for today, persisting gratitude from the heart, and celebration in every action and interaction
22. Just for today, filled with Divine laughter, the heart sings
23. Just for today, ease and simplicity in every choice
24. Just for today, a living example with conviction and contentment
25. Just for today, creating something, destroying nothing
26. Just for today, great care with whims and wishes
27. Just for today, the soul is never compromised

### ***Mantra Meditation with Visualization***

1. Objective: Between 15 and 75 minutes of continuous meditation each day. If you can, insulate this with a buffer of five minutes before and after. It is best to practice this meditation only after several weeks practicing the Gratitude Meditation above.
2. Find a quiet place to sit and relax where you won't be disturbed or distracted, and begin your meditation with an inner commitment to the golden intention.
3. Relax every part of your body. Start with your hands and feet – perhaps moving them or shaking them a little to release tension – then your arms and legs, then your torso, head and neck.
4. Breathe deeply and evenly into your stomach, preferably through the nose, so that your shoulders remain still but your stomach “inflates.” Practice this until you are comfortable with it.
5. Begin the “four-fold” breath – that is: breathe in slowly, hold for the length of a breath, breathe out slowly, rest for the length of a breath. Practice this until you are comfortable with it.
6. On the inhale, say the first part of this mantra, “The Sacred Self,” with your internal voice. During the held breath, hold this thought and let it fill you.

7. On the exhale, say the second part of this mantra, “in All is One,” with your internal voice. During the rest period, relax into this thought; let it permeate your being with acceptance and certainty.
8. As images, sensations, feelings, or thoughts arise, let them go and return to the mantra.
9. As you become comfortable residing in this mantra, add a progression of visualizations. First, imagine someone you respect or admire sitting facing you and continue the mantra. After a time, change the visualization to someone with whom you have a loving, mutually respectful relationship. Lastly, change your focus to a person you do not like, who is antagonistic to you or your way of being, or with whom you have not found any common ground. Maintain your visualization of each person for as long as possible.
10. If you become disquieted, uncomfortable, jittery, or severely disoriented, try to relax through it. If uncomfortable sensations persist or become extreme, cease all meditation for the day.
11. Give yourself space after your meditation to process what you have experienced. Just *be* with what has happened without judgment or a sense of conclusion.



## 7. Fred's Thought Experiment & Our Relationship with Meaning

### *Fred and the Bubble of Nothingness*

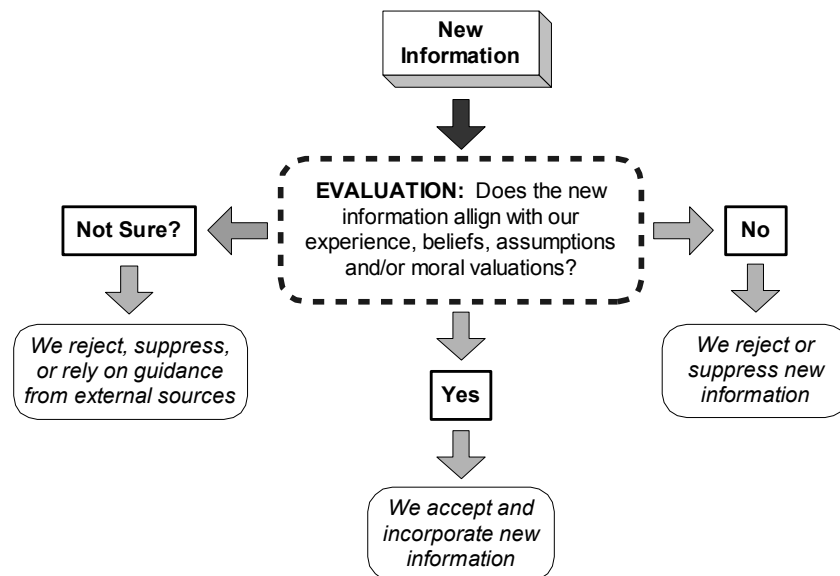
Imagine a bubble of nothingness. Absolute nothingness. Not even a thought can penetrate this bubble. Not even an all-powerful Deity, for the non-space and non-time inside this bubble don't even exist and have never existed. It is, in fact, a nonexistence that preceded even our conception of it, in the moment before these sentences were written or read. Inside this bubble of nothingness lives a fellow named Fred. For my own entertainment, I like to imagine him wearing a burgundy sweater and gold wire glasses, sitting at an immense roll-top desk of some richly grained hardwood. Fred is humming to himself and thinking about the essence of his reality as it flows in all directions around him; he does not perceive himself to be in a finite bubble at all. What to us is a non-concept of nonexistence is, in fact, Fred's ever-expanding universe – albeit of “nothingness.” Taking a sip of hot chocolate, Fred imagines a realm that utterly contradicts his own: a realm of existence, complete with galaxies, spiritual forces and sapient beings. He even imagines you reading about him right now. But from Fred's perspective, his own universe occupies everything that has meaning and reality for him, and all that exists for you and me is trapped within Fred's bubble of rich – but objectively finite – imagination. Just as we view Fred as a negation of *all that is* for us, Fred views us as a negation of *all that is not* for him.

Then Fred moves on to other thoughts, and you yourself finish reading this description of Fred. Soon, both of you have pretty much forgotten about each other, but a question remains: what is the meaning of Fred to you? And what is the nature of everything in our Universe – everything that we can ever imagine or experience, even an all-encompassing, all-powerful Deity – to Fred? Clearly, with a shrug and another sip of hot chocolate, Fred can dismiss everything that we are, and all that we dream we are, as completely insignificant, just as we can easily dispense with everything that Fred imagines he is – Fred doesn't exist, after all! This shows us how the contrast between our conception of reality and our direct experience of reality necessitates meaning, and how all meaning is therefore interdependent – that is, created by the context of one thing relating to another. This is not only true for the extreme dichotomy of existence and non-existence, but also for every subtle gradient of differentiation we perceive both in the external Universe, and in ourselves. Externally we differentiate a beautiful flower from a bothersome weed, a refreshing rain from an overwhelming deluge, a pleasant fragrance from a cloying stench, or an exciting adventure from a terrifying crisis. Internally we compare and contrast the inspiring flame of passion and the destructive heat of anger, overconfident knowledge and humble wisdom, a humorous observation and a demeaning jibe, a brilliant insight and deluded insanity. And with each choice to separate and evaluate what we encounter, we perpetually construct and support all of our most fundamental beliefs.

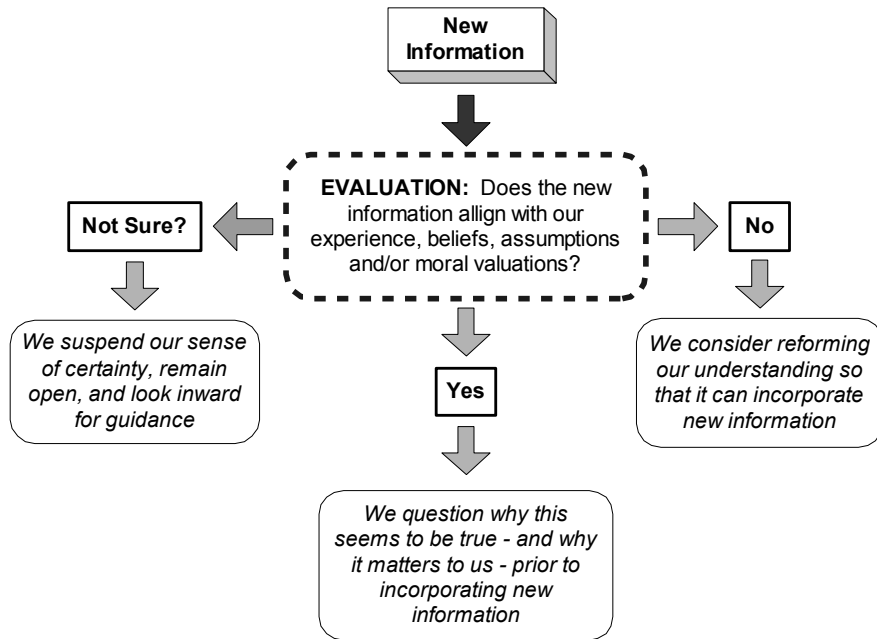
### *Passive vs. Active Assignment of Meaning*

What if we let go of our assumptions? What if we pretend, for the sake of stepping into a different perspective, that despite all we have learned we have *no idea* what anything in our life means? To be free of any presumption of meaning would allow us to accept whatever we encounter without prejudice, wouldn't it? That is, we would be able to experience events without confining ourselves to a predetermined valuation of those experiences. And as we greet each experience with unconditional acceptance, a new confidence emerges: that we can *decide* the value of something, instead of accepting what our habitual thinking tells us. Such a state of conscious neutrality – leading first to unconditional acceptance, and then to an intentionally interdependent construction of meaning – empowers us to exit the prison of our own arrogance, and open ourselves to whatever truths are present *in this moment*. This is the key to the door of an ever-expanding *multidimensional* perception, because we can then explore information outside of our habitual thinking and culturally programmed definitions using every dimension of our being.

### *Passive Assignment of Meaning*



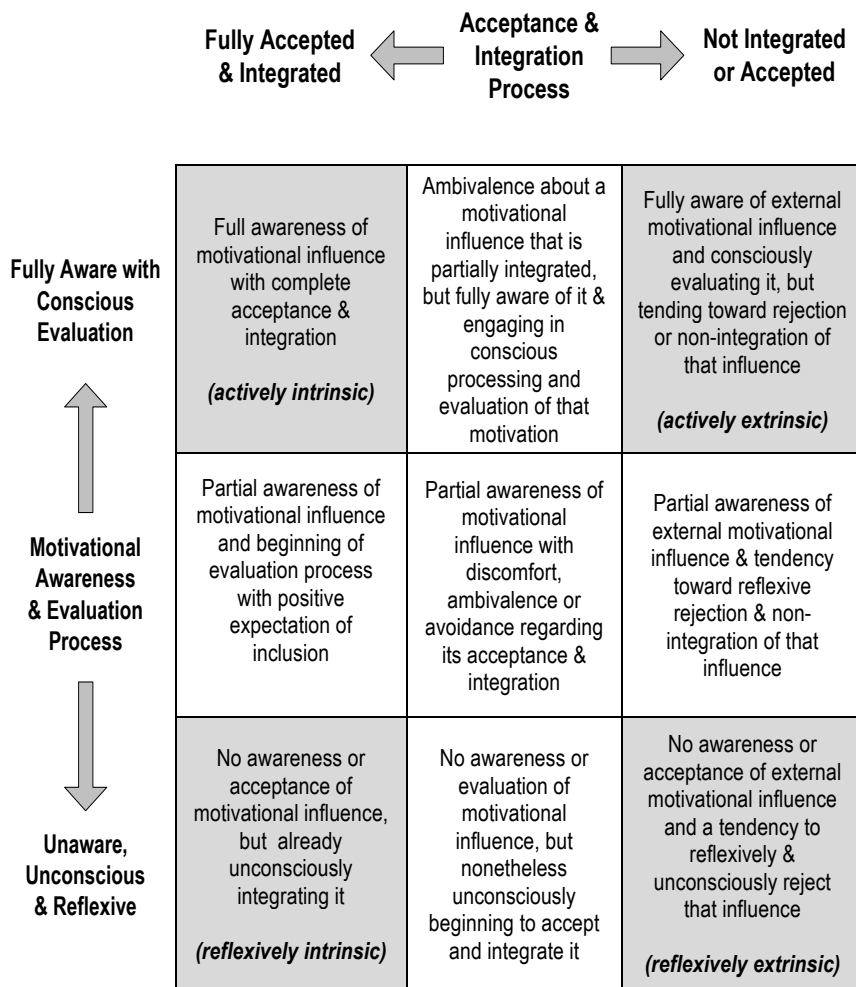
*Active Assignment of Meaning*



## 8. Primary Drives, Fulfillment Impulses, Motivation & Functional Intelligence

### *Motivational Awareness & Integration Process*

Cognitive psychology has frequently ascribed two categories to motivation to help explain it: that which influences us to react because it is imposed on us from outside ourselves (extrinsic motivation), and that which we generate internally to compel ourselves into action (intrinsic motivation). What is really being described here is, I think, a graduated shift from motivational influences we have not yet accepted or integrated and which, consequently, we respond to in more reactive or reflexive ways, and those motivational influences we have fully accepted and integrated into our conscious way of thinking. The chart below captures the array of motivational responses that can occur when the evaluation and integration axes interact.



When we look at this chart, we can generate a working definition of what the extremes of the intrinsic/extrinsic spectrum really are. Either we are being driven by reflexive impulses or by conscious decisions; either our actions are governed by external influences or by internalized values. The ideal state, of course, is to be consciously aware of our motivational process, and at the same time be able to integrate what we value into our current mode of being. Am I able to find contentment and serenity within myself regardless of my circumstances from moment to moment, or am I constantly reacting to my environment in a reflexive and unconscious way? Am I able to feel compassion and affection spontaneously and without preconditions, or do I rely on others to demonstrate their feelings or fulfill certain requirements before I can express love? Have I created an interior purpose to energize me and draw me forward through my day, or do I respond to an environment's demands on me without thinking about it? Are the reasons I do things from moment to moment consciously justified and intrinsically valued, or unconsciously accepted after they have been externally imposed? I think this may be a useful model of what "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" motivations really represent.

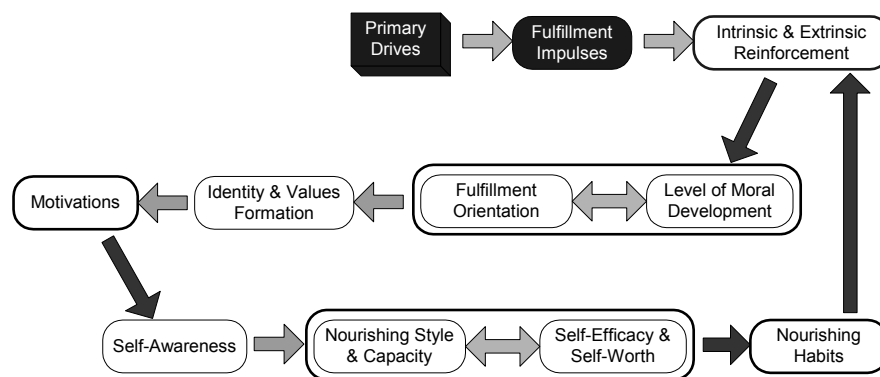
Whatever our motivational pattern is, it is not set in stone. We always have a choice to shift from reflexive and external dependencies to conscious and internal self-sufficiency. In fact, that is something we tend to do naturally over time anyway. We begin life totally dependent on the guidance of our parents and the boundaries set by our environment, but slowly we integrate that guidance and those boundaries into our self-governance. And at some point we will probably even question those integrated guidelines, synthesizing new ones from our own questioning and some new experiences. So we always have a choice. What influences us most to rely on our internal compass instead of external pressure? I think it is habit. There is tremendous comfort and security in familiar, unconscious habits, and breaking free from them can be a scary undertaking. But if we decide to consciously process how we are reacting to various situations, we can begin to challenge those habits and break free from unhealthy patterns. So the compelling question is not what motivates us, but how aware we are of what motivates us.

But why does it matter? Because without appropriate, compelling, immediate, internally generated motivation, our efforts can have oppressive and even crippling effects over time. When we push ourselves forward on autopilot, relying on decisions we made years previously or on external structures that guide our responses, our emotional life will become flat and disinterested and our efforts strained. When our responses are dependent solely on such habits or the pressures of our external environment rather than internal inspiration, we may even unconsciously create crises and conflict around us to keep ourselves reactively engaged. If we cannot frequently and actively evaluate our motivations, we will accumulate a number of negative and antagonistic results: We may sabotage our success in areas that are important to us; we may alienate loved ones; we may become depressed or physically ill. All because we

resist tuning in to what we value most – what is meant to keep us focused and inspired in the current moment.

So that is our choice: to remain diligent, conscious and self-aware about our motivational landscape, or to default to unconscious impulses or automatic programming. Intrinsically generated and conscious, or extrinsically reactive and unconscious. As we differentiate between these extremes, we must ask ourselves how to best cultivate motivational awareness. How will we discern what our interior world looks like from moment to moment? How can we actively navigate it to find the motivations we require? How can we shift out of habitual reactions to more conscious modes of being? The next section begins to answer these questions. For a start, let's take a look at the first two elements of the Integral Lifework motivational diagram and see what can be uncovered.

### *Primary Drives & Fulfillment Impulses*



To begin, it is helpful to distinguish motivations from primary drives. A primary drive is a fundamental imperative that nearly everyone shares, facilitating survival of the species. A motivation results from a series of complex events and interactions (note that the “Motivations” element is pretty far along in the diagram), but ultimately serves one or more of these primary drives. It’s like having different approaches to achieve the same outcome, and as we have already seen, each approach will be uniquely suited to each situation, and each person has a unique way of creating and expressing their own approach. But let’s dig into this a little. First, here are the four basic survival drives as they are defined in Integral Lifework:

- To Exist
- To Experience
- To Adapt
- To Affect

These fundamental drives govern everything we do and relate to every aspect of our existence. The focus of each drive – the processing space within which it operates – shifts constantly, but the drive is ever-present. For example, in one moment I am concerned only with myself in the now: how I exist in this instant; how I experience this instant; how I adapt to this experience; and how I have an effect on my own experience. In the next moment I am concerned with someone or something else, perhaps in a more expanded time-space: how some event in history is perpetuated in memory (*existence*); how others may share my *experience* of joy; how my elderly neighbors will *adapt* to the impending road construction in our neighborhood; how a child will *affect* the life of their canine companion. The concept of widening circles of interaction will also become important in understanding our own evolution of being. But regardless of where we are along the arc of an ever-expanding self-concept, we cannot escape our primary drives.

We do, however, have a great deal of choice in how those drives are satisfied. Layered on top of primary drives are sixteen different fulfillment impulses. These fulfillment impulses contribute to how our motivations are defined and reinforced, and are instrumental in corralling all our efforts to serve primary drives. They also help us understand what constitutes full-spectrum nourishment, because every type of nourishment ultimately satisfies one or more fulfillment impulse. So primary drives generate fulfillment impulses, which in turn lead to motivations that are satisfied by essential nourishment. Simple, right? It will become clearer in a moment, but here is why this process of motivation-synthesis is relevant: once we understand how motivations are formed and how they contributed to our day-to-day well-being, we can begin to consciously shape that process. And once we shape that process, we can resist the pitfalls of externalized or habit-based motivation. We can then be set free from attachment to past patterns of survival and reliance on external structures to nurture ourselves. We can live fully in this moment for a clear and empowering purpose we choose in accordance with the values we consciously cherish. And we can offer true love a prominent role in this process. In other words, we can ultimately become more effective in fulfilling both our primary drives and our guiding intentionality. In Integral Lifework, this is what it means to thrive.

Okay, so let's take a look at the diverse menu of "fulfillment impulses" available to us. In the following chart, each impulse is defined by its most common expression in our volition and behavior (active expression), and by the emotional responses we frequently associate with it (felt sense).

<b>FULFILLMENT IMPULSE</b>	<b>ACTIVE EXPRESSION</b>	<b>FELT SENSE</b>
<b>Discovery</b>	Observe/Explore/Expand/Experiment	Sense of adventure, risk, opportunity
<b>Understanding</b>	Contextualize/Evaluate/Identify/Interpret	Sense of purpose, meaning, context, structure
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Impact/Shape/Actuate/Realize	Sense of activity, success, achievement, accomplishment
<b>Perpetuation</b>	Stabilize/Maintain/Secure/Contain	Sense of safety, family, security, "home"
<b>Reproduction</b>	Sexualize/Gratify/Stimulate/Attract	Sense of attraction, arousal, satisfaction, release, pleasure
<b>Maturation</b>	Nurture/Support/Grow/Thrive	Sense of caring, supporting, growing, maturing
<b>Fulfillment</b>	Complete/Transform/Transcend/Become	Sense of wonder, awe, fulfillment, transcendence, self-transformation
<b>Sustenance</b>	Taste/Consume/Quench/Savor	Sense of fullness, enjoyment, contentment, satiation
<b>Avoidance</b>	Escape/Evade/Deny/Reject	Sense of fearfulness, self-protectiveness, wariness, stubbornness
<b>Union</b>	Accept/Embrace/Incorporate/Combine	Sense of "being," union, interdependence, continuity
<b>Autonomy</b>	Differentiate/Individuate/Rebel/Isolate	Sense of distinct self, uniqueness, freedom, personal potential
<b>Belonging</b>	Cooperate/Conform/Commit/Submit	Sense of belonging, trust, community, acceptance
<b>Affirmation</b>	Appreciate/Enjoy/Celebrate/Create	Sense of "I am," play, gratitude, aesthetics, inspiration
<b>Mastery</b>	Empower/Compete/Dominate/Destroy	Sense of strength, power, control, skill, competence
<b>Imagination</b>	Hypothesize/Consider/Extrapolate/Project	Sense of limitlessness, possibility, inventiveness, "aha"
<b>Exchange</b>	Communicate/Engage/Share/Interact	Sense of connection, intimacy, sharing, expression

**Journal Exercise: What Fulfills You?** Using the *active expression* and *felt sense* columns in the chart as a guide, take a moment to reflect on the fulfillment impulses that infuse your daily life. What impulses do you think energize many of your actions and reactions from moment to moment? Which ones seldom seem to prompt you at all? Why do think either pattern exists in your life? Are there events in your past that have influenced which impulses you've relied up on over time? Can you see how these impulses have either the potential to support primary drives and skillful love-consciousness, or to disrupt them in some way?

### *Functional Intelligence*

In the context of Integral Lifework, *functional intelligence* represents our effectiveness in perceiving, developing and operationalizing personal values. This demands a high level of self-awareness, and answers to some detailed questions. For example, are we aware of our operative values hierarchy, especially in contrast to an idealized one? Do the outcomes of our efforts actually align with our values? Do we routinely and accurately



predict those outcomes? Over time, have we been able to improve our skillfulness in actualizing our primary values? Do we recognize when we stray from a desired course? Over time, have we been able to integrate new, idealized values with our more intuitive and reflexive values? In this way, does our values hierarchy reflect an ongoing maturation process? In the most concrete and measurable terms, what is the relationship between our internal values, what we think, how we feel, and what we do? By answering these questions and elevating our attention to these patterns, we begin to outline the many facets of functional intelligence.

Central to our understanding of functional intelligence the role of *intuitive values*; that is, values that we are already operationalizing whether we are conscious of them or not. As one obvious example, many of the values expressed in Integral Lifework theory have become part of how I navigate functional intelligence in my own life. In one sense, it is impossible to separate most definitions of intelligence from our values system because all such definitions operate within specific values structures. In our definition of functional intelligence, we are simply recognizing that intuitive values are nearly always the mechanism of prioritization for our actions, thoughts, attitudes and intentions. And, to reiterate, these values are not conscious ideals, carefully structured beliefs, or socially imposed mores. Ideals, beliefs and mores may help shape or influence intuitive values over time, but, in what once again is a mainly pragmatic concern, intuitive values are what actually govern our priorities in-the-moment, in what are most often unconscious or reflexive ways.

Recalling the *fundamental drives* and *fulfillment impulses* mentioned in the previous section, if these are operating in every person to varying degrees, then one way to define self-nourishment is the satisfaction of these drives and impulses via every internal and external relationship of our existence. What our intuitive valuations may really represent, then, is the way in which each fundamental drive and fulfillment impulse manifests in all of these relationships. In relationships between ourselves and other people, between our conceptions and our perceptions, between our invented divisions of self (heart and mind, mind and body, etc.), between ourselves and any system in which we operate...and between our contribution to those systems and everything else with which those systems interact. I would propose that our values system – as defined by the qualities of *clarity*, *emphasis*, *hierarchy* and *consistency* across all of our intuitive values – is therefore an expression of which drives and impulses most observably influence on all of these relationships.

- **Clarity.** Our values are most clear when they regularly express and reinforce themselves, and when we can then observe and interpret that expression. Introspection can aid us in discerning what our values may be, but the most effective means of understanding what we value – and the actual hierarchy of those values – is to simply pay attention to our behavior over time and correlate that with values structures. Thus, although intuitive values operate mainly in

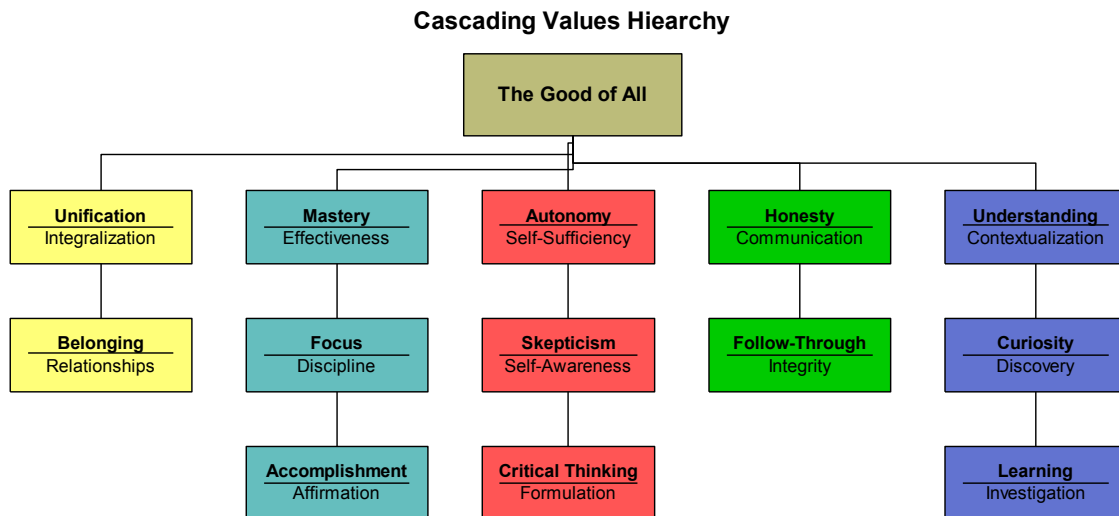
unconscious ways, we can become more conscious of them through observation and introspection...and this creates clarity.

- **Emphasis.** What is most important to me? What has the most emphasis and influence in my life? Is it the emotional quality of my relationships with other people? My level of power of influence in a group? How quickly or ingeniously I can solve complex problems? The safety and happiness of my family? The amount of money I have in the bank? The perceptions of my peers about what I think or how I act? The size of my vocabulary? My sexual gratification? How creatively I can cook a meal? In other words, what consistently ranks highest in priority, as evidenced by my thoughts and behaviors?
- **Hierarchy.** What is the cascading, hierarchal structure of my values? Are their overarching values (meta-values) that influence that prioritization and organization? Are there values that are primary and intrinsic to how I view reality, which then inspire other, more instrumental values? For example, if I have a primary value of protecting my family, I might have a secondary, instrumental value of building strong fences, or installing high-end security systems. Then again, my primary values might be a pride in building things, or learning about electronics, which then subordinate the protection of my family to an instrumental value (that is, the secondary, family-protection value facilitates my primary, building-things and learning-electronics values). All of these, in turn, may be guided by the meta-value that any value that preserves the life, thriving and reproduction within my local gene pool should be prioritized as primary.
- **Consistency.** This relates to how I contextualize my values. Do my values somehow contradict and compete with each other, or do they consistently align with each other? Are they internally consistent? Also, are my values and their hierarchy consistent from one moment to the next, or do they change when I am with different people or in different environments? How steadfast and resolute am I in demonstrating the same hierarchy in diverse situations? Do I demonstrate one set of values at work, and another at home? One set with my close friends, and another with strangers? One set with men, and another with women? How does this impact the alignment of my values with my meta-values? Is there potential for cognitive dissonance or self-defeating patterns, or is there overall integrity?

So values originate from every dimension of self, and attempt to fulfill every dimension of nourishment. What differentiates the intuitive values stream from the functional intelligence stream is that intuitive values are mainly embedded knowledge – innate, conditioned or fully integrated conclusions about what we perceive, learn and experience – whereas functional intelligence involves the active, self-aware arm of our

cognitive processing. Intuitive values are the passive lens through which we automatically assess and navigate each moment, and functional intelligence is a our demonstrated capacity to operationalize those values, and adjust those operations according to perceptions and feedback. Certainly all values seem to change as a result of our experiences and reactions, but the change occurs at such a fundamental level that we are seldom aware of it. What I will suggest here is that these intuitive values interact with pragmatic, functional intelligence on many levels – each interaction shaping and maintaining every other – and that we can and should become more conscious of these interactions. But functional intelligence and intuitive values are really inseparable – they are two sides of the same coin, and cannot exist independently of one other.

To conclude, the following is a targeted example of values operationalization, and how functional intelligence can be applied in the real world. It begins with a clarified values hierarchy, and then uses that hierarchy to inform a community decision-making process.



**Operationalization & Assessment**

A friend asked me if I needed some help leading a community discussion about how to oversee business expansion in our neighborhood. I thanked her but said no, I would like to lead the discussion myself, and that I would appreciate any resources she could provide. So she sent me some information on how to seed a group with ideas and build consensus before the meeting occurred, so that it would appear as if consensus was happening organically, when really it was a result of prior persuasion. But, after meditating on the subject and discussing it with some trusted friends, I decided not to take this approach. Instead, I researched some more until I found material on facilitating group discussions that encouraged brainstorming among different perspectives, then provided ways of "bubbling up" those different ideas into shared primary objectives. I then led the discussion using these tools, and was able to cultivate consensus in the group regarding the question at hand. As a result, the community was able to consolidate behind a specific list of standards that businesses would be required to adopt when setting up shop in our neighborhood. It would be several years until we were able to assess whether the standards would have the desired results, but in the interim the community felt empowered to engage in the governance process, and optimistic about their prospective impact. What was clear for now was that I did seem to operationalize my own values hierarchy in this process .

*Motivating Change: From Downward Spiral to Upward Spiral*

How can we discover motivations that help us migrate away from unhealthy habits into healthy ones? And how can we sustain a healthy and self-supportive motivation over time? These are central questions in transformative practice and deserve careful reflection and exploration. Why? Because there two of the most powerful forces within us are working at odds: a desire to grow and thrive that actively seeks change (corresponding mainly to the *experience* and *adapt* primary drives), and a desire for safety and stability that is ambivalent about or resistant to change (corresponding mainly to the *exist* and *affect* primary drives). If either of these forces ever dominated us completely, our quality of life would quickly degrade. For we can neither remain in stasis, nor constantly cast aside established patterns in favor of new ones. One condition would lead to stagnation and depletion, and the other to chaos and overstimulation; once again, we must find the middle ground, the *optimal range of effective effort*. The following chart provides some insight into which “optimal range” could most benefit us in a given situation, or with respect to a specific extrinsic or intrinsic motivation, with the underlying assumption that cultivating love-consciousness is a worthwhile and rewarding endeavor.

<b>Foundational Factors for Effective Love-Consciousness</b>			
<b>MATURITY FACTOR</b>	<b>DEPLETION ←</b>	<b>OPTIMAL RANGE</b>	<b>→ EXCESS</b>
<b>Values Alignment</b>	Inauthentic – either unaware of an apparent disconnect between one’s values and beliefs and one’s thoughts and actions, or a lack of commitment to aligning them (laziness)	Authentic – tolerance of paradox and ambiguity with relaxed acceptance, while committed to aligning thoughts and actions with values and beliefs as closely as possible	Exaggerated – excessive effort to rationalize thoughts and actions that contradict values and beliefs (i.e. cognitive dissonance)
<b>Integrity</b>	Inability to harmonize intentions, thoughts, words and deeds and/or high tolerance of failure, with little interest in or commitment to self-betterment	Thoughtful harmonization of intentions, thoughts, words and deeds with low tolerance of failure and realistic commitment to self-betterment (example: what I intend I think about, talk about and do).	Obsessive effort to harmonize intentions, thoughts, words and deeds at any cost, with extreme intolerance for failure and unrealistic ideal of integrity

<b>Morality</b>	Amoral – rejecting moral framework for intentions and actions and/or a disregard for the same	Moral – conscious effort to evolve moral standards of intention and action within a framework constantly reassessed according to its effectiveness (i.e. outcomes reflecting values)	Legalistic – rigid adherence to moral code without evaluating outcomes and efficacy of our approach
<b>Fulfillment Orientation</b>	Protective – unable or unwilling to engage in nourishing exchanges with others in one or more areas, forcefully rejecting any perceived dependence	Self-reliant – fully individuated from family of origin, peers, tribe and society and able to support and maintain own well-being through comfortably interdependent, mutual exchanges	Dependent– a strong identification with and reliance on environment, parents, peers tribe or society for all nourishment and sense of well-being (i.e. lack of individuation)
<b>Identity</b>	Unformed or insecure identity – unable to maintain clear and solid sense of self around other strong influences	Interdependent and inclusive - strong sense of self, expanding to include wider arenas of affection, spiritual unfolding, growth and interdependent connection	Over-identification with self-limiting descriptors – i.e. tribe, survival personas, ego, etc.
<b>Spiritual Grounding</b>	Disconnected from spiritual experience, with little or no access to spiritual realm and own spiritual essence (often with an overemphasis on material experience)	Open and persistent connection with the spiritual realm (ground of being, essence, Divine, etc.) with an unrestrained expression of spiritual essence and nature, balanced with material existence	So immersed in spiritual experience that effective interface with material plane is disrupted or disabled
<b>Arenas of Affection</b>	Affection response has not fully developed or is not active in several arenas – not even towards self	Balanced effort to expand love-consciousness into as many arenas as possible, while still sustaining affection and compassion for self	Overextension or fixation of affection in one or more arenas to the depletion of all others and especially self
<b>Strengthening Factors for Effective Love-Consciousness</b>			
<b>MATURITY FACTOR</b>	<b>DEPLETION ←</b>	<b>OPTIMAL RANGE</b>	<b>→ EXCESS</b>
<b>Self-Concept</b>	Low self-worth and lack of belief in own skillfulness or abilities	Healthy, balanced sense of self-efficacy and self-worth, both as a general self-concept and with respect to each dimension of nourishment	Exaggerated self-confidence and self-worth, and exaggerated belief in own skillfulness or abilities
<b>Self-Awareness</b>	Unskilled, unaware or in denial about one or more aspects of self, which debilitates overall effectiveness	Realistic and regular self-awareness about strengths and limitations, patterns of thought and behavior, identity, values, beliefs, etc. that facilitates increased effectiveness	Absorbed in or obsessed with self-awareness to the exclusion of all other input, resulting in decreased effectiveness

<b>Intentionality</b>	Reactive or unformed – absence of clear intentions or love-consciousness	Golden intention – clear and ever evolving love-consciousness directed toward the good of All, inclusive of self	Fixation on self and ego satisfaction – substitution of ego gratification for love
<b>Mental Clarity</b>	Suppressed – casual thoughts and creative thought process are routinely disregarded, denied or judgmentally devalued	Neutral awareness – casual thoughts and imagination process are allowed to flow freely without immediate valuation or need for action	Obsessive – thoughts or imagination process dominate all other functions, requiring immediate attention and/or action
<b>Nourishment Discipline</b>	Self-Depleting – inability to consistently self-nourish in one or more dimensions	Balanced – able to consistently self-nourish with a diligent but relaxed effort to progress from baseline disciplines to transformative disciplines	Overindulgent – obsessive or excessive effort to self-nourish, often resulting in addictive substitutions
<b>Mindful Openness</b>	Passive & closed – evaluation of meaning or importance of all information through externally defined criteria and inflexible belief system, with less willingness to suspend a sense of certainty	Active & open – evaluation of meaning or importance of new information through flexible and ongoing reevaluation of beliefs and assumptions, with a relaxed willingness to suspend a sense of certainty	Overactive & uncritical – excessive emphasis and dependence on the invented significance of all new information with an inability to critically evaluate
<b>Discernment</b>	Unconscious navigation of each situation based on arbitrary emphasis on either external input streams (such as advice, observed behaviors, mass media, etc.) or impulsive emotional reasoning	Consciously balanced, vigilant but relaxed assessment of input streams from all sources – internal and external, experiential and intuitive, rational and emotional, spiritual promptings and empirical observations	Fixation on one form of hyper-vigilant navigation, such as strong emotions, synchronistic events, black-and-white reasoning, or an overly stringent system of ethics

**Common Barriers to Effective Love-Consciousness**

<b>MATURITY FACTOR</b>	<b>DEPLETION ←</b>	<b>OPTIMAL RANGE</b>	<b>→ EXCESS</b>
<b>Relationship Style</b>	Disengaged – either as indulgent pattern or neglectful/absent pattern (also can be defined as “other-depleting”)	Interdependent - authoritative and egalitarian with distinct sense of “self” and “other,” but with a fundamental acceptance of mutual, intrinsic sovereignty and value	Excessive engagement or enmeshment - overexertion of control, an authoritarian style, or overly attached (loss of self) resulting in “one-up” or “one-down” dynamics
<b>Attachment Style</b>	Destructively detached –sacrifice and denial to extreme deprivation, depletion and harm (to self and/or other) without a sense of interdependence	Compassionately detached – effortless letting go without a sense of sacrifice or denial that naturally leads to deeper connection and nourishment with a strong sense of interdependence	Compulsively attached – inability to let go to the point of dependence, over reliance and addiction, rejecting interdependence and freedom to self-nourish

<b>Permeability (sensitivity &amp; openness)</b>	Impermeable, unaware, numb, unaffected by events within and without; callous and insensitive; thick-skinned to the point of either obtuseness or disinterest	Aware and able to accommodate inward and outward flows of emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual energy without disruption or stress, as well as consciously filter or boundarize those flows when required	Excessively permeable - unable to manage adversity, stress and upheaval; less able to filter the flows of energy from any source or maintain healthy boundaries
<b>Processing Flexibility</b>	Inflexible and stuck – unable to move from once processing space to another	Flexible and fluid – able to move confidently and consciously between different processing spaces with ease	Sporadic – flitting from one processing space to the next without control or conscious awareness
<b>Barrier Management, Monitoring &amp; Resolution</b>	Unaware – unable to recognize own barriers to well-being or repeating patterns of failure and a tendency to deny that barriers exist	Acknowledgement & compensation – able to recognize, monitor, manage and in some cases resolve own barriers to well-being without substituting for or flooding any one dimension	Overcompensation – able to recognize barriers, but a tendency to either compulsively substitute unhealthy behaviors for an impeded dimension of nourishment, or to reactively diminish the importance of that dimension
<b>Disposition of Will</b>	Annihilation – repression of own sovereignty and choice, expressed as a reactive, submissive or paralyzed disposition and passive inactivity	Willingness – neutrality of will preceding all thought and action while maintaining confidence in own sovereignty and freedom of choice	Willfulness – forceful imposition of will that disrupts sovereignty and choice, often manifesting as obsessive or controlling behaviors
<b>Grief Resolution</b>	Arrested - unaware or in denial about loss and resulting grief and pain	Acknowledgement and acceptance of loss and able to allow grieving process to take its course without suppressing or overemphasizing its importance	Fixated on loss and emotional pain to the point where these are perpetuated and amplified

## 9. Moral Development & Widening Arenas of Action & Intention

As we strengthen each dimension of self through Integral Lifework, we can feel safe, confident and grounded enough to be vulnerable and intimate with others within that dimension. And as we moderate our barriers across all dimensions, we can confidently express our authentic being from moment to moment in more of our relationships and interactions. This, in turn, amplifies all of the energies in play. At some point we will integrate progressive nourishment in enough of our dimensions ignite entirely new modes of perception-cognition, and new ways of being. As a result, often without realizing it, we progress from a narrowly confined identity to an ever more expansive and inclusive identity. This may happen in fits and starts, with both soaring skillfulness and grim defeats, but eventually it results in identity and moral valuation evolutions outlined in the chart below. First we will catch glimpses of each new stratum as we mature, sometimes resisting our progression, and again sometimes leaping forward or slipping backward. But somehow we keep growing until we can comfortably inhabit each new stratum in a stable and reliable way, supporting it with multidimensional nourishment. It is important to acknowledge that this maturation process is not all-inclusive, inevitable or irreversible – healing, growth and transformation occur at different rates in our different dimensions and processing spaces. But ultimately, if we can continue to relinquish our previous conceptions of self, our insights and execution will become more skillfully compassionate.

How does this broadening sense of self impact arenas of affection and action? Paralleling these transformations of identity are the ever-expanding realms of manifestation in which we consciously focus our efforts. The flow of compassion we initiate in ourselves for ourselves never ceases or fragments, but our perception of that self – the felt sense of our boundaries of being – enlarges to include more and more interdependent phenomena. As we become more than our ego, we love more than our ego. And since love-consciousness is both prerequisite and companion to this evolution, love-consciousness grows continually in harmony and resonance with All that Is (according to our current understanding of what that means) until there is nothing left to encompass. In peak moments of fluid and effortless being, we become everything, love becomes everything, and everything becomes love. Consequently, more and more of our actions and intentions will operate within the broader and more inclusive arenas of our maturing identity, until what was previously understood as a summit is now appreciated as a helpful resting place.

The chart below describes the relationship between our “Self-Identification” and our “Strata of Moral Valuation” in this regard, with the lowest proposed levels of development at the bottom of the chart, and the highest proposed levels at the top of the chart. An explicit outcome and critical aim of Integral Lifework is to stimulate and support this moral maturation process.



<b>Self-Identification</b>	<b>Strata of Moral Valuation</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Unitive Infinite</b></p> <p>Self Equates both Being and Non-Being (or Non-Identification, “No Self”) and Compassionate Integration of All That Is, Including Previous Self-Identifications</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Applied Nonduality</b></p> <p>This is an expression of mystical, nondual consciousness as a supremely unfettered existence where intuitions of universal freedom are fully realized. There is a certain irony that the autonomy one’s ego so craved in earlier strata is now readily available through the absence of ego. The lack of a distinct sense of self in some ways eradicates any sort of identification at all -so non-being is equivalent to being, and self is equivalent to both nothingness and previous conceptions of "the All." Here inexhaustible loving kindness is conclusively harmonized through advanced forms of discernment. An enduring all-inclusive love-consciousness integrates all previous moral orientations, current intentions and actions into a carefree -but nevertheless carefully balanced -flow; a flow into what might be described as "ultimate purpose." Previous orientations are then viewed not as right or wrong, but as a spectrum of imperfect expressions of that ultimate purpose. In this final letting go of self-identification, all nourishment is love, all love is nourishment, and all values hierarchies are subordinated to skillfully compassionate affection. At the same time, this realization and any other constructs become just that: constructs, inventions of the mind. Up until now, the main concern of moral valuation has been the orientation of self-to-self, self-to-other, self-to-community, self-to-environment, self-to-planet, self-to-humanity, self-to-nothingness, self-to-All, etc. In other words, previous values hierarchies tended to be preoccupied with the context of the self. In this stratum, that context is no longer relevant, because there is no self, no no-self, and not even a concept of self or no-self. Along the same lines, the past/present/future construction of time dissolves into insignificance.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Formless Infinite</b></p> <p>Self Equates Non-Being, Non-Identification, “No Self”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Unknowing Emptiness</b></p> <p>This mode of being has been the backdrop for all previous strata, and has woven itself into those strata at various points in the form of “letting go” of previous constructs and patterns of being – we just haven’t fully comprehended the scope of that letting go until now. This is the stratum first of radical deconstruction, then chaotic revolution, a tearing asunder of the veil of certainty, challenging of self-concept and of the nature of all relationships and interdependencies, and fluid revision of the context and content of all moral strata and systems. Once again, the theme of acquiescence has always been part of previous transitions and evolutions, but here we fully inhabit that space and allow it to permeate our consciousness and interactions. This is the gap where faith and doubt collide, where rational and nonrational reconcile, where manifest and unmanifest infuse each other; this is the crucible where <i>agape</i> and emptiness forge a new alloy. As expressed in actions and intentions, this stratum frequently feels like either fragmenting disruption on the one hand, or perceived paralysis on the other: either a grenade of Light that exposes underlying stucturelessness, or the quiescent twilight of action-without-action. Ultimately, however, this is where multidialectical tensions can resolve in neutral stillness, where negation becomes the midwife of creation, and where detachment creates a fertile ground for more skillful love-consciousness. In terms of time-space, “now” still predominates, but its context dilates to encompass every point in the continuum previously considered past, present or future; the now becomes <i>potential</i> even as it ceases “becoming” anything at all.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Shared Spirit</b></p> <p>Identification With All That Is as Defined by Shared Spiritual Understanding</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Spiritual Universality</b></p> <p>Through persistent and intimate connection with an absolute, universal inclusiveness of being, moral function is defined by whatever most skillfully facilitates “the good of All” (that is, the greatest good, for the greatest number, for the greatest duration). "The good of All," in turn, is an evolving intuition, a successive unfolding of mystical awareness in concert with dialectical cognition and neutrality of personal will. However, it tends to remain more of a felt sense than an exclusively rational construct. Skillfulness can still be refined through empirical experimentation and observation, but it is always subjected to a filter of intensified and unconditional compassion -a felt sense as well. Identification</p>

	<p>with the All is fluid and seamless, and moral thought and action flowing from this identification are also fluid and seamless. That is not to say that this stratum can't occasionally be interrupted by regressions to previous strata within one or more dimensions of being (usually as a reaction to overwhelming or stressful situations), but the contrast and incongruity of those regressions is strikingly obvious. Past, present and future become a continuum where "now" is less fixed; the experience of time itself is more relative and process-oriented. Nevertheless, "now" remains the primary reference for that process.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>All-Being</b></p> <p>Identification with Progressively Broader Inclusions of Consciousness &amp; Being Together with All Supportive Systems</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Transpersonal Holism</b></p> <p>This stratum is marked by an increasing flexibility of moral orientation. For example, the realization that more than one values hierarchy can be valid, that someone can operate within multiple values hierarchies simultaneously, or that seemingly opposing values hierarchies can synthesize a new, higher order moral orientation. This intersubjective moral ambiguity is then navigated through the discernment of intentional, strategic outcomes that benefit the largest majority possible. Definition of what constitutes "the largest majority possible" likewise changes and evolves, but is strongly informed by transpersonal perceptions and experiences. In turn, identification with this transpersonal connectedness subordinates other identifications, so that, for example, experiencing a shared ground of being is indistinguishable from compassionate affection for all beings, and compassionate affection for all beings is indistinguishable from attenuation of individual ego. The relevant time-space for this stratum becomes contextual; the relevance of past, present and future shifts with current priorities, and the cycles and patterns of time begin to give way to a continuum.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Earth Life</b></p> <p>Identification with Every Living System on Earth – All Its Individual Components &amp; Supportive Environments</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>World-Centric</b></p> <p>At this point there is a greater appreciation and acceptance of ecologies that facilitate, transcend and include human society. These ecologies may contain biological, metaphysical, quantum or other systems-oriented constructs, with the feature that these systems are vast, complex and interdependent. Here moral function is inspired by individual and collective commitment to understanding and supporting those systems in order to support all life. Personal identification with this broader, ecological consciousness expands humanity-centric compassion and concern into world-centric compassion and concern. Values hierarchies now begin to be viewed as a primary form of nourishment, from which all other nourishment is derived. Time dilates and slows a bit here, tending to be viewed more as cycles and patterns than a linear progression.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Human Society</b></p> <p>Identification with All People Everywhere</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Principled Rationalism</b></p> <p>Moral function is now defined by a rationally defined set of reasoned moral principles, principles with the unifying objective of benefiting all of humanity. For anyone operating in this stratum, empirical validation of moral efficacy is of particularly compelling interest; what really works should be embraced, and what doesn't should be discarded. There is also an additional form of individuation here, where identification with previous communities (communities whose values and goals had previously been facilitated and integrated) begins to fade, and is replaced with increasing identification with, and compassion for, all human beings. Social divisions are discarded in favor of equal status. The future can now become an all-consuming fixation that drives more and more decisions, the past becomes an advising reference, and the current moment a fleeting absorption. As a result, time tends to both constrict and accelerate in this stratum, remaining linear in experience and conception.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Affinitive Community</b></p> <p>Identification with All People Who Share the Same Values or Experience</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cooperative Communalism</b></p> <p>Here a communal role and collective responsibility is firmly accepted and established as part of moral function, and community is defined by shared values and experiences, rather than just shared benefits or just laws. The necessity of collaborative contribution to human welfare is understood, and the desire to compete for personal advantage fades</p>

	<p>away. A community's shared values are appreciated, integrated and supported in order to further that community's goals and collective nourishment, but without the suppression or sacrificing of personal values and identity that were common in earlier tribalism. Thus distinctions of class, caste, and social position tend to attenuate. This stratum also tends to invite preoccupation with the future, sometimes even beyond one's personal future, because we are charting a course through increased complexity. Time is experienced and conceived of as episodic.</p>
<p><b>Beneficial Community</b>  Identification with All People Who Benefit Each Other in Some Way</p>	<p><b>Competitive Communalism</b></p> <p>Moral function is strongly influenced by personal acceptance of the importance of participating in a mutually beneficial and lawfully just community, while still retaining individual uniqueness. However, this initial expansion into a communal moral orientation usually orbits around competition. Competition with others for personal positional power and influence in the community; competition with other moral orientations, asserting the relevance of one's own views and priorities; nonconformance with, and continual challenging of, a community's established values hierarchy; and competition for other forms of social capital. In this stratum the future gains more importance as one strategizes navigation of these competitions. The past also regains its teaching role, with emphasis on both failures and successes to inform current strategies.</p>
<p><b>Committed Greater Self</b>  Acceptance of the Identify of "Self" as Larger Than Associations with Group(s) or Ideas</p>	<p><b>Contributive Individualism</b></p> <p>Now more fully individuated from the primary tribe and its social constraints, one continues to be committed to one's own well-being, freedom, wholeness and access to more subtle, nuanced and complex nourishment resources. Moral function is increasingly defined by efforts that appear "good" or helpful to others, as framed by conscience, the context-of-the-moment and interpersonal relationships. In this sense, moral relativism is derived from one's own experiences and interactions, and tends to be maintained and defended within this self-referential absorption. The present is still paramount here. This stratum is part of an individuation process from the tribe and the tribe's values hierarchy. Moral orientation may lapse into previous strata, but is otherwise centered around a sense of obligation to one's own uniqueness, freedom, well-being and wholeness. As a result, one is open to more complex nourishment that was not available within egoic or tribal orientations. Probably as a component of emancipation from tribal expectations, there tends to be minimal concern about the impact of one's individuation process on others. In this stratum, the present once again gains preeminence; the past is being left behind, and the future matters less than assertiveness in the now.</p>
<p><b>Tentative Greater Self</b>  Identification with a Possible "Self" Larger Than Associations with Group(s) or Ideas</p>	<p><b>Opportunistic Individualism</b></p> <p>This stratum is part of an individuation process from the tribe and the tribe's values hierarchy. Moral orientation may lapse into previous strata, but is otherwise centered around a sense of obligation to one's own uniqueness, freedom, well-being and wholeness. As a result, one is open to more complex nourishment that was not available within egoic or tribal orientations. Probably as a component of emancipation from tribal expectations, there tends to be minimal concern about the impact of one's individuation process on others. In this stratum, the present once again gains preeminence; the past is being left behind, and the future matters less than assertiveness in the now.</p>

<p align="center"><b>Secure Tribal Position</b></p> <p align="center">Identification with “My People”</p>	<p align="center"><b>Defensive Tribalism</b></p> <p>Here the social order and internal rules of our primary social group(s) are championed as correct and proper both within the tribe (regulation) and to the outside world (proselytization). Competition with and subjugation of -other individuals or groups outside of the tribe (or one's class, caste or social position) becomes more pronounced. Thus moral function is defined by rigid definitions and legalistic rules (law &amp; order, right &amp; wrong, black &amp; white) that justify and secure personal standing within the tribe, as well as the tribe's standing within a given environment. Now, because one's tribal position is secure, the past again dominates. Past authorities, traditions, insights and experiences infuse the present legalistic frame with self-righteous justification.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Insecure Tribal Position</b></p> <p align="center">Identification with “The People I Want to be My People”</p>	<p align="center"><b>Tribal Acceptance</b></p> <p>Conformance with social expectations, and approval of one's primary social group(s), governs moral function here. What is “right” or “wrong” is defined by what increases or attenuates social capital and standing within the group(s). The acknowledged link between personal survival and tribal acceptance expands self-centeredness to tribe-centeredness, but otherwise operates similarly to lower moral strata. In this stratum, one's "tribe" tends to be fairly immediate, and fairly small -a family, team, group of peers, gang, etc. Now the relevant timeframe shifts back into the immediate future, where status and influence will either be lost or realized; the past may still be instructive, but what waits around the next bend in the road is what preoccupies.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Ego Identity</b></p> <p align="center">Identification with Ego</p>	<p align="center"><b>Self-Protective Egoism</b></p> <p>Moral function is governed by acquisitive, manipulative, consumptive or hedonistic patterns that accumulate and defend personal gains (i.e. secure nourishment sources) in order to insulate the ego from risks and loss. This self-centeredness may be masked by primitive adaptive personas that navigate basic reciprocity, but is generally indifferent to other people except for the ability of others to satisfy personal demands. Now the past can actually become more important than the present, because the past is where wrongs were suffered and gains realized. Reflections on the present and future, on the other hand, tend to be inhabited by fear of risk and loss.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Formative Identity</b></p> <p align="center">Developing Ego and Ego-Identity</p>	<p align="center"><b>Self-Assertive Egoism</b></p> <p>The aggressive utilization of basic tools to satisfy one's own wants and whims, usually without regard to the impact on others, is an overwhelming moral imperative here. In most situations, this imperative is only moderated by fear of "being caught" and the personal embarrassment, punishment or loss of personal nourishment that may follow. The relevant timeframe for fulfilling one's desires expands a little here, so that gratification can be delayed until the near-future. However, the past is largely irrelevant, except as a reminder of negative consequences to be avoided.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Unformed Identity</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Egoless Raw Need</b></p> <p>Naïve, helpless state in which volition is centered around unrestrained basic nourishment in every moment, but where the mechanisms of needs fulfillment are unknown, unskilled or otherwise inaccessible. In this stratum, the scope of one's relevant time-space for this needs fulfillment is almost always the immediate, everpresent <i>now</i>.</p>

## 10. Integral Lifework in the Public Arena: Advocating for a Level 7 Political Economy

First some guiding principles and assumptions about how the most healing and constructive solutions to the ills of state capitalism – including the corrosion of democracy by cronyism and clientism – could be created in an advanced political economy. These are derived from a long tradition of prosocial moral and political philosophies, the importance of empathy and skillful compassion in all social relations, and the proposed impact of moral advancement on attitudes about property ownership, natural ecosystems, systems of production, styles of governance, and types of democratic participation. Essentially, they reflect a values hierarchy predicated on an *agape* that recognizes the inherent, equal worth of every individual, and the consequent freedoms, protections and access to opportunity that must be afforded every human being in an advanced political economy. They are summarized as follows:

- A philosophy of government that more fluidly and directly expresses democratic will, and does so equally, inclusive of all ideological orientations and special interests, without disproportionate influence through concentrations of material wealth or social capital.
- An economic system that inherently enables the most equitable, egalitarian distribution of opportunity, material wealth and social capital, and provides a level playing field for all potential and existing producers of goods and services. This system sustains itself in a stable, high quality steady state - or more probably in predictable cycles of ebb and flow that are dynamic but not extreme - rather than relying on constant growth.
- An education system that supports all other systems with a diversely informed populace trained in compassion, critical thought, alternative viewpoints and broad-spectrum dialogue; that is, a populace whose literacy, expertise, proficiency and interests can help manage economies and governments at all levels from a more advanced moral orientation.
- A mediasphere that offers a neutral space for the emergence of divergent perspectives, while at the same time providing both democratically controlled feedback mechanisms for accuracy and fairness, and unlimited access to independent evaluative data on all sources of information.
- An industrial production system that not only strives toward an equitable distribution of profits and decision-making within each organization, but also incorporates social, political and ecological externalities into its strategic and tactical metrics and decisions, for the greatest benefit to all (in harmony with the precautionary principle). For example, factors like biological diversity,

environmental sustainability, community empowerment, democratic feedback mechanisms, cultural diversity, and the health and well-being of workers and consumers would all be taken into account.

- An energy production system that relies on highly distributed, scalable, renewable resources whose capacities in a steady-state or cyclical non-growth economy inherently exceed demand as both conservation and efficiencies increase over time.
- A monetary system that does not, by its very nature, create inflationary pressures, perpetual debt-slavery, or concentration of wealth in private banks, but instead encourages investment opportunities for all, while remaining under public, democratic control.
- In all of these contexts, initial policies and rigorous metrics would strive to maintain a continuous Pareto efficiency, as framed by the intention that public goods eventually overtake most arenas of private profit.

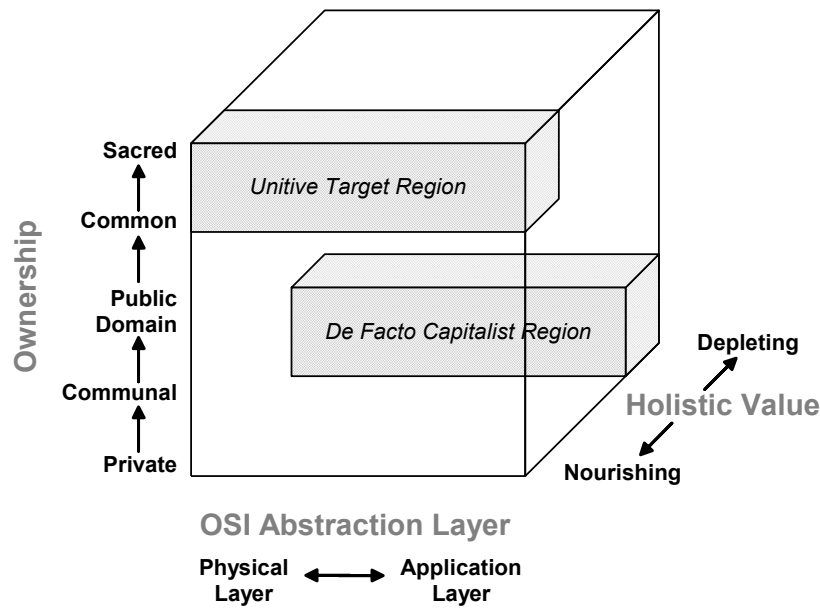
Where these guiding principles lead us should have, by design, tremendous variability and flexibility in implementation, but they can nevertheless provide us with a few instrumental assumptions regarding our roadmap's milestones:

- The first stage of transition demands a carefully balanced, mixed economy that retains necessary centralized standards, systems and supportive structures, but shifts the implementation and management of those standards, systems and structures away from centralized administration and toward highly distributed self-governance. Thus, although the most complex building blocks of this political economy are still organized and integrated on a large scale, they would be tactically managed on a smaller, distributed scale. For example, centralized infrastructure and essential services (i.e. the most foundational and universal processes, production, services and institutions of the new political economy) would provide a "Universal Social Backbone," which in turn supports a host of spontaneous, decentralized, rhizomatic and community-centric elements that thrive under distributed management.
- Exchange values would be calculated on a proposed "holistic value," which includes multiple dimensions of import, many of which are now often considered mainly in the abstract – or as bothersome externalities. Holistic value is an attempt at a more comprehensive valuation, and so includes a host of metrics including, but not limited to, perceived and intersubjective use value, effective nourishment value, and potential "perverse utility" – that is, a negative value based on possibilities of abuse or harm. The ongoing impact of goods and

services on environmental, individual and social thriving would be measured in as many dimensions as possible, then fluidly and transparently promoted to the electorate, so that exchange values can be revised to enable the greatest good for the greatest number. In this way, informed direct democracy would override the artificially engineered tensions of demand and supply.

- While property of all kinds would increasingly fall under a “res communes” property designation, other designations (public domain, private, communal, etc.) would still exist on a scale commensurate to the workers, stakeholders and beneficiaries involved. In other words, we would create a kind of transitional, hybrid form of property ownership, where everyone who has a stake in the use, profits, privileges, impacts or benefits of any property – whether that property is a natural resource or the result of service and production activities – would have a say in how that property was used and managed, and how its benefits are distributed. Again this means that residents, consumers, workers and government officials are all part of the mix; what is held in common for the benefit of all is administered (again at a community level, if possible) for the benefit of all by those whom it benefits – with a clear appreciation of externalities and holistic value as part of this mix. While this hybrid ownership schema initially might favor those who appear to have a greater stake in certain property, its eventual aim would be to shift into purely “common” ownership where such emphasis would no longer have priority.
- Along the lines of the hybrid property ownership feature, but also to address the rule of law and other essential civic institutions, direct democracy and direct civic involvement at the national, regional and community levels would at first augment, then increasingly replace the current representative abstractions of governance, banking, commerce and institutional accountability on every scale – from the local level to the global.

*Progressive Property Position*



As we then refine planning, increasing granularity from the thirty-thousand-foot level to concrete action items, we need to propose specific solutions that are tailored to each unique cultural, demographic and economic environment around the globe. Thus the interdependent design of a post-capitalist system will be complex and multifaceted, but below are a few of the more generic considerations for just one such implementation, in this case the U.S.A. These proposals have also been borrowed from *Political Economy and the Unitive Principle*, and although the concepts and language are more thoroughly defined in that book, I have rephrased things here to provide insight into how each of these proposed components are formulated.

1. To whatever degree possible, quid pro quo political connections between industry, finance, a more direct democratic implementation of government, the mediasphere, the education system, and the health-and-welfare system must be severed, then insulated from each other as rigorously as possible. These are of course interdependent structures, but separation could be maintained through independent funding, governance processes and decision-making cycles, with differing degrees of direct democratic involvement – or insertion of the democratic process at different junctures in the governance process, so as to counterbalance short-lived collective impulses. What we are aiming for here is a pragmatic, clearly boundarized functional and political separation. The final purveyor of this separation is of course the general populace, but that democratic will would be concentrated and normalized through different formulas and



durations of leadership - as well as staggered referendum cycles and legal restrictions on revolving door leadership deployments across these divisions.

2. Although all government would still consist of executive, legislative and judicial branches, the two-party system would of necessity be abolished. Instead, the legislative branch would be restructured to reflect either a parliamentary system, or some other effective means of non-polarizing proportional representation. In addition, more frequent direct national referendums would guide public policy at the national level, so that procedural sabotage of democracy (such as the current "majority of the majority" rule in the House of Representatives) could be overridden. Likewise, direct votes at each level of government, all the way down to local, would inform policy and practice at those levels. A certain percentage of government representatives could also be chosen at each level of government through a service lottery, much as jury duty selections occur today, to serve for a limited time as part of decision making bodies (citizen commissions, city councils, state legislatures, etc.). And a certain percentage of representatives would be selected through a multi-party election process without primaries, to serve for longer terms than those selected via lottery, but with a limit on the number of terms they could serve. It should be understood and appreciated that highly advanced societies will require highly specialized skill sets for these elected officials, and that many independent schools of technocratic proficiency will inevitably arise to meet this need. The key will be to ensure that all such specialized viewpoints are adequately represented, while concurrently balanced with citizen input and community-based authority.
  
3. Labor would be separated into two distinct categories that are organized and managed in different ways. The first category would be "infrastructure and essential services" (i.e. the Universal Social Backbone). These are the fundamental products, institutions and services necessary for any sort of complex society to function at the most basic levels, and which have already tended to be socialized in most mixed economies. Roads, bridges, water, electricity and communication are the first tier of this category, followed by more abstracted products and services that build on those foundations, but are still perceived as universal expectations by the general public. This second tier is comprised of the systems and institutions that provide the backbone of civil society. For example, public transportation, public healthcare, public education, public safety services, social security, and so on. As expectations differ from one zeitgeist to the next, so would the scope of inclusion in these tiers. I happen to think basic banking and insurance services, basic nutrition, basic housing, mail delivery, fundamental scientific research, worker retraining, employment placement services, and unemployment benefits also fall under "infrastructure and essential services." One common thread of these public domain industries, however, is that they facilitate trade for the second category of labor. This is a

crucial point: without centrally coordinated infrastructure and essential services, there really is no way to enable a reliable (or equitable) exchange economy of any kind.

To whatever degree possible, *all of this should be organized and tactically managed at the community level*, with centralized standardization and support, subject to direct democratic control. Instead of centrally run state institutions or corporations, there would be **networked, non-profit, worker-owned cooperatives** that are centrally regulated and monitored, but administered with a substantial degree of autonomy at the community level. It might also be interesting for different regions to compete with each other for customer satisfaction, and be rewarded in some way for their success. If the service or product being delivered provides the most fundamental level of infrastructure or essential services, there wouldn't be competition for customers between the cooperatives, but the cooperatives would be limited in size (by service area, etc.), and subject to public input and scrutiny to ensure an adequate level of service delivery. If the service or product is not part of infrastructure or essential services, then the non-profit cooperatives could compete with each other for the same customers across different regions. So although there is a strong element of central planning here, the actual control and execution is highly segmented and distributed, both because of the divisions of government already alluded to, and the emphasis on community-level organization.

There should be some mechanism to ensure the Universal Social Backbone doesn't somehow undermine individual contribution to society by inoculating the least morally developed against survival or well-being concerns. That is, there would be some form of citizen reciprocation for this foundation, and consequences for a lack of reciprocation. So, for instance, everyone who receives benefits could participate in these very same programs as unpaid volunteers for short but regular periods of time, with consistent expectations of performance. If someone chooses not to volunteer, or willfully demonstrates exceedingly poor performance, their access to some or all of these services (or perhaps certain qualities of service) could be restricted.

4. The second category of labor is for production of goods and services that add value to society above and beyond essential services. There would be several tiers to this category. At the top would be certain major industries, especially those that a) have essentially become closed to rapid or major innovation, b) are de facto market monopolies, or c) otherwise dictate economies of scale with highly centralized controls. These would become worker-owned cooperatives subject to governmental oversight, with the level of government responsible for oversight always larger than the size and reach of the business itself. These would be much like the first category of labor, but in this case for-profit. There is

no reason why this tier couldn't compete with cooperatives in the first category, wherever that makes sense. Again, the scope of this category will change from one culture to the next, and from one generation to the next.

In the second tier we find medium-to-large businesses, once again worker-owned cooperatives, which would compete with each other for customers. Communities in which either of these two top-tier businesses are located would have the ability to a) reject proposals to start a business in a given location, b) introduce progressive penalties on a misbehaving or undesirable business in their community, or c) rescind a business's privilege to operate in their community altogether for cause. All of this would be accomplished through a direct referendum process, with the intent that all such businesses work closely with the community to address that community's preferences and concerns. The third tier would be sole proprietorships or very small businesses (perhaps five employees or less?), which is the only tier where a business entity could be privately owned and managed, and thereby be insulated from community controls. This three-tier system - or an equivalent approach - is an absolute necessity, in my view, since currently such huge concentrations of wealth and influence in the private sector has demonstrated itself to be the greatest threat to a functional democracy, the most pernicious abuser and exploiter of workers and the environment, and the most disruptive to our collective moral maturation process. In other words, these huge privatized industries are simply too powerful to be permitted to exist outside of the democratic process as they do today.

5. The ratio between the salary of the highest paid individuals in a given field and that of the lowest paid individuals in the same field - as well as what the highest and lowest wages would be, the benefits of seniority, and other aspects of pay structure - could be publicly determined through a direct democratic process by the general populace for all organizations that are not privately owned (i.e. government agencies, non-profits, and for-profit enterprises). The same formula could be applied to the ownership of communal property shares in any enterprise. To avoid rapid salary swings, changes could be incremented over time. In addition, the highest and lowest wages across all of society could also be democratically set to reflect their holistic value as evaluated and agreed upon by the electorate. In both cases, this wage-setting process could be repeated regularly every few years. Using some combination of consistent calculation factors, this would reflect a more equitable distribution of wages within organizations and across whole industries, especially as some positions between those organizations become interchangeable. It also has the potential of eliminating the lopsided educational funding, career flocking, research and development and other investment bias created by excessive wage imbalances. As our culture matures, the objective could be to amplify the social capital of

fields that contribute constructively and holistically to society. To include a competitive variable in this equation, profit-sharing would not be part of these set wages, but in addition to it. However, profit-sharing could also be distributed according to exactly the same wage ratios. There could of course be other profit (or communal property share ownership) distribution mechanisms, but the goal is to curtail the stratospheric concentration of wealth in any individual or group of individuals.

6. As an important holistic value consideration, trades that fall under perverse utility (i.e. have a high probability of abusive, addictive, lethal or socially destructive impact) would be subject to train-test-monitor controls. This is important because these particular trades tend to erode social cohesion and moral evolution. Along the same lines, human interaction with the Earth's ecosystems should be compassionate, sustainable and low-or-no impact. I appreciate the core tenets and twelve design principles of the Permaculture movement, and think they provide an excellent starting point here. Further, the "precautionary principle" would ideally guide all technology development and deployment, harmonizing with slower product development cycles no longer driven by quarterly profit pressures.
7. Energy from renewable resources could be produced locally whenever possible, via community cooperatives, and ideally using business and residential structures as installation platforms, then aggregated and distributed within each geographic region as needed. The absolute end of fossil fuel and other nonrenewable energy production should, I think, be aggressively, rapidly and relentlessly pursued. This is not only for the sake of eliminating carbon emissions, but also because the very nature of concentrated-yield sources like petroleum distorts consumption expectations and reduces costs in the short term, while the long term reality of stable, steady-state energy sourcing dictates entirely different consumption and cost relationships. Local-renewable approaches align with the longer term energy expectations, and mirror the distributed nature of production, labor and political power in this new political economy.
8. Part of a fundamental education should, I would think, be the inclusion of many of the concepts addressed here and in *Political Economy and the Unitive Principle*, with an emphasis on comprehensive training in full-spectrum nourishment, synergistic dialogue, moral creativity and development, and an overview of the strengths and failings of various political economies. And of course students, parents and teachers should all share responsibility for the structure and management of a more participatory educational environment. I also believe exposure to other cultures has extraordinary benefit for the young, and to that end every child should have the opportunity to experience for themselves how

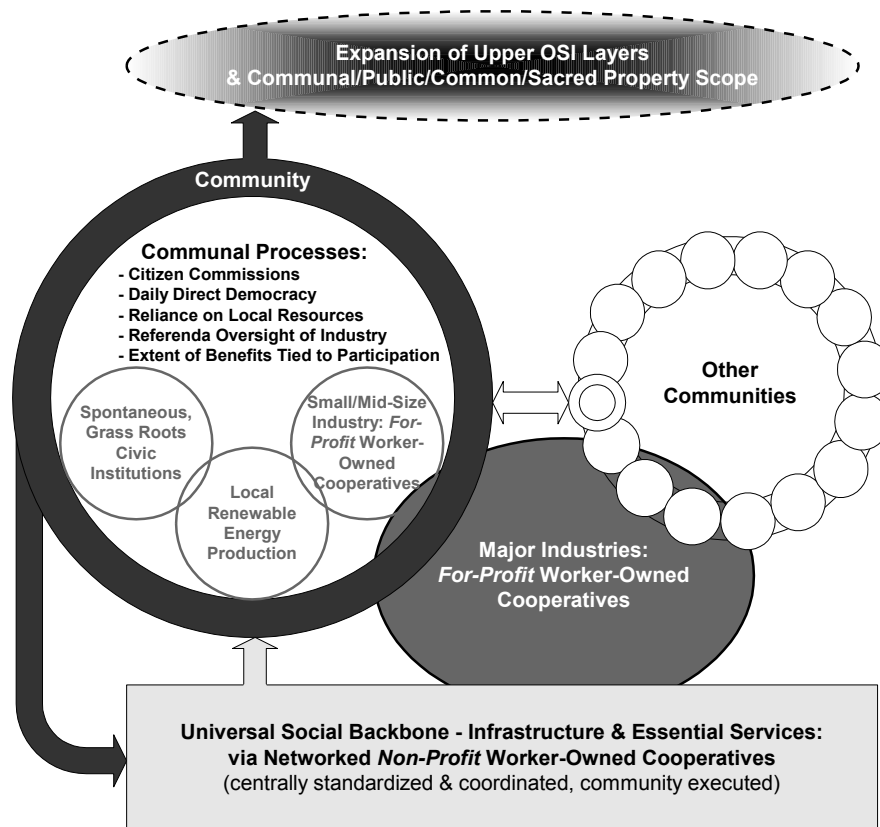
the rest of the world lives, ideally by traveling to and living among other cultures. In fact, this is probably a critical foundation for appreciating diverse viewpoints, navigating social complexities, and learning to think multidimensionally. It seems the broader and deeper the vocabulary of language, ideas and experiences made available to our young people, the more likely they will be able to manage complex responsibilities for the rest of their lives. But the intent behind all of these approaches should be to encourage the advanced moral function necessary to sustain the new political economy being proposed.

9. The importance of civic institutions and social movements that arise spontaneously - often operating independently of both markets and government - should also be recognized and vigorously facilitated. These not only fill gaps in needed services and resources, but may provide unexpected change agency toward a higher moral function in society. In particular, community development corporations (CDCs) and community land trusts (CLTs), when guided by community input and participation, offer a promising mode of communal transformation. At the same time, institutions that become well-established players in civil society should also be subject to direct democratic control – just as government, non-profit and for-profit enterprises would be under this proposal.
10. Clearly some attention must also be given to reforming the tax code. In market-centric economies like the U.S., taxes are often used to incentivize some behaviors while penalizing others. This tool should no longer be needed to the same degree, and the tax code could be substantially simplified as property ownership – and the surplus value of production – advances into more unitive strata – that is, as society evolves to value everything more collectively. As an interim step, a progressively tiered tax rate with very few deductions should work for individuals, along with a similarly tiered tax rate on net income for businesses, based on their size. In conjunction with this, a flat rate "wealth tax" could be implemented across the board to augment and perhaps eventually replace income taxes. As property position shifts, this wealth tax, in turn, could increasingly be calculated on accumulated shares of communal property.
11. The monetary system should be subject to the direct control of the people as a socialized central bank, in conjunction with a national network of non-profit cooperatives and community banking systems. For-profit lending institutions could be entirely eliminated, and fractional reserve banking would, at a minimum, be strictly restrained by a conservative leverage ratio – one that is either set in stone or can only be adjusted to be more conservative, not less. Government institutions would no longer pay interest on any loan, and indeed a set percentage of government loans would be lent interest-free to large scale entrepreneurs, non-profit community organizations, community land trusts and

worker-cooperatives, in order to stimulate innovation, create a level playing field for emerging disciplines and technologies, and instigate a road to self-sufficiency. Special targeting of "outsider" innovation would also be an ideal standard, but realistically this may have to be left to the market side of the mix. There is also opportunity here to institute a gift economy with a certain percentage of government lending as well, and this should increase over time as the moral creativity of society evolves.

12. One of the consequences of financial system reform would be the elimination of the stock market as it exists today. It is difficult to conceive of any sort of stock exchange scenario that can't be exploited, or that doesn't contribute to market instability, as has been evidenced many times over in the U.S., and has only increased with the advent of automated computer trades. That said, there should probably be some opportunity for stock trades to occur, so that outsider innovations and other market advantages can be facilitated in emerging industries. However, the resulting stock exchange system would be of a much smaller scale than its current manifestation, and would be looked upon more as an interesting experiment than a central feature of the economy. There could also be strict restrictions on highly speculative investment instruments, and perhaps a small tax on every trade, to further contain volatility and reduce impact on the rest of the economy.
13. It may also be useful to either institute or promote different kinds of currency that operate mainly within different dimensions of the economy; for example, there could be gift dollars, market exchange dollars, public utility dollars, barter systems, community banking systems, and other currency independent of fiat money. These could still be sanctioned and coordinated through the socialized central bank, or just be encouraged and supported through independent institutions, so that morally advanced experiments can demonstrate proof-of-concept.
14. In order for any of these ideas to retain integrity and resist corruption in a fully functional democracy, the electorate must have access to both raw data and complex analysis tools about virtually every element of society. Whether it be a judge's rulings history, a manufacturer's product safety record, or a politician's legislative patterns, multidimensional data on every individual and institution in public life should be readily available via the web at no cost. In addition, users should be able to specify values criteria that represent their priorities, and dynamically display data according to those personal criteria. A standardized analysis tool could be provided across several competing information sources: nonprofit government-run clearinghouses, community-based information providers, and mass media news outlets.

15. What I describe in *Political Economy and the Unitive Principle* as “an expansion of the upper OSI layers of property” will become increasingly important over time. Initially this refers to what has been traditionally categorized as the creative thinking, cultural riches, intellectual property or academic pursuits in society, and especially that which thrives in the commons of universally shared media, research, innovation and communication. But really this also expands to include what are the most intangible, non-material elements of human endeavors, interaction, consciousness and self-expression, forming an abstracted realm of exchange that will always transcend ridged institutions, mundane commodities, and predictable systems to produce the true wealth of human experience. These spontaneous, organic creations rely upon the “lower OSI layers” in order to thrive (for example, the aforementioned Universal Social Backbone eliminates antagonistic survival preoccupations and, when combined with voluntary reciprocation, reinforces relevant social contracts), and cannot advance without that support.



But how can we transition towards this ideal, and away from our current, highly destructive form of growth-dependent state capitalism and its pernicious undermining of democracy? Here are some possible first steps:

1. Educating people about economics, technology, the functions of government, and what is actually healthy and helpful for individual and collective well-being and happiness, all-the-while exposing the deceptions and misinformation that are mercilessly disseminated in service of profit.
2. Encouraging moral maturity, compassion and empathy through revised interpersonal standards, better awareness of multidimensional nourishment, and inspirational modeling.
3. Holding accountable those government officials, businesspeople, and average citizens who persist in indifference and callousness, and doing this through education about values hierarchies, societal expectations and the rule of law, while also eliminating the social and economic incentives for this behavior.
4. Promoting holistic approaches to well-being that counter addictions, consumerism, self-destructive habits and externalization of personal power.
5. Creating new institutions that “compassionately tribalize” all of these more evolved, sophisticated and morally responsible values, and create a safe place to reinforce and propagate the most proven and constructive means of moving forward.

Anyone who has endeavored to promote these or similar countermeasures to capitalism has invariably faced the entrenched interests of atrophied institutions and the powers-that-be, along with the draconian defense mechanisms of the ruling class. Even so, there have been progress and immensely positive examples of how alternatives to plutocratic state capitalism could evolve. I am reminded of democratic socialism in Europe, the Mondragon experiment, direct democracy in Switzerland, Canadian credit unions, etc.

However, any new, more progressive system will fail unless we accelerate our individual and collective moral evolution to embody a more inclusive, collaborative, equitable and compassionate meta-ethical framework. This is in contrast to our current political economy, which reinforces ethical regression. History demonstrates time and again that civic institutions must operate from principles at the same level moral maturity as the electorate, because whenever they attempt to exceed that level, they ultimately become ineffective, corrupt or collapse entirely. And because state capitalism has endeavored for so long to infantilize consumers into perpetual dependency, selfless and compassionate participation in government and the democratic process has waned proportionately. But we can no longer remain children.



To that end, we return to Integral Lifework as a possible mechanism for evolving civil society. As noted in the previous section on moral development, it is my contention that we cannot mature, in a moral sense, unless we are fully nourishing all dimensions of our being. Such harmonized support is required for more unitive structures – that is, more affectionately compassionate attitudes and habits regarding ourselves and others – to flourish and grow both individually and collectively. This is my hypothesis, grounded in time-honored mystical traditions from around the world and observations from my own work and life. But the proof is in the pudding, as they say: it is only possible to observe the benefits of the practice once we engage it fully. Remaining outside of the practice and speculating about its efficacy isn't a very tenable position; *ab intra* validation always trumps *ab extra* conjecture. So my exhortation would be to invest in Integral Lifework as a means to an end, with the only costs being a little time and effort, a little learning, a little refining of guiding intentions, and a little more flourishing of being.