

## Introduction

# What is Integrative Leadership?

*“You cannot teach a man anything;  
you can only help him find it within himself.”*

GALILEO GALILEI

**B**EFORE WE CONTINUE WITH THE STORY of John and Mary, we would like to pause and give you some background on our perspective regarding leadership development and the framework we have developed and will use to help guide John and Mary through their life and leadership journey.

### **Integrative Leadership**

Integrative Leadership is a holistic approach to leading oneself and others in a reflective, conscious, thoughtful and responsive way. The process of integration involves multiple perspectives, four domains of intelligence (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) and three levels of awareness (personality, individuality, universality). Integrative leadership is an integral philosophy, a framework model, a set of universal principles and an emerging practice that informs and helps build a foundation for personal, interpersonal and organizational success.

### **Our Leadership Beliefs**

In our years as reflective practitioners of leadership we have come to believe that leadership is:

- Everyone's business, regardless of position or situation. Everyone has the capacity to lead. Leadership is a choice.
- Development of the whole person. All leadership development is ultimately self-development.
- About people and process, whereas management is about the work and goals. Both are needed for sustainable success.
- About meaningful and purposeful relationships with yourself and others.
- About producing transactional, transformational and transcendent change, individually and organizationally.
- About an outside story (actions, behaviors, opinions) and an inside story (intentions, thoughts, feelings) that require balance, truth, compassion and wisdom to be effectively integrated.
- About learning. Leaders are learners who learn by a) experience, b) accessing role models, coaches, mentors, and counselors, and c) education, training and development. We have found that everyone can, through patient and consistent practice, become a better leader.

We believe that the greatest leverage to being a responsive, Integrative Leader is through personal development addressing multiple perspectives, all four intelligences, all three levels of awareness, and awakening and effectively using our power of choice.

### **Evolution and Involution**

In leadership development we can move from the outside in, which we call *evolution*, or from the inside out, which we call *involution*. These two forces of change and development have been with us since the beginning of time. If we are influenced more by actions, behaviors and our senses, then we are more evolutionary in our approach to life. If we are influenced more by our core

values, beliefs, principles and intuitions that can help us reshape our attitudes and emotions and inform our behaviors, then we are more involuntarily.<sup>1</sup>

Both these processes are happening for us simultaneously. We will discuss this further in Chapter 1, with two complementary forces—separation and integration—discussed in Chapter 2.

### **The Coming Age of Integration**

We have moved through various ages in the history of humankind. We have evolved from walking on hind legs nearly ten million years ago to being hunters, gatherers, nomads, shepherds, farmers, industrialists, informationalists and knowledge masters. Today, we are entering a new age of wisdom, synthesis and integration. This new age is the subject of debate on how it will impact our global socio-economic framework over the next decade. Integrative Leaders will thrive in this coming time of transition by willingly awakening, developing and utilizing more of their natural human potential. We will discuss this coming *Age of Integration* more fully in Chapter 3.

### **Building a Model of Integrative Leadership™**

#### **Multiple Perspectives**

Integrative Leaders see the world from multiple perspectives. This is fundamental to developing creativity, adaptability and flexibility. Without this ability, we can only see the world through our own narrow perspective. In any exchange, we need to suspend for a moment our own beliefs and attitudes to allow ourselves to see the others. Without this openness and curiosity about life and people, we remain rigid in our thinking. These rigid beliefs act as barriers to seeing the world as it truly is, and move us instead to seeing our world only as we are.

#### **Four Domains of Intelligence**

The four domains of intelligence are physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. The physical involves impulsive, instinctive thinking; the mental involves serial thinking; the emotional, associative thinking; and the spiritual, unitive

thinking. The latter three all use the physical domain to express themselves in the world. Whereas management primarily focuses on actions and thoughts, leadership also focuses on feelings and intentions. An Integrative Leader awakens, develops and uses all four domains of intelligence to inform evaluating, decision-making, problem solving and planning processes.

### Three Levels of Awareness

In our work, we also observed that there are three levels of awareness that influence our journey of life and leadership.

The first level is about our *personality*, our *image of self*, or what we call our *Surreal Self* that we publicly show to the world. This level is often superficial and skims the surface of who we really are, and captures much of our waking attention. When this intoxication with our worldly life becomes unfulfilling, our search for fulfillment can move our attention upwards and inwards to more fully engage our second level of awareness.

Level II awareness is about our *Individuality* or *Character* that is our more private thoughts and feelings about our world and is the home of our *Real Self*. From Level II awareness, our attention can be drawn back to the noise, glamour and glimmer of Level I awareness, or our search for lasting fulfillment can move our attention higher and more deeply inward to fully engage our Level III awareness.

Level III awareness is about our *Universality* or *Essence* and is the home of our *True Self*. It is the level from which wisdom, higher knowledge, genuine compassion, authentic happiness, original inspirations and higher sensory perception flow into our conscious Level I awareness. This flow serves to not only capture, but also enrapture, enlighten and illuminate our attention. Our *Ideal* is a consciously formulated image of who we would like to become. It can be attuned to and motivated by any of our three levels of awareness. The highest of what we can conceive as the best of human qualities and virtues is our *Ideal Self*. As we attune, apply and embody our Ideal in our daily life, our knowledge and understanding of our Ideal will evolve and in time, will become more and more aligned, harmonious and resonant with our True Self. This is the aim or goal of the journey and process of integration. When we compare our Ideal Self to our Real and Surreal Selves, we find that there are some alignments, overlaps and areas of strengths upon which we can build. And we also find that there are misalignments, separations and

areas for development. The separation between our three levels of awareness we call the *Being-Knowing-Doing* Gap.<sup>2</sup>

Building on our alignments and strengths while reducing and minimizing these gaps is an essential part of the journey to becoming an Integrative Leader.

### **A Fifth Domain: The Power of Choice**

The method for negotiating through the four domains of our intelligence and the three levels of our awareness is awakening and utilizing our power of will, choice and desire.

For the majority, our will is either mesmerized, hypnotized or asleep while immersed in Level I awareness. Awakening our personal will is a step along the path of integration that is first seen as negation, then negotiation and finally affirmation. The phase of affirmation leads to full conscious, responsible and accountable development of our personal will. The final step on the path towards integration is to allow our personal will to be informed and transformed into our *Higher Will* so that more of our True Self can be embodied in our world.

We will deal more fully with the four domains of intelligence, three levels of awareness and the power of choice in Chapter 4, *Building a Model of Integrative Leadership*.

## **The Process of Becoming an Integrative Leader**

The journey of becoming an Integrative Leader can be described in various ways. It is about making the unconscious conscious. It is about balancing and harmonizing our inner and outer stories. It is about integrating our various personality roles into a more congruent and cohesive whole among many other similar perspectives.

Each leader has a unique path to walk for personal and professional development and integration. However, there are some similar patterns, perspectives and processes that seem to be the same for all who have successfully walked the path of integrative life and leadership that involve change, choice and approach.

There are three processes of change: transactional, associated with Level I awareness; transformational, associated with Level II awareness; and

transcendent, associated with Level III awareness. All three processes are evident in the journey of integrative life and leadership.

There are fundamentally two choices before us in every situation we may encounter. We can either react from our past habits and image of self, or respond in accordance with our Ideal Self. One choice leads to sameness and mediocrity and the other to growth and adventure. Cultivating the practice of reflection becomes a key that will help to inform your choice in the present moment.

Just as there are two fundamental choices, there are also two fundamental approaches to the journey of integration. One is the path of struggle. The other is the path of flow. The path of struggle has been called the ‘crucible of leadership’<sup>3</sup> and is often characterized by crisis, drama, loss and trauma. 85% of the world currently walks the path of struggle. The path of flow has been called ‘awakening the soul of leadership’ and is characterized by peak experiences, awe, wonder, grace and adventure. 15% of the world currently walks the path of flow.<sup>4</sup> Cultivating the practices of awareness and attention will help you apprehend the messages from your inner and outer life that will in turn help your journey of integration have more flow and less struggle.

Chapter 5, *The Process of Becoming an Integrative Leader*, will move into more detail about these aspects of the journey as well as the seven elements of becoming an Integrative Leader.

## **Guidelines for Becoming an Integrative Leader**

The foundational guidelines for the integrative journey are Universal Laws that operate everywhere, all the time, on everyone and everything. They are beyond belief because, for example, whether or not you believe in the law of gravity, it still works. Awareness of these Universal Laws and seeking to align, apply and understand them will help you successfully navigate your personal journey of integration.

The eight Universal Laws, twelve principles for strengthening relationships and twelve Integrative, Transformative & Transcendent (ITT) Practices, if habituated, become a natural life-giving response to the ever changing events of your life.

We will share our understanding of these Universal Laws, principles and associated practices more fully in Chapter 6.

## **Organizational Integration™: Building a Living Organization**

For an organization to be alive, its constituents must number among the *living* as opposed to the *living dead*. The process of integration is one that helps renew and awaken new life in individuals, and by association, the organizations they serve.

Applying the integrative leadership philosophy, principles and practices to an organization can help its culture transform from a surviving to a thriving one. This process, which we call *Organizational Integration*, will allow them to be engaged, enthused and inspired to make a meaningful difference. We will share some further thoughts and ideas about *Organizational Integration* and *Building a Living Organization* in Chapter 7.

## **An Emerging Integral Philosophy**

Over the past three years, Integrative Leadership has evolved into a philosophy, worldview or integrative paradigm. The key points that comprise this philosophy are:

- Everybody and every body of knowledge contain a portion of the truth, but no one body at this time contains it all.
- Life is our teacher and our Ideal Self is our guide. Our life provides our life and leadership curriculum.
- Everyone can become their Ideal Self by having the courage to experiment and practice new behaviors.
- The process of becoming our Ideal Self is as important as the goal. Balance between our process and goal orientations is important for successfully walking the path of integration.
- An unreflective life is not worth living. Without regular periodic life reviews, we tend to repeat the mistakes of our past *image of self*.

- We are more than our actions, thoughts and feelings. Within us resides a vast untapped and unexplored sea of energy, information and potential. Tapping into this sea of energy and information and allowing it to move with us and through us becomes the path of flow.
- Higher-order integrative thinking can solve old problems in often unique and surprising ways.
- There is a shadow side and a light side within every leader. Acknowledging and dealing with our shadow side while emphasizing the light side are necessary parts of the process of becoming an Integrative Leader.

We hope that you see a reflection of your own life and leadership journey in John's, Mary's and our own, and that it will give you more clarity, new insights and a heightened awareness of who you are and what you want to do with this gift of life we have all been given.