

## **MWI White Paper Appendix on:**

### ***Higher stages of Human Psychological Development and the Potential for Continued Growth throughout Adulthood***

***Process and End Points:*** journey and destination

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Sri Aurobindo, *Human life into a Life [divine](#)*

#### **About**

Sri Aurobindo (born **Aurobindo Ghose**; 1872 – 1950) was an Indian [nationalist](#), philosopher, [yogi](#), [guru](#) and poet. He joined the [Indian movement](#) for independence from [British rule](#), for a while was one of its influential leaders and then became a spiritual reformer, introducing his visions on human progress and [spiritual evolution](#). He was nominated for the [Nobel Prize in Literature](#) in 1943 and for the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) in 1950. Philosopher Aurobindo has been considered a 20<sup>th</sup> century renaissance person who, was born in Calcutta; educated since a very young age in England, culminating at Cambridge University. He was an intellectual who intensely analyzed human and social evolution.

#### **Significant contributions to the field**

- He produced a comprehensive synthesis of the different schools of Indian thought (including the Vedic tradition), but also added a dynamic, evolutionary element missing in the tradition as it is commonly understood.
- Aurobindo's work as it is transferred to Applied Psychology is a *Pathway for Change*. Last, and perhaps most important, the different approaches to Yoga contain insights and techniques to bring about psychological change, that can revolutionize applied fields like psychotherapy and education.
- He developed the concept of *Integral Yoga* which does not propose any kind of physical "asanas," breathing techniques or external movements. It is more psychological in nature, with internal reflection and self-analysis & correction as main tools of development. "Sri Aurobindo taught that people can be enlightened while enjoying the World, by following all the main Yogas - Gyan, Bhakti, Karma, Tantra - integrated together as one philosophy, which he called Purna or Integral Yoga."<sup>1</sup>
- He developed different components of education including the reframe of the fundamental aim of education and its curriculum. He emphasized that education should be in accordance with the needs of our real modern life, and should:
  - create a dynamic citizen to meet the needs of the complexity of modern life;
  - have physical development and physical purity from which true spirituality is possible.

- train all the senses - hearing, speaking, listening, touching, smelling and tasting.
- In 1926 Sri Aurobindo had another major breakthrough in his own *sādhana* (daily spiritual practice or individual spiritual effort. It is the main tool used by the individual to achieve the purpose of life. It can be done alone or in a group), which he later described as the embodiment of Krishna's Overmental consciousness.
- He made a distinction between what he called the Overmental and the Supramental planes of consciousness.
- the entity "mind" assumes the stature of an organic part and parcel of the transcendental Divine, the Absolute.

## Key Points

With regards to his concept of Integral Yoga, the main practices or approaches are divided into

- The yoga of divine work (yoga through ones work )
- The yoga of Integral Knowledge ( Yoga through analysis, observation & knowledge)
- The Yoga of Divine love ( Commonly referred to as Bhakti yoga or love of god)
- The Yoga of Self-Perfection (referred to as a Synthetic yoga or the triple way)

"The various concepts and theories of mind prevalent today have had their origin and development in the West. They can be classified as : Psycho-analytical (cf., Sigmund Freud, Karl Jung, A. Adler), Behavioural (cf., Gilbert Ryle), Gestalt (cf., Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, Wolfgang Kohler), Physiological (cf., J. J. C. Smart, U. T. Place, Feigl), Psycho-physical (cf., Karl Popper), Evolutionary (cf., Henry Bergson, Samuel Alexander, Whitehead), Functional (cf., R. Rorty, Peter Smith, O. R. Jones), and Mental or Homo Sapiens-oriented (cf., Roger Penrose)."<sup>2</sup>

According to Aurobindo, ultimately, "the entity 'mind' assumes the stature of an organic part and parcel of the transcendental Divine, the Absolute."<sup>3</sup>

*The Hierarchy of Minds*, by Jyoti and Prem Sobel, comes closest to a systematic coverage of an Aurobindonian noetology by gathering all of Sri Aurobindo's references and quotes on the subject of "Mind" and arranging these according to the type of Mind. These various Minds and Mental principles are described as follows:

## Physical Mind

- **The Mechanical Mind** is a much lower action of the mental physical which when left to itself can only repeat the same ideas and record the reflexes of the physical consciousness in its contact with outward life and things.

- **Mind** in the physical or mental physical mentalizes the experiences of outward life and things, sometimes very cleverly, but it does not go beyond that, unlike the externalizing mind which deals with these things from the perspective of reason and its own higher intelligence.
- **Physical Mind** - refers to either or both the Externalising Mind and the Mental in the Physical; it is limited to a physical or [materialistic](#) perspective, and cannot go beyond that, unless enlightened from above.
- Mind of Light - according to [The Mother](#) this is the Physical Mind receiving the [supramental light](#) and thus being able to act directly in the [Physical](#).

### Vital Mind

- **Vital Mind** - a mediator between the vital emotions, desires, and so on the mental proper. It is limited by the vital view and feeling of things, and expresses the desires, feelings, ambitions, and other active tendencies of the vital in mental forms, such as daydreams and imaginations of greatness, happiness, and so on. As with the Externalizing Mind, Sri Aurobindo associates it with the Vishuddha or Throat Chakra

### Mind proper

- Mind Proper - is free-fold, consisting of Thinking Mind, dynamic Mind, externalizing Mind. It constitutes the sum of one's thoughts, opinions, ideas, and values, which guide conscious thinking, conceptualizing and decision-making processes, and is transformed, widened, and spiritualized through the practice of [Integral Yoga](#).
- Thinking Mind - the highest aspect of the mind proper, concerned with ideas and knowledge in their own right. It is equated with the [Ajna Chakra](#)
- Dynamic Mind - that aspect of the ordinary mind that puts out of mental forces for realization, acting by the idea and by reason. It is also equated with the Ajna or Brow center.
- Externalizing Mind - the most "external" part of the mind proper, concerned with the expression of ideas in speech, in life, or in any form it can give. It is equated with the [Vishuddha or Throat Chakra](#)

### Higher Mind

- Higher Mind - the first and lowest of the spiritual mental grades, lying above the normal mental level.
- Spiritual Mind - either the spiritualized mind, or a general term for levels of mind above the normal mental level (the "Mind Proper").
- Inner mind - the mental component of the Inner Being, which lies behind the surface mind or ordinary consciousness and can only be directly experienced by [sadhana](#).
- True mental being - is the [Purusha](#) of the mental level freed from the error and ignorance of the lower [Prakriti](#) and open to the knowledge and guidance

- above.
- Psychic Mind - a movement of the mind in which the [Psychic Being](#) predominates; the mind turned towards the Divine,

**SRI AUROBINDO:**  
**SOME CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATIONAL THINKING**  
**AIMS OF EDUCATION**

- ❑ To achieve **mental development** of the child; the enhancement of **all mental faculties** namely; memory, thinking, reasoning, imagination and discrimination.
- ❑ To develop **morality**, because merely developing the mental is harmful to human process.
- ❑ Heart of child should be so developed as to show **extreme love, sympathy** and **consideration** for all living things; this is real moral development.

**" The teacher should be a role model to his children that mere imitation can enable them to reach higher and higher stages of development."**

Figure 1

Ken Wilber, *The bio-psycho-socio-systems perspective of Integral Theory*

### About

Kenneth Earl "Ken" Wilber II (1949 to present) is an American writer on [transpersonal psychology](#) and his own [integral theory](#), a four-quadrant grid which suggests the synthesis of all human knowledge and experience. Wilber has written on psychology, philosophy, mysticism, ecology, and spiritual evolution. He was greatly influenced by leading 20<sup>th</sup> century physicist, David Bohm, as well as Madhyamaka Buddhism. While Wilber has practiced [Buddhist](#) meditation methods, he does not identify himself as a Buddhist, although he became inspired by Eastern literature, particularly the [Tao Te Ching](#).

A pre-med student at Duke, he left his pursuit of medicine to complete a bachelor's degree in chemistry and biology and a master's degree in biochemistry from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. His integral approach gained popularity with the publication of his first book, "The Spectrum of Consciousness," a synthesis of religion, philosophy, physics, and psychology which became the basis for all subsequent attempts at integrating psychology and spirituality. He supports the need for an integrated approach because in our current post-modern world, we possess an abundance of methodologies and practices belonging to a multitude of fields and knowledge traditions.

### Significant contributions to the field

- Ken Wilber is unquestionably the leading figure in the developing field of Transpersonal Psychology, and created and developed **Integral Theory**.
- In one of his most significant works, ***Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*** (1995), he introduced his iconic quadrant model often referred to as the AQAL model, with AQAL standing for all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, and all types. These five elements signify some of the most basic repeating patterns of reality.
- In 2001, Wilber published ***A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality*** – detailing his approach/application of the AQAL model of Integral theory to practical applications in philosophy, business, education, medicine, ecology, and war.
- Integral theory (with practical applications) of how to make sense of complexity - looks at the whole in an "integral" fashion. This is known as a **bio-psycho-socio-systems** perspective, and its premise embraces the principals, amongst others of Quantum Physics. He created this model, or theory, as a means to bolt the principals of science and the ancient spiritual traditions in a manner that would be easily understood by Western thinking.
- One of Wilber's main interests is in mapping what he calls the "neo-perennial philosophy", an integration of some of the views of mysticism typified by [Aldous Huxley's \*The Perennial Philosophy\*](#), with an account of cosmic [evolution](#) akin to that of the Indian mystic [Sri Aurobindo](#).
- He is credited with expanding the notion of the "transpersonal" to a wider audience which, previously defined by Maslow, explained experiences "in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos."<sup>4</sup>
- In 1982 New Science Library published his anthology, *The Holographic Paradigm and other Paradoxes*, a collection of essays and interviews, including one by physicist David Bohm of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). This was a very significant piece which, looked at the interplay of the hard sciences-physics, biology, and medicine-and those of the human sciences-psychology, sociology, and philosophy. The aim of this series is the enrichment of both the scientific and spiritual view of the world through their mutual dialogue and exchange. The essays looked at how [holography](#) and [holographic paradigm](#) relate to the fields of consciousness, mysticism, and science.

- Integral Theory has been applied in fields as diverse as ecology, sustainability, psychotherapy, psychiatry, education, business, medicine, politics, sports, and art.
- He's the most widely translated academic writer in America, with 25 books translated into some 30 foreign languages
- *Publishers Weekly* has called him "the Hegel of Eastern spirituality."<sup>5</sup>
- Wilber is credited with influencing key contemporary figures such as cultural/political figures like [Bill Clinton](#), [Al Gore](#), [Deepak Chopra](#), Richard Tarnas (cultural historian), and Robert Keagan (Harvard developmental psychologist).

## Key Points

Wilber's AQAL, pronounced "ah-qwul", is the basic framework of Integral Theory. It suggests that all human knowledge and experience can be placed in a four-quadrant grid, along the axes of "interior-exterior" and "individual-collective". According to Wilber, it is one of the most comprehensive approaches to reality, a **metatheory** that attempts to explain how academic disciplines and every form of knowledge and experience fit together coherently.

AQAL is based on four fundamental concepts and a rest-category:

- **four quadrants** (on vertical and horizontal axis where left quadrants refer to interior and right quadrants refer to exterior realities).
- **levels** (stages of psychological development - pre-personal through personal to transpersonal – similar to Kohlberg's moral development), condition of vertical thinking or the individual's capacity to process, observe, and manage different levels of complexity. Stages centered around specific themes and develop out of internal and external life conditions.
- **lines** of development (cognitive, spiritual, emotional, physical etc.),
- **states** of consciousness (an individual's state of awareness of their environment, thoughts, feelings, or sensations; in order to experience consciousness, one must be both awake and aware. Theories of consciousness include developmental, cultural, neural, computational, and moral perspectives).
- **types** is a rest-category, for phenomena which do not fit in the other four concepts – also referred to as "typologies." Examples of these are Myers-Briggs and the Enneagram.

According to Wilber, the model speaks to the idea of formless awareness, "the simple feeling of being", which is equated with a range of "ultimates" from a variety of eastern traditions. This formless awareness transcends the phenomenal world, which is ultimately only an appearance of some transcendental reality. The AQAL categories — quadrants, lines, levels, states, and types – describe the relative truth of the [two truths doctrine](#) of [Buddhism](#). According to Wilber, none of them are true in an absolute sense: only formless awareness, "the simple feeling of being", exists absolutely.



He embraces a more traditionally [Western](#) notion of the [great chain of being](#). As in the work of [Jean Gebser](#), this great chain (or "nest") is ever-present while relatively unfolding throughout this material manifestation, although to Wilber the 'Great Nest' is actually just a vast [morphogenetic field](#) of potentials. In agreement with Mahayana Buddhism, and [Advaita Vedanta](#), he believes that reality is ultimately a [nondual](#) union of [emptiness](#) and [form](#), with form being innately subject to development over time.

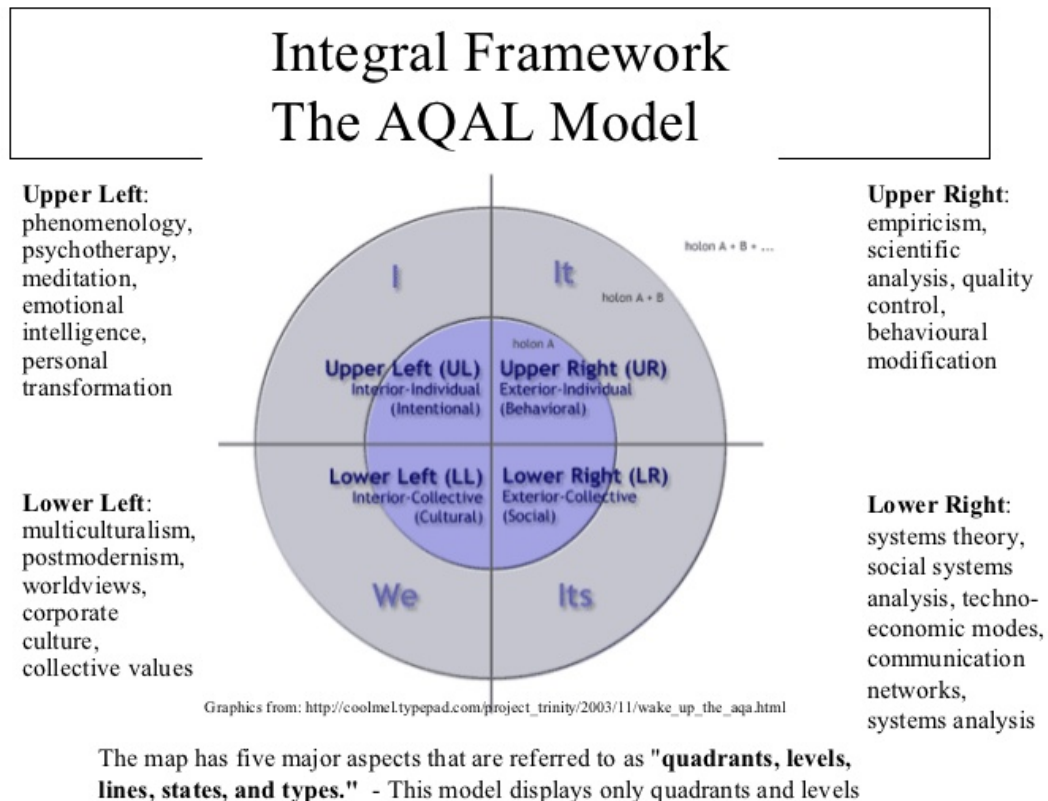


Figure 2

### Theory of truth

The mystical traditions, according to Wilber, provide a basis and access to knowledge or a transcendental reality (which is transpersonal) and [perennial](#) – that is that being the same throughout all times and cultures. This proposition is based on an unquestioned assumption, that Wilber believes poses juxtaposition to the reductionist thinking of plain materialism or the main paradigm of regular science.

	<i>Interior</i>	<i>Exterior</i>
<i>Individual</i>	Standard: <i>Truthfulness</i> ( <i>1st person</i> ) ( <a href="#">sincerity</a> , <a href="#">integrity</a> , <a href="#">trustworthiness</a> )	Standard: <i>Truth</i> ( <i>3rd person</i> ) ( <a href="#">correspondence</a> , <a href="#">representation</a> , <a href="#">propositional</a> )
<i>Collective</i>	Standard: <i>Justness</i> ( <i>2nd person</i> ) (cultural fit, <a href="#">rightness</a> , understanding)	Standard: <i>Functional fit</i> ( <i>3rd person</i> ) ( <a href="#">systems theory</a> web, <a href="#">Structural functionalism</a> , <a href="#">social systems</a> mesh)

Figure 3

In his later works, Wilber argues that manifest reality is composed of four domains, and that each domain, or "quadrant", has its own truth-standard, or test for validity:

- "Interior individual/1st person": the subjective world, the individual subjective sphere;
- "Interior collective/2nd person": the intersubjective space, the cultural background;
- "Exterior individual/3rd person": the objective state of affairs;
- "Exterior collective/3rd person": the functional fit, "how entities fit together in a system"<sup>6</sup>

### Pre/trans fallacy

According to Wilber, the non-rational stages of consciousness (what Wilber calls "pre-rational" and "trans-rational" stages – Kohlberg's pre-conventional and post conventional) can be easily confused with one another.

One can reduce trans-rational spiritual realization to pre-rational regression, or one can elevate pre-rational states to the trans-rational domain. For example, Wilber claims that Freud and Jung commit this fallacy. [Freud](#) considered mystical realization to be a [regression](#) to [infantile](#) states, or the pre-rational). Wilber believes that Freud thus commits a fallacy of reduction. While [Jung](#) commits the converse form of the same mistake by considering pre-rational myths to reflect divine realizations. Likewise, pre-rational states may be misidentified as post-rational states. "In any developmental sequence – pre-rational to rational to trans-rational, or subconscious to self-conscious to superconscious, or pre-verbal to verbal to trans-verbal, or prepersonal to personal to transpersonal – the "the pre" and the



“trans” components are often confused, and that confusion goes in both ways.”<sup>7</sup>

Wilber believes that many claims about non-rational states make a mistake he calls the “pre/trans fallacy,” and he has stated that he has fallen prey to this fallacy, in the past, as well.

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## FIGURES

1. <https://www.slideshare.net/WrenLovelyDeTobio/contributions-to-educational-thinking>
2. Integral Framework, AQAL model, Ken Wilber
3. Theory of Truth graph : Table and quotations from: Ken Wilber, *A Brief History of Everything*, 2nd edition, [ISBN 1-57062-740-1](#) p. 96–109

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Abraham Maslow, ***Self-actualization and Transcendence***

#### **About**

**Abraham Harold Maslow** (1908 – 1970) was an American psychologist who was a psychology professor at Alliant International University, Brandeis University, Brooklyn College, New School for Social Research, and Columbia University. His work focused on the importance of understanding the positive qualities in people, and he is one of the most recognized names in the field of Psychological Stage Development. In 2002, a *Review of General Psychology* survey, ranked Maslow as the tenth most cited psychologist of the 20th century.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Significant contributions to the field**

- He created a framework known as ***Maslow's hierarchy of needs*** (published in his 1943 paper, "A Theory of Human motivation")<sup>2</sup>; a theory of psychological health predicated on fulfilling innate human needs in priority, culminating in self-actualization – and eventually, the possibility for self-***transcendence***. Maslow was one of the founders of transpersonal psychology (a sub-field of psychology that integrates the spiritual Eastern traditions and transcendent aspects of the human experience within the field of modern psychology). This subset explores advanced wellness or optimal well-being. "Retrospective analysis of definitions published over some 35 years suggests the major subject areas of the field can be summed up in three themes: beyond-ego psychology, integrative/holistic psychology, and psychology of transformation... While transpersonal psychology still needs to embody the inclusiveness and diversity that it represents, its vision is one of great relevance to the contemporary human condition."<sup>3</sup> This translates into the individual's sense

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.apa.org/monitor/julaug02/eminent.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Hartelius, G., Caplan, M., & Rardin, M. A. (2007). Transpersonal psychology: Defining the past, divining the future. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 35(2), 135-160.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08873260701274017>

of identity to include the transpersonal, or the underlying unity of all reality (the mystical and meditative traditions of the world's religions).

- His particular contribution to Humanistic Psychology was in keeping with the belief that every person has a strong desire to realize his or her own potential and to reach a level of “self-actualization” and “transcendence” – and therefore to emphasize the positive potential of human beings.
- Maslow viewed his work as a complement to Freud's, although he was also highly critical of it as it did not recognize spirituality as a directive for human behaviors.
- He proposed that a person enjoys “**peak experiences**” or high points in life when the individual is in harmony with himself and his surroundings. According to Maslow, self-actualized people can have many peak experiences throughout a day while others have those experiences less frequently.
- He amended his model near the end of his life, to include **transcendence** so therefore, the conventional portrayal of his hierarchy is incomplete without this final element. He postulated that human beings can experience the highest level of development, what he called self-transcendence, by focusing on some higher goal outside ourselves, such as altruism, or spiritual awakening or liberation from egocentricity In *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* ( New York, 1971, p. 269.), he wrote:

*Transcendence refers to the very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos.*

- The placing self-transcendence **above** self-actualization results in a radically different model. While self-actualization refers to fulfilling an individual's own potential, self-transcendence puts the person's needs aside to serve something greater than the self. In the process, self-transcenders may have what Maslow called peak experiences, in which they transcend personal concerns. In such mystical, aesthetic, or emotional states the individual feels intense joy, peace, **well-being**, and an **awareness** of ultimate truth and the **unity of all things**.
- Such states aren't always transitory—some people might be able to readily access them. In such states the human being is able to have “plateau experiences.” These are characterized as more lasting, serene, and cognitive states, as opposed to peak experiences which tend to be mostly emotional and temporary. He explained that plateau experiences allow individuals to access not just positive feelings but such emotions including sadness that comes with realizing that others cannot have similar encounters.
- While Maslow believed that self-actualized, mature people are those most likely to have these self-transcendent experiences, he also felt that everyone was capable of having them. Scholar, Mark Koltko-Rivera wrote “Recognizing self-transcendence as part of Maslow's hierarchy has important consequences for theory and research: (a) a more comprehensive understanding of worldviews regarding the meaning of life; (b) broader understanding of the motivational

roots of altruism, social progress, and wisdom; (c) a deeper understanding of religious violence; (d) integration of the psychology of religion and spirituality into the mainstream of psychology; and (e) a more multiculturally integrated approach to psychological theory.”<sup>4</sup>

- According to Maslow's theory, when a human being passes through the different stages of the hierarchy, after having fulfilled the needs in the hierarchy, the person may eventually achieve self-actualization. He identified human needs as follows:

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### Key Points

- First Level: "**Basic needs or Physiological needs**" of a human being: food, water, sleep, sex, homeostasis, and excretion.
- Second Level: "**Safety Needs: Security, Order, and Stability**". These two steps are important to the physical survival of the person. Once individuals have basic nutrition, shelter and safety, they attempt to accomplish more.
- Third Level: "**Love and Belonging**" are psychological needs; after individuals have taken care of themselves physically, they are ready to share themselves with others.
- Fourth level: "**Esteem**" is achieved when individuals feel comfortable with what they have accomplished, and the need to be competent and recognized, such as through status and level of success.
- Fifth Level: "**Cognitive**" where individuals intellectually stimulate themselves and explore.
- Sixth Level: "**Aesthetic**" level, which is the need for harmony, order and beauty.
- Seventh Level: "**Need for Self-actualization**" occurs when individuals reach a state of harmony and understanding because they are engaged in achieving their full potential. Maslow defined self-actualization as achieving the fullest use of one's talents and interests—the need "to become everything that one is capable of becoming." Self-actualization is highly individualistic and reflects Maslow's premise that the self is "sovereign and inviolable" and entitled to "his or her own tastes, opinions, values, etc."

- **Self-transcendence**
- At the level of self-actualization, the individual works to actualize the individual's own potential, **and** at the level of transcendence, the individual's own needs are put aside, to a great extent, in favor of service to others.
- Is the highest level of human psychological development where the real aim of human existence is essentially self-transcendence rather than self-actualization, and self-actualization cannot be attained if it is made an end in itself, but only as an effect of self-transcendence.

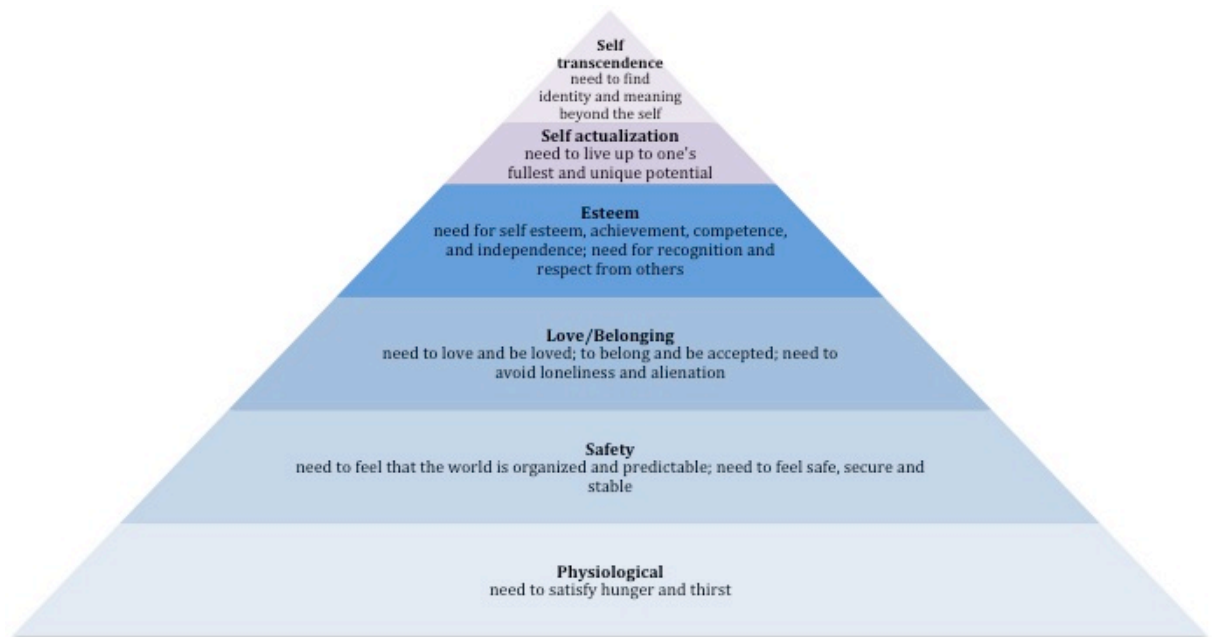


Figure 1

Lawrence Kohlberg, *Stages of moral development*

### About

**Lawrence Kohlberg** (1927-1987) was an American psychologist who was a professor in the Psychology Department at the University of Chicago and at the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. Considered an unusual subject of study, he pursued the topic of moral judgment (work continuing Jean Piaget's account of children's moral development). Kohlberg's work continued not just where Piaget had left off, but also the work of George Herbert Mead and James Mark Baldwin. In so doing, he created a new field within psychology: "moral



development.” Kohlberg has been found to be the 30th most eminent psychologist of the 20th century.<sup>5</sup>

### Significant contributions to the field

- Kohlberg's stages of moral development consisted of work that was seen as a continuation or adaptation of the theory originally conceived by the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. He postulated that these stages are planes explaining the development of moral reasoning.
- Kohlberg's approach assumes that humans are intrinsically motivated to explore, and become competent at functioning in their environments.
- The order of stages of **moral development** corresponds to a sequence of progressively inclusive social circles (family, peers, community, etc.) in which human beings look to operate competently. Oriented by reciprocity and mutual care and respect, growing humans adapt to larger and larger circles of justice, care, and respect. Each stage of moral cognitive development is the realization in conscious thought of the relations of justice, care, and respect exhibited in a wider circle of social relations.
- Moral reasoning is the basis for ethical behavior, and Kohlberg identified six developmental constructive stages – each more adequate at responding to moral dilemmas than the previous. The higher stages of moral development provide the person with greater capacities/abilities in terms of decision making and allow people to manage higher levels of complexity.
- He was a leading contributor in educational circles for his applied work of moral education in schools. The three major contributions Kohlberg made to moral education were the use of Moral Exemplars, Dilemma Discussions, and Just Community Schools.
- Kohlberg's examined the lives of moral exemplars that practiced principled morals such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Socrates, and Abraham Lincoln. He believed that moral exemplars' words and deeds increased the moral reasoning of those who watched and listened to them.
- Kohlberg's theories have been used in the creation of DIT (Defining Issues Test) created by James Rest. A later version of this (revised in 1999) continues to be utilized in moral testing for divinity, politics and medicine.
- A relationship between higher levels of EEG coherence and Kohlberg's emerging Stage 7 have been studied in scientific research of the last 40 years which, has indicated that subjective experiences of higher states of development directly correlate with physiological changes especially observable higher functioning of the brain.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cs.umb.edu/~hdeblois/285L/Kohlberg'sMoralStages.htm>

## Key Points

Kohlberg's six stages can be grouped into three levels of two stages each: **pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional**. Following Piaget's theory of cognitive development, once a certain level or stage is achieved; it is extremely rare to regress in stages—to lose the use of higher stage abilities. By the same token stages cannot be skipped; each provides a new and necessary perspective, more comprehensive and differentiated than its predecessors but integrated with them, like Russian nesting dolls. The following is an overview of levels and stages.

### ***Level 1 (Pre-Conventional)***

- Common in children, but adults can exhibit this level of reasoning, whereby the individual judges the morality of an action by its direct consequences.
- This level comprises the first and second stages of moral development and is solely concerned with the self in an egocentric manner.
- Pre-conventional morality has not yet adopted or internalized society's conventions regarding what is right or wrong but instead focuses largely on external consequences that certain actions may bring.

#### **Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation**

*(How can I avoid punishment?)*

#### **Stage 2: Self-interest orientation**

*(What's in it for me?)*

*(Paying for a benefit)*

### ***Level 2 (Conventional)***

- Common in adolescents and adults, and reasoning in a conventional way is to judge the morality of actions by comparing them to society's views and expectations.
- The conventional level consists of the third and fourth stages of moral development, characterized by an acceptance of society's conventions concerning right and wrong. At this level an individual obeys rules and follows society's norms even when there are no consequences for obedience or disobedience. Adherence to rules and conventions is somewhat rigid, and a rule's appropriateness or fairness is seldom questioned.

#### **Stage 3: Interpersonal accord and conformity**

*(Social norms)*

*(The good boy/girl attitude)*

#### **Stage 4: Authority and social-order maintaining orientation**

*(Law and order morality)*

### Level 3 (Post-Conventional)

- Known as the principled level, it is marked by a growing realization that individuals are separate entities from society, and that the individual's own perspective may take precedence over society's view.
- Individuals may disobey rules inconsistent with their own principles. Post-conventional moralists live by their own ethical principles—these principles typically include such basic human rights as life, liberty, and justice. People who exhibit post-conventional morality view rules as useful but changeable mechanisms—ideally rules can maintain the general social order and protect human rights.
- Rules are not absolute dictates that must be obeyed without question. Individuals at the post-conventional level will prioritize their own moral evaluation of a situation over social conventions, and thus their behavior, especially at stage six, can be confused with those at the pre-conventional level.

#### Stage 5: Social contract orientation

#### Stage 6: Universal ethical principles (*Principled conscience*) orientation

## Kohlberg's Moral Stages

Level and Age	Stage	What determines right and wrong?
<b>Preconventional:</b> Up to the Age of 9	Punishment & Obedience	Right and wrong defined by what they get punished for. If you get told off for stealing then obviously stealing is wrong.
	Instrumental - Relativist	Similar, but right and wrong is now determined by what we are rewarded for, and by doing what others want. Any concern for others is motivated by selfishness.
<b>Conventional:</b> Most adolescents and adults	Interpersonal concordance	Being good is whatever pleases others. The child adopts a conformist attitude to morality. Right and wrong are determined by the majority
	Law and order	Being good now means doing your duty to society. To this end we obey laws without question and show a respect for authority. Most adults do not progress past this stage.
<b>Postconventional:</b> 1 0 to 15% of the over 20s.	Social contract	Right and wrong now determined by personal values, although these can be over-ridden by democratically agreed laws. When laws infringe our own sense of justice we can choose to ignore them.
	Universal ethical principle	We now live in accordance with deeply held moral principles which are seen as more important than the laws of the land.

Figure 2

### ***The emergence of stage 7 within an understanding of moral development and “natural law”***

With the advent of the latest knowledge in Quantum mechanics, we have come to understand that the universe is one whole – unbroken, where everything is woven together in invisible links. Modern science has come to agree on this basic nature of the universe which, for thousands of years has been the premise of the wisdom traditions of both east and west. Thus, we come to the basic center of gravity for stage 7, ***Cosmic Orientation***.

Although Kohlberg was not able to collect empirical evidence in this stage (partly due to his untimely death), he explained that a cosmic perspective is in keeping with an inherent order within the universe, and a connection with that cosmic order. By extension, “natural law” theory points to the fact that “human responsibilities, duties and rights are not arbitrary or even dependent on social norms but rather arise from fundamental laws of nature. Western philosophy has held that individuals can apprehend these laws of nature through the exercise of reason.”

At this later stage, the human being is able to go beyond the issue of morality itself, and enter into the realm of answering what it means to be fully human, and “why be moral?” In Kohlberg’s thinking, this is about going beyond universal justice, and beyond despair, to an experience of oneness and connectedness to the larger cosmic whole or order – to the emergence of a transcendental morality.

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