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historically
from the 1980s onward

developmental psychology
from about 40/45 years
(midlife)

Integral Consciousness I (providing harmony)

1. What does 'integral' mean

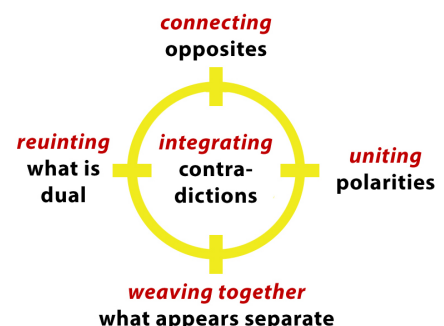
Integral means **whole** and **holistic** – derived from the Greek word *holos* (whole). It describes an approach in which a **system** – whether a human being, an ecological, economic, or educational system, or an organization – is understood not merely as a collection of separate parts, but as an inseparable **unity**. All parts are interconnected, mutually influencing one another. This requires a **multi-perspective view**, one that does not isolate individual elements but recognizes their relationships and interplay.

In *integral education*, holism could mean incorporating, promoting and developing **all 5 core capacities**: the **spiritual**, **physical**, **emotional**, **mental** und **creative** – rather than focusing solely on the mental, as is the case in our Western society, which results in a considerable imbalance.

In *integral medicine*, for example, the **whole person** (body, soul, spirit and social environment) is considered. **Conventional medical** methods and therapies are thoughtfully combined with **complementary and naturopathic** healing approaches.

The integral perspective recognizes the *dual/polar/opposing/contradictory/paradoxical*¹ and seemingly *separate* principles of life and all creation as the very driving force of existence² and as the foundation for *conscious* learning. It is only through the deliberate experience of this **duality** that a leap in awareness becomes possible. This insight was already recognized over a hundred years ago by the Zurich-based educator [Mimi Scheiblauer](#).

Yet the Integral does more than merely perceive opposites and acknowledge them as opportunities. It is capable of **integrating** contradictions, **uniting** polarities, **reuniting** what is dual, **connecting** opposites, and **weaving together** what appears separate – thereby **healing** entire **systems**.



¹ The mathematician [Roger Penrose](#) said: "I find **paradoxes** extremely appealing. You see something like that and try to understand how on earth it could possibly make sense?! Even that is paradoxical: I have a great fondness for paradoxes, and at the same time I want to eliminate them from the world!" (quoted by [Gábor Paál](#)) – Whenever we encounter something paradoxical, we are very close to the *essence of life!*

² The supposed **separation** of subject and object, feeling and reason, activity and passivity, heaven and earth, culture and nature, day and night, father and mother, head and heart, experience (**pathos**) and knowledge (**logos**) is seen as 'two sides of the same coin' and culminates in a **holistic, undivided** awareness.

Such integration becomes possible because the personality has matured and become whole enough to **no longer require identification** or attachment, neither: • to status symbols • to power & possessions • to *a particular* political ideology/party • to *a single*, true religion or doctrine of salvation • to the values of *a specific* social class • to *one* sports team • to *one* philosophy or world-view (not even to the integral one!) • or with *any* developmental stage in Spiral Dynamics... releasing the need to cling to expectations, opinions, ideas or material possessions, places or people, relationships, identities or behavioural patterns leads to a state of true '*inner freedom*' and its twin sibling – '*inner peace*'.

This integrating – this re-connecting (re-ligio³) – is an intensive '**inner journey**' of '**personal growth**', guided by a clear '**inner alignment**'. Its focus is *not* on reaching a **destination**, but on honoring the **process** itself. As the well-known saying goes: *the journey is the destination* – a *life-long* journey. It is a conscious '**inner development**' of *all* 5 core capacities, enabling awareness, integration, and situational application of *all* levels of human development (**archaic**, **magical**, **warrior**, **traditional**, **modern** and **postmodern**) consciousness – embracing both their light *and* shadow aspects, depending on the situation.

2. The Transition into the Integral – from **Green** to **yellow** & **Turquoise** (Integral I & II)

All previous transitions in the *Spiral Dynamics* model were characterised by rupture and separation, shaped by an '*either-or* mindset'. What was on one level before was seen as outdated and obsolete, while what emerged next was dismissed as mere fantasy and perceived as a threat to the status quo, something to be preserved and defended at all costs.

This transition, however, is far more complex. On the path toward a multi-perspectival way of seeing, the move into the Integral involves a profound leap in awareness. Consciousness expands into an inclusive, **holistic view** that no longer divides (*either-or*), but connects (*both-and*). This new perspective has shifted from linear, bipolar, **judgmental**, two-dimensional thinking into a circular, holistic, spatial, multipolar, **non-judgmental**, three-dimensional way of understanding. It is a deep inner transformation – comparable to that experienced by painters in the early 15th century when they made the transition from **perspective of meaning to central perspective**.

Integral Consciousness I corresponds to **mid-adulthood** – a phase when body image changes for a second time after puberty: **menopause** (for women) or male **climacteric** (for men) – often accompanied by a **midlife crisis**. These changes invite profound questions about what *truly matters in life*, what do we want our lives to stand for. These changes raise questions about what is truly important in life, what should shape one's personal life, and, in the awareness of our own mortality, *what is ultimately worth focusing on*. This fundamental shift in values leads to a fulfilling and responsible life *for the good of the whole*, the nurturing of meaningful relationships, and BEING fully present in the here and now, cultivating harmony and balance.

People in **yellow** recognize 'inner programmes' and patterns, meaning they see connections in information and behaviour that may not be obvious at first glance. It is the ability to discover an underlying order in what appears random or complex – and to understand recurring dynamics in personal relationships or professional situations.

This is why they naturally grasp **models**⁴ such as *Spiral Dynamics*. Such frameworks resonate with them because they make complexity visible. People in **yellow** can distinguish levels, place them in context, and **assess** their meaning with clarity and ease.

³ *Re-ligere*, from *Latin*, means to bind again, to reconnect, to unite – *consciously* reconnecting with life, with the origin of life, and with the Divine. This is also where the word "*religion*" originates. This "re-connection" brings increasing flow, ease, and love into life. Therefore, the integral perspective cannot exclude the religious-spiritual dimension – it simply belongs to life, to wholeness. Spirituality *is* an integral part of life.

⁴ A **model** is understood here as a representation of an *inner reality* – a map that graphically depicts *internal forces* at work and can serve as a means of orientation. Neither models nor maps are *reality* itself, but they can point the way and offer a comprehensive perspective if one knows how to read them. If one wishes to do so, this must be learned and practiced. And, as with **atomic models** and their electron orbits, nothing is 'fixed' or 'set in stone'; rather, everything is dynamic, interconnected, and open at the same time.

We live in polarity, like *day and night*, and must constantly *evaluate* and *decide* – up to 20,000 times a day, mostly unconsciously and automatically. Even our judgments are *polar*: there is judging, condemning, prejudging, criticizing, and **evaluating** in the sense of **value judgments** (good/bad, right/wrong...). From these, **yellow** increasingly distances itself to create a value-free space – a personal, intimate space without fear, where evaluative thoughts fall silent and healing can occur.

It is quite different when it comes to **evaluating** through **discernment** (*fits/doesn't fit – usually spatially, temporally or politically*), for example, when gauging the speed of an oncoming vehicle before stepping onto a pedestrian crossing, in order to decide whether to walk or wait. Or in a job interview, the assessment is made empathetically – without judgment – wise, tactful, and appreciative.

3. The process of organic unfolding and development

People in **yellow** recognise, in everything, the **process organic unfolding and development**⁵, – above all, the possibility of personal, 'inner growth'. – For the first time they are able to see and accept *all* previous levels of the spiral **without judgement** – both their **gifts** (*bringing life, connection, strength, beauty, understanding and love*) as well as their **challenges** (*the need to survive, preserve, fight, believe, prove and save*). And they can draw upon each level appropriately to the situation.

However, when growth becomes limitless, they also recognise the dark side of growth: in medicine, unchecked cellular growth is called cancer. In the same way, they see through the dominant **growth credo** focused solely on technical and material progress in economics and society, science and culture. To them, this worldview feels narrow, short-sighted, and soulless – promising a future rooted in *HAVING* mode rather than *BEING* mode. This concern was already powerfully articulated in 1976 by social psychologist **Erich Fromm** in his socially critical work ***To Have or To Be?***

In BEING-Mode, which is always **aligned** first *inward* and then *outward*, the gifts of all previous levels **come together**: • development of all 5 core capacities • reconnection with/return to the whole (non-dual connectedness) • inner freedom • spiritual practice with calmness/silence, meditation and centredness • non-judgmental, non-attachment, process-oriented, multi-perspective view • heart-to-heart communication.

Recognizing the **complexities** and **paradoxes** of life, and learning to shape and **connect** them – rather than attempting to manage or control them, or even attempting to **resolve** contradictions!

+ **Supportive** are: • integration of opposites • Inner calm/stillness • on the 'inner path' to transcendence • a non-dual spirituality: 'If the world were perfect, it would not be'. (as in a **Zen koan**) • opening up new approaches to solutions, as shown in the film '**Tomorrow**' • universal principles such as justice, tolerance and the dignity of all human beings at the centre

- **Hindering** are: • risk of isolation and arrogance: 'I am the best' • holistic buzzwords (being only supposedly 'holistic' on a mental level) • the attempt to appear reasonable, mature and balanced • the combination of charisma and moral outrage can be a negative force if not kept in check

Transition from Yellow → Turquoise (from around 1990 onward)

For the first time, this transition unfolds as a natural continuation rather than a break with what came before. It represents a refinement and deepening of consciousness: more original, more connected, more attentive and sensitive, more compassionate, caring, and generous – and open to the extraordinary, the transcendent.

Urban

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⁵ An *organic* development comes from within, through one's own strengths and abilities – that is, from the intrinsic drive (*intrinsic*) and 'inner force' inherent in every system. This natural, healthy and self-sustaining growth from within usually takes longer and is therefore stable and sustainable.