

Merging Behavioral and Developmental Practices: Creating an Integral Framework for Deep Listening and Thinking based on Developmental Tools

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Present work with individuals and groups/teams in coaching and consulting, whether in Europe or the US, is *behavioral* in the sense that emphasis is put on how people act based on psychological traits and personal and organizational experiences and competences. We propose a broadening of this traditional framework by integrating into it theoretical and empirical findings from adult-developmental research as practiced through CDF, the *Constructive Developmental Framework* (Laske, 1999; 2005; 2008;2015). This amounts to shifting attention from individuals' and teams' behavior to their *frame of reference*, or way of constructing the world internally through emotion and thinking.

Broadening and deepening the traditional coaching and consulting framework is for us a matter of introducing new **listening and thinking tools, the latter based upon the former** (ascolto evolutivo). This entails introducing new perspectives as well. Doing so has a different purpose, meaning, process and outcome for work with individuals compared to work with groups or teams.

Below, we address work with individuals in Section A, work with groups and teams in Section B from a pragmatic point of view. Important for both kinds of work is the realization that a purely emotional, psychological or "spiritual" focus will not help consultants improve people's conceptual construction of their "world", that is, the *frame of reference* that underlies their behavior and decision making. Therefore, in CDF we always integrate a "social-emotional" and "cognitive" approach, for the purpose of working holistically and systemically.

A. Work with Individuals

Meaning: setting individuals on the path of self authoring

Purpose: increasing the effectiveness of interventions, for the sake of realizing individuals' developmental potential

Process: individual coaching sessions (embedded in strategic organizational projects); supervision of coaches learning to become developmental coaches

Outcome: self aware individuals in their private and professional sphere, realizing their citizenship responsibility

Our goal in working with individuals is to enter more deeply into their present experience, and to address their needs and issues on the level they presently function at developmentally and in real time.

Individuals often find it hard to understand their own behavioral *ego* and developmental *self* sufficiently. As consultants, we take that fact into account by using deep listening and deep thinking techniques. *Deep listening* in CDF means to listen for the “meaning generator” of a person, *socio-emotionally*, and for the sense-making generator (construction of the world) of the person, *cognitively*. CDF provides a set of tools for both ways of listening, -- tools we refer to as “prompts”.

We understand individuals' meaning-making generator by using projective keywords eliciting answers we can decode based on our insight into developmental stages, as shown in Fig. 1, below. The answers tell us how a client presently "sees" him- or herself relative to others, and what is beyond their ken, especially in terms of self authoring (taking full responsibility).

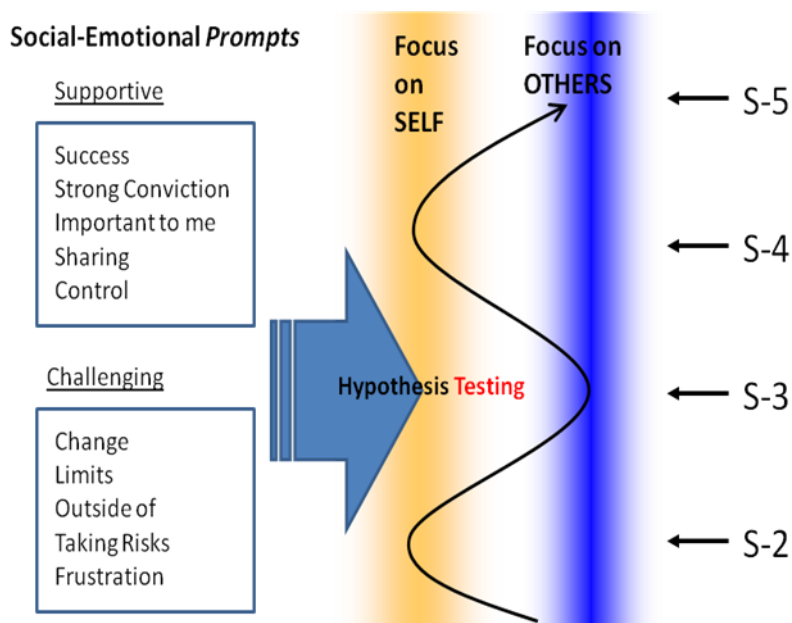


Fig. 1 Listening based on testing social-emotional hypotheses formulated with the aid of client answers to prompts

As we want to show in Fig. 1, a social-emotional intervention rests on two pillars: (1) prompts chosen by the client (left) and (2) hypotheses formulated by us regarding the level of meaning making from which the client is projecting him- or herself into the prompt (right). By formulating and testing hypotheses based on what is said in real time, our listening is highly focused on getting answers regarding the speaker's present developmental level. For us, this level is the yardstick that determines how we construct an intervention.

As shown further below, our "cognitive prompts" are either moments of dialectic (classes of thought forms) or individual thought forms (TFs), depending on the complexity of a cognitive dialog we engage clients in. Cognitive prompts answered by clients lead to inferences about the structure and fluidity of a speaker's present thinking.

As CDF consultants, we always ready to listen to clients "both ways", and we know when to switch from an emotional to a cognitive orientation for the benefit of clients. In this fashion, we utilize a holistic approach, making informal or formal assessments of individuals' developmental profile, and then entering into dialog with them according to our interpretation of empirical findings they provide us with. The capability to do this can be schooled, and has been shown to be learnable, within a period of about 1 year (or less), based on mentoring and assiduous practice. It leads to *evidence based* counseling, coaching, and consulting.

B. Work with Groups and Teams: Focus on New Thinking Tools

Meaning: creating collaborative intelligence in teams

Purpose: increasing the effectiveness of interventions for the sake of organizational innovation and culture transformation

Process: introduction of techniques of deep listening and thinking; playing *thought games* at different levels of complexity (see below); turning team members into observers of themselves and each other, especially in their thinking

Outcome: deep thinking and listening teams practicing openness in reaching consensus and joining in action

Our goal in working with groups and teams centers on creating *collaborative intelligence*: making each team member *think for him-/herself (rather than collectively)*, liberated from previous adherence to downloaded (taken for granted) models, whichever they are.

Not all groups are teams. Therefore, we distinguish one from the other. We do so by bringing to bear on our work a social-emotionally grounded typology of groups/teams that is based on the "developmental spread" we perceive to exist in a team. This spread (or range of developmental profiles) helps us understand the dynamics of the group or team we are working with, as well as the extent to which we can count on a group becoming a team.

While we don't give a group or team explicit feedback on its developmental spread, but rather on issues arising in its *personal process*, we give constant feedback on members' thinking as we perceive it by deeply listening to the dynamics of their *task process*.

In this, our listening follows the AQAL matrix shown below which we deepen by following up dialog within each quadrant by identifying, explaining, and using four interrelated classes of thought forms (TFs) referred to as C (context), P (process), R (relationship), and T (transformation). We think of these classes of TFs as moments of dialectic of dialog oriented to a particular quadrant with, thus moving from AQAL (all quadrants, all levels) to AQAT, *all quadrants all thought forms*:

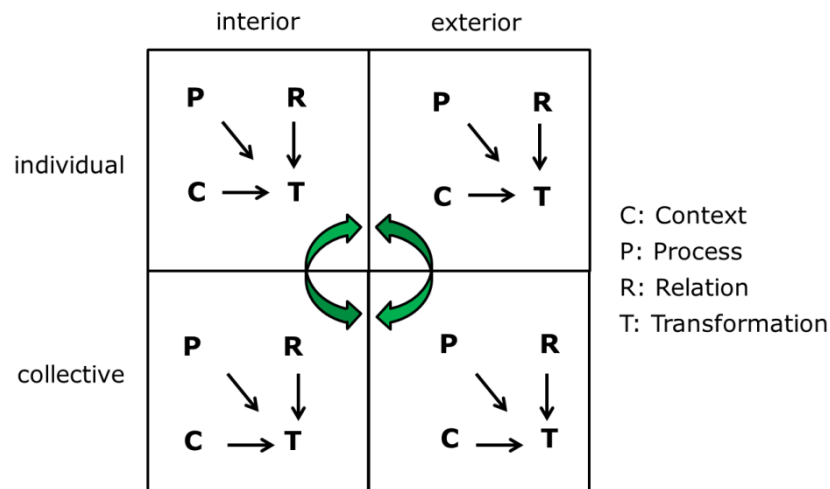


Table 1. Four classes of TFs inherent in Wilber's AQAL
(Courtesy B. Frischherz, 2014)

In detail, this stepwise immersion in the complexity of each quadrant, and especially the increasing awareness of the relationship *between* quadrants, looks like shown in Table 2, below:

	Step 1: <i>Identify (other's TFs)</i> [Listening]	Step 2: <i>Reflect (on own TFs)</i> [Focus on Thinking]	Step 3: <i>Use (TFs in speech and writing)</i>
Practice Level 1 Simple Tools (4 moments of dialectic, or classes of TFs)	Analyze/classify pictures/texts	Reflect on a problem (of your own, or your group or team)	Ask questions of self or others; describe and illuminate an issue posed in private or in a group or team
Practice Level 2 Medium Tools	Compare speech or text fragments	Reflect on a highlighted detail	Rethink a problem in terms of 3

(12 TFs, 3 representing each class of TFs)		or base concept of your own or the team's problem discussion	successive levels: pointing (p) elaborating (e) linking (l)
Practice Level 3 Complex Tools (28 TFs, 7 representing each class of TFs)	Analyze a structured interview transcription or book text in terms of TFs used therein	Bring to bear on a problem all details and perspectives so far illuminated, either in yourself and in the group or team	Coach the thinking process of an individual, or of a group/team

Table 2. Three levels of thinking complexity differentiated into three practice steps in the *Dialectical Thought Form Framework* (DTF)

(Adapted from N. Shannon and B. Frischherz, ESRAD conference, The Hague, 2016)

In step 1 ("simple tools"), we make group and team members aware that they are "thinking", by pointing to (or asking about) the moments of dialectic they presently employ, here shown in a visual form.

C:Context

P:Process

R:Relationship

T:Transformation



Fig. 2. The four moments of dialectic visualized (Bhaskar, 1993; Laske, 2008)


This makes members aware that there are other, alternative, perspectives they could take on an issue at hand, delving into the content they are fixated on. Following the sequence of *Identify* → *Reflect* → *Use*, we lead members deeper and deeper into their own untrammelled thinking until the "models" they are presently following become an object of reflection for them, and thus fall away. This has the result that group or team members gain insight into the process of their own thinking, thereby re-gaining their natural creativity (Steiner's "thought process" in contradistinction to "thoughts").

In step 2 ("medium-sized tools") we proceed to explicating the four moments of dialectic **in terms of the four classes of TFs**, thus introducing actual *thinking tools*. (In this way, we go

beyond quadrants as well as moments, Wilber as well as Bhaskar). This enables us to highlight three levels of complexity of thinking in clients:

- *Pointing* to an issue in terms of a TF (p, e.g., Cp)
- *Elaborating* on an issue in terms of a TF (e, e.g., Ce)
- *Linking* a specific TF to a different TF in the same (l, e.g., Cl) or different class, the latter being referred to as *coordinating* TFs.

Context Themes	Process Themes	Relationship Themes	Transformation Themes
Cp: Relationship between Part(s) and Whole	Pp: Emergence and Inclusion of Opposites	Rp: Bringing Elements into Relationship	Tp: Limits of System Stability
Ce: Structure and Stability of a System	Pe: Patterns of Interaction	Re: Structure of Relationships	Te: Developmental Movement
Cl: Multiple Contexts and Frame of Reference	Pl: Embedding in Process	Rl: Patterns of Interaction and Influence	Tl: Comparison and Coordination of Systems



Integration/Listening

(C) CS&KE All Associates, 2013

Table 3. Three levels of explication of an issue by way of TFs

Pedagogically, this is the central training ground for preparing complex thinking to emerge. We are readying clients for step 3, comprehensive deep thinking, in which we explicate each class of TFs by way of 7 (rather than only 3) TFs. In our experience, individuals and teams thereby arrive at deeper and untrammled thinking about an issue, and are able to discard the crutches that downloaded models previously provided for them. Social-emotionally speaking, this also enhances their ability to embrace self-authoring.

CONCLUSION

We have outlined the different *meaning, purpose, process, and outcome* of work with CDF for engaging with individuals and groups/teams. At this time, evidence-based *cognitive coaching* in

the sense of thought forms is unknown outside of IDM, the focus being exclusively and narrowly on social-emotional and psychological issues. This also holds true for teams.

When working with teams cognitively, social-emotional issues, now the sole focus of the team literature, can always be introduced explicitly when needed to strengthen team members' personal process. Integral constellations that are now largely "flat" (and behavioral) thereby gain strength in terms of structure and observable process, and this helps with moving attention from the WHAT to the HOW of thought processes, -- a liberating step in the adult development of a person as well as team.

Pragmatic Conclusion: Evidently, workshops for *CDF beginners* would be focused on simple notions of social-emotional differences (livelli socio-emotive) and the four moments of dialectic (CPRT) as pictured in Figs. 1 and 2, respectively. Second-level workshops would engage intermediate stages of meaning making (not shown in Fig. 1) and the use of 12 TFs unfolding the four moments of dialectic (Table 3). Finally, advanced workshops would focus on the full spectrum of social-emotional and cognitive CDF tools for intervention with both individuals and teams. (The table of 28 TFs is not shown in this paper.)

In this way, a three-level cohesive didactic program of developmental constellation work in counseling and consulting would become reality. Experiences already accumulated would be enriched since previous perspectives and coaching/consulting strategies and plans would be refined. On the other hand, IDM would gain additional experience in the integral *didactics* of social-emotional and cognitive listening and thinking, resulting in concrete benefits for clients.

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