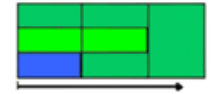


# **Introduction to Cognitive Coaching Using the Four Quadrants of Dialectic**

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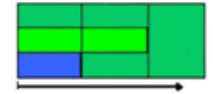


# Course Objectives

## Objectives

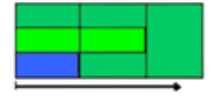
This course introduces coaches to the Dialectical Thought Form Framework (DTF), both for expanding the coach's own thinking and that of his or her client. The workshop focuses on experiential learning. It combines information intake, reflection, and rehearsal of concepts and methods, focusing on **cognitive coaching**.

Dialectical thinking transcends logical thinking. It starts in late adolescence and matures gradually over entire life span. It is here introduced as a coaching tool for harnessing the client's best capabilities for thinking on his or her own, being critical of others' thinking, and arriving at a broad and flexible world view.

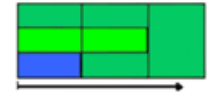


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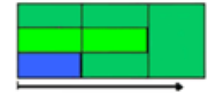
# 1. Dialectical Thinking in Coaching



## This Course is About Your Thinking

- Rarely do coaches focus on their own thinking.
- But how is your own thinking structurally different from that of others?
- Logical thinking is inadequate for understanding systems in transformation such as yourself and your client.
- This course will open up for you new avenues of reflecting on your own thinking and that of your clients.
- The course is essentially about YOU, since what you can't "think" you won't be able to see in your clients' either.
- Nobody can change your thinking but you yourself.

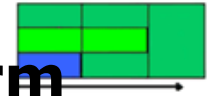
**Dialectical thinking is a *discovery procedure* for finding new ways of understanding your own world and that of your clients.**



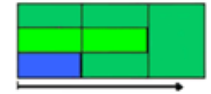
## What Does Coaching have to do with Thinking?

- Thinking is broader in scope than emotion; it is the capacity that transforms mere feeling into emotion and refines emotion.
- When working with coachees, we are focused on both their feeling and thinking. It is fruitful to separate the two from each other.
- Both emotion and thinking create “reality” for an individual, but these realities differ. Thinking is able to create “objective” realities, thus broadening what is real for an individual.
- Language and thinking are inseparable. Through articulation in language, thinking creates for each person his or her own frame of reference, or world view.
- In contrast to behavioral coaching, developmental coaching is about changing a coachee’s frame of reference.

## 2. Introduction to the Dialectical Thought Form Framework (DTF) for Coaches



- By listening to our clients focused on the structure, rather than the content of their thinking, we can begin to assess their level of cognitive development.
- As developmental coaches, we are interested in how fluid their (dialectical) thinking is by which they construct their "world".
- In order to understand a coachee's present level of cognition, we listen to what they say to us and "filter" their speech flow through a theoretical framework called the Four Quadrants of Dialectic and their associated thought forms.
- By so doing, we gain many advantages:
  1. We understand in depth how a coachee constructs "reality", -- what is real for him or her.
  2. We can give the coachee feedback on his or her ways of thinking, and help him/her gain a higher degree of fluidity of thinking.
  3. We can help the coachee take different perspectives on his life, work, goals, and environment, and discover new aspects of herself so far unseen.
  4. We can actively "change" the way a coachee lives and works, both in his/her making meaning and sense making, and can thereby change his or her Frame of Reference.



## **Exercise 1: Understanding the Three Managers**

How coachee's differ in their Frame of Reference is well illustrated by the report of three managers on one and the same organizational situation.

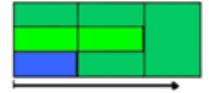
For coaches, these differences should be highly revealing. When understood in their structural depth, they give rise to different coaching approaches customized to a coachee's present level of cognitive development.

**Question: What are the differences in thinking between the three managers, and what can we learn from a comparison of their different „takes“ on their company's present situation?**

- **Work in Groups of 3-4**

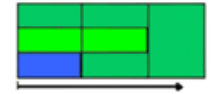
**➔ Exercise 1**



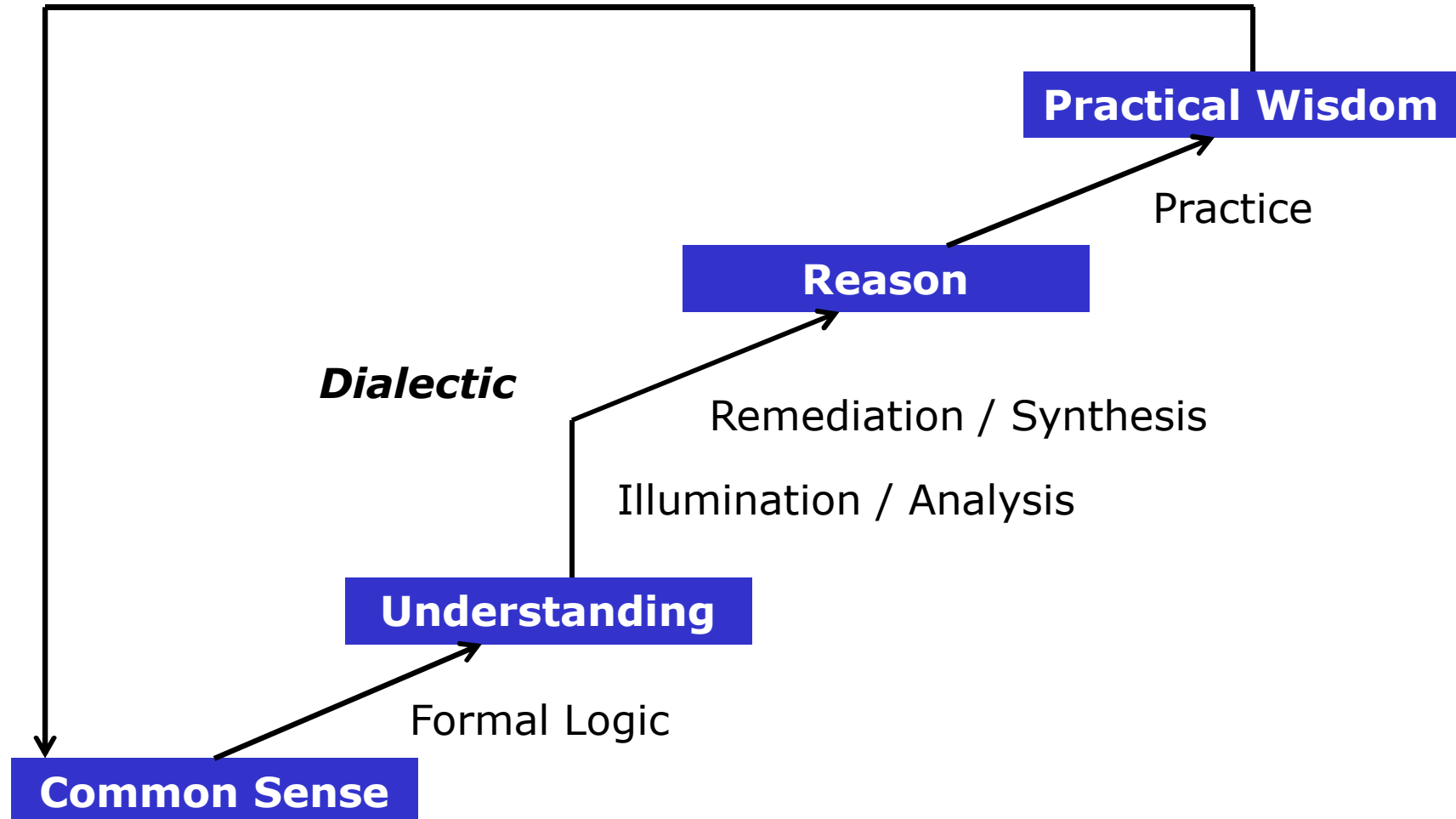


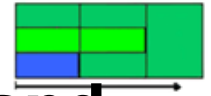
## Understanding Structural Differences of Thinking

- From the example of the Three Managers, we have seen that different individuals think differently about one and the same situation, event, or process.
- We now need to understand not only the content differences, but the structural differences, between the three Managers: how they differ in the structure of the thinking.
- For this purpose, we need to delve into the theory of cognitive development which gives rise to dialectical thinking.



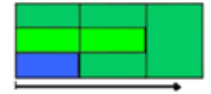
# Four Eras of Adult Cognitive Development



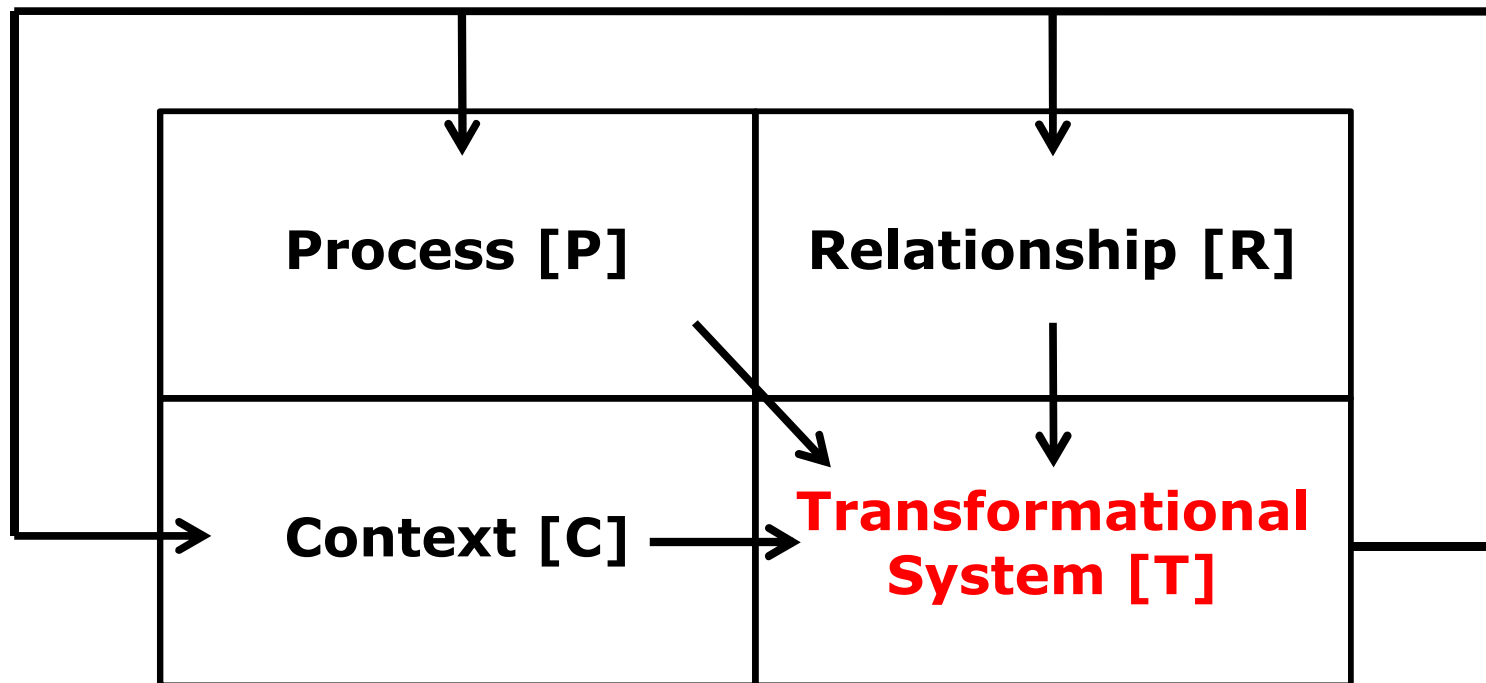


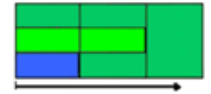
# What Era of Cognitive Development Are You and Your Client Presently In?

- When listening to your client with “dialectical ears”, you will notice the following:
  - A client speaking from within *Common Sense* cannot appreciate contradictions and paradoxes.
  - A client speaking from within *Understanding* can appreciate contradictions and paradoxes but does not know what to do with them, and therefore will declare them to be “logically false”, and thus something to be avoided.
  - A client who is on his way from Understanding to *Reasoning* can appreciate what is “absent” (missing, distorted, lied about, in opposition to what is, etc.) to various degrees and can also illuminate (spell out) such absences as part of the real world (4 phases of dialectical thinking); his internal mental space has grown.
  - A client on his/her way to *Practical Wisdom* takes dialectical thinking for granted and reveals his aptitude for using it in all s(he) thinks and speaks about..



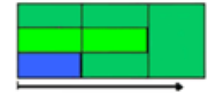
## The Four Quadrants of Dialectic Are Separate and Inseparable at the Same Time





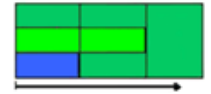
## A Short Explanation of the Four Quadrants of Dialectic

- **Process [P]** – unceasing change in how things emerge into being and vanish into non-being.
- **Context [C]** – stable configurations that appear as a stratified “big picture” momentarily able to withstand unceasing change.
- **Relationship [R]** – unity in diversity that shows how what is different is different only relative to a shared commonality (common ground) that includes all differences;
- **Transformation [T]** – systemic equilibrium created in thought and action by integrating different, even opposing, systems, -- a hallmark of human agency at its best.



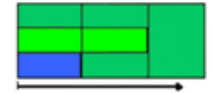
## The Fine Structure of the Quadrants of Dialectic

- The world is not what we think it is; it has its own reality, rarely understood fully by human thinking.
- We therefore need to distinguish what the world IS (its “ontology”) from how humans THINK IT IS (“epistemology”).
- One way to do this is to distinguish “Quadrants” and “thought forms” used in thinking.
- The Quadrants determine what the world is like, while use of thought forms (TFs) determine how we think about the world.
- In DTF, each of the four Quadrants unfolds into 7 different thought forms which together define each quadrant in human thinking.



## Context Quadrant (C)

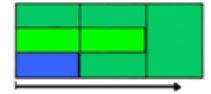




## Context Thought Forms (C)

- **Dialectical image:** “big picture”, in the sense of a whole encompassing parts.
- **Figure:** what appears as a stable, well-balanced form.
- **Ground:** unified by the category of differentiation that introduces variety and depth into what is real, making it alterable.
- **Scope:** multiplicity of entities and thoughts partaking of a common frame of reference.
- **Theme:** equilibrium of what exists.
- **Dialectics:** parts of a whole shifting their balance; stratification; generative mechanisms.

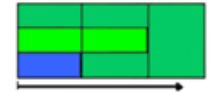




# Process Quadrant

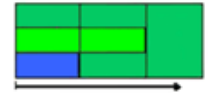


p 17, Experiencing Dialectical Thinking



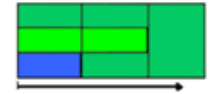
## Process Thought Forms (P)

- **Dialectical image:** emergence (from a void).
- **Figure:** what does not exist yet (is absent) but is emerging through unceasing change.
- **Ground:** unified by the category of absence from which the whole circuit of the four Quadrants derives.
- **Scope:** spanning negation, contradiction, critique.
- **Theme:** the presence of the past and future; motion in thought and reality.
- **Dialectics:** process, transition, interaction, opposition (including reversal).



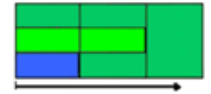
## Relationship Quadrant (R)





## Relationship Thought Forms (R)

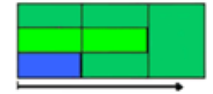
- **Dialectical image:** common ground (totality).
- **Figure:** what does not exist other than held within a totality of (possibly oppositional) links and connections.
- **Ground:** unified by the category of totality, thus of holistic causality.
- **Scope:** all parts of a whole, however split and split off, center to periphery.
- **Theme:** unity in diversity, internal relatedness, illicit separation and fission, (un-dialectical) fixation on unrelated (isolated) elements and multiples.
- **Dialectics:** reciprocal, intrinsic, based on constitutive relationship (logically preceding parts of a whole) and shared, common ground.



## Transformational Quadrant (T)

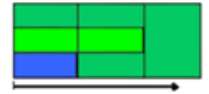






## Transformational Thought Forms (T)

- **Dialectical image:** organism; e.g., beehive, human city.
- **Figure:** what is in constant transformation seeking equilibrium, through physical or mental growth, shift, sudden reversal, virtualization, collapse, breakdown, and pain.
- **Ground:** unified by the social category of transformational praxis or agency.
- **Scope:** all of reality with a focus on human practice.
- **Theme:** stability through developmental movement, attention to problems of coordination and change in a developmental direction, multiplicity of perspective, acknowledgement of human agency as intentional causality in the cosmos.
- **Dialectics:** special affinity with Process as social change.

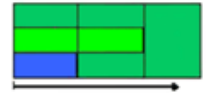


## Short Summary of the Four Quadrants

- **Content Quadrant:** All that appears stable and is endlessly differentiated; big picture.
- **Process Quadrant:** All that emerges out of absence, and is in unceasing motion.
- **Relationship Quadrant:** All that together makes up a totality sharing a common ground; unity in diversity; nothing is isolated or single.
- **Transformational Quadrant:** [conceivable only when the previous three quadrants have been mastered] the world seen and acted upon as a holon that maintains itself only by constantly disintegrating and reassembling, partly on account of human agency.

=> Exercise 2

# Unfolding the Quadrants of Dialectic Through Thought Forms (TFs)

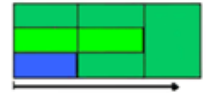


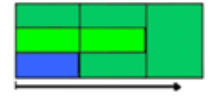
- The Four Quadrants of Dialectic appear within human thinking as **Classes of Thought Forms**, one for each quadrant.
- Following Basseches (1984), we can assemble the thought forms in a table comprising 7 rows and 4 columns, thus altogether 28 thought forms.
- Each thought form has a particular position and a numerical name.
- This is practical not only for making cognitive assessments through interviews, but also for referring to a particular thought form by name.
- Since dialectic is a discovery procedure, each thought form can be viewed as a **mind opener** by which to expand our own and our clients' thinking.
- E.g., TF 1, "unceasing motion", is a mind opener that points to the fact that nothing is truly stable, whether inside or outside of a person, and thus to the need to avoid arresting motion in thought.



<b>Process TFs</b>	<b>Context TFs</b>	<b>Relationship TFs</b>	<b>Transformation TFs</b>
1. Unceasing motion, negativity	8. Contextualization of part(s) within a whole; emphasis on part	15. Limits of separation. Focus on existence and value of relationship	22. Limits of stability, harmony, durability (incl. quantitative into qualitative changes)
2. Preservative negation, inclusion of antithesis (non-A)	9. Equilibrium of a whole; emphasis on whole	16. Value of bringing into relationship	23. Value of conflict leading in a developmental direction
3. Composition by interpenetrating opposites, correlativity	10. (Description of) structures, functions, layers, strata of a system	17. Critique of reductionism and "detotalized," thus isolated, entities separated from their shared common ground	24. Value of developmental potential leading to higher levels of individual and social functioning
4. Patterns of interaction	11. (Emphasis on the) hierarchical nature of layers systems comprise	18. Relatedness of different value and judgment systems	25. Evaluative comparison of systems in transformation
5. Practical, active character of knowledge	12. Stability of system functioning	19. Structural aspects of relationship	26. Process of coordinating systems
6. Critique of arresting motion (reification)	13. Intellectual systems: frames of reference, traditions, ideologies	20. Patterns of interaction in relationships	27. Open, selftransforming systems
7. Embedding in process, movement	14. Multiplicity of contexts (nontransformational)	21. Constitutive, intrinsic relationships (logically prior to what they relate)	28. Integration of multiple perspectives in order to define complex realities; critique of formalistic thinking

### **3. Cognitive Coaching: Conducting Coaching Sessions Using the Four Quadrants of Dialectic and Their Associated Thought Forms**





# Using Dialectical Thinking in Coaching Sessions

## => Exercise 3

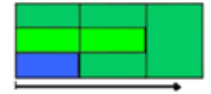
Coaching is an activity suffused in language.

When as a coach you are aware of your own speaking and have learned to listen to your client's speech flow, you begin to be able to discern in it what we can call STRUCTURE in contrast to CONTENT.

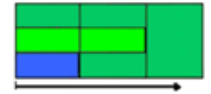
In cognitive-developmental coaching based on the Constructive Developmental Framework (CDF), we take „Structure“ to mean „the Four Quadrants of Dialectic“.

When we listen to client's speech flow in terms of the Four Quadrants of Dialectic and, more highly analytically, in terms of the thought forms through which they unfold, we can deepen coachees' thinking during coaching sessions.

We refer to this approach as „cognitive coaching“.

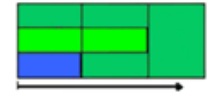


## **4. Cognitive Interviewing: Rehearsing the Use of Tools for Mastery in Cognitive Coaching**

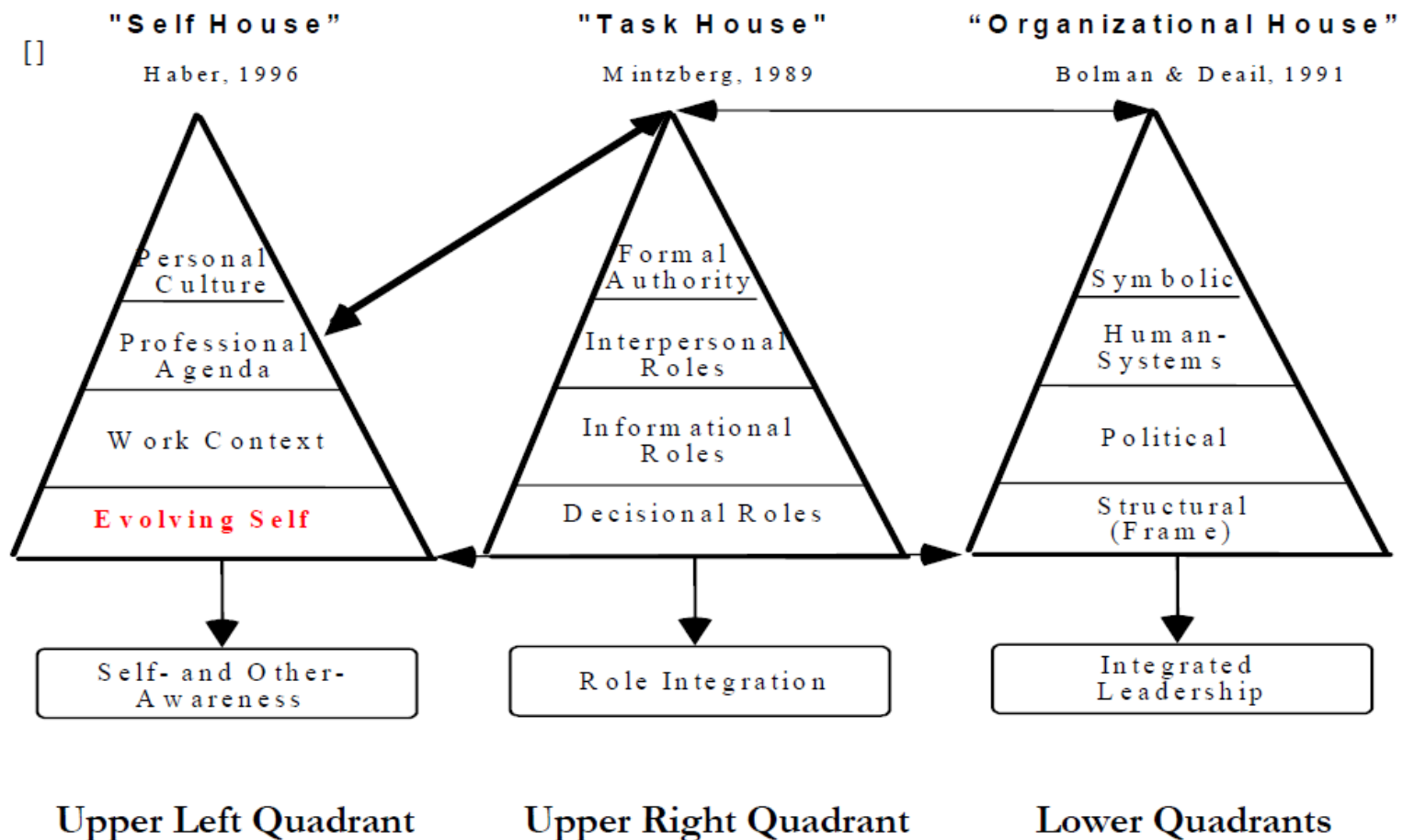


# **Developmental Interviewing is not a Coaching, But Rather a Practice for Mastering Cognitive Coaching**

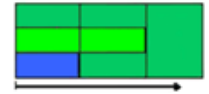
- It is important not to equate developmental interviewing – whether social-emotional or cognitive – with coaching.
- Interviewing precedes coaching, and coaching is based on the empirical outcome data of interviewing.
- However, developmental coaching greatly benefits from using the skills acquired in interviewing.
- One might say that the most important benefit deriving from learning developmental interviewing is that it enables one to master cognitive coaching.
- Interviewing schools structure-focused listening, -- “deep listening” that is focused on structure, not content.
- It is this kind of “developmental listening” that is most beneficial in coaching sessions which focus on expanding a coachee’s cognitive frame of reference.



# The Three Houses: A Template for Conducting a Structured Cognitive Interview

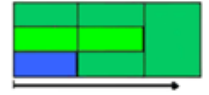


# The Mental Space of Work



- We divide the mental space of work (and of coaching) into three domains or Houses: Self House, Task House, Organizational (Environmental) House.
- Each House has a unique THEME and comprises several FLOORS and ROOMS that are variously open or closed to the client.
- Consultant (coach) and client both reside in each of the Houses, but in different ways:
  - the Self House is the Professional House where both parties reside in terms of their professional intentions and personal uniqueness;
  - the Task House differs for both client and coach and can be objectively described in terms of role played, goals, factual situations, etc.;
  - the Organizational House is complex because it comprises both the lower left and right quadrant, merging 'subjective' and 'objective' realities.
- There is no preordained relationship between Houses and classes of thought forms; all Houses can be described in terms of C, P, R, T.

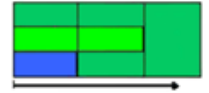
# The Relationship between the Houses



- We can view the Houses as *internal partitions of the client's internal workplace which is projected into the external physical one.*
- We essentially 'go to work' in the inner, not the outer, workplace.
- From the perspective of each House, the environment we work in, organization or not, looks different.
- Since the Houses represent Wilber's quadrants (Self House = UL; Task House = UR; Organizational House = LL&LR), we need to think about them 'systemically', as interconnected.
- In the cognitive interview, therefore, we gauge the phase of a client's thinking in the workplace by investigating how far s(he) can use formal logic tools for purposes of thinking systemically.
- In terms of Jaques, working on Strata V to VIII requires cognitive development beyond formal logic.

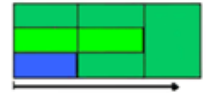


# Interview Guide Questions

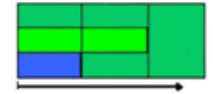


- Task House: Can you please elaborate on your present status and authority (in the company), and the roles that derive from them?
- Organizational House: If you were to think about how you see the organization (environment) you work in from a 'bird's eye' perspective, what would be most striking for you? What perspective, would you say, you are predominantly taking on it:
  - a structural perspective
  - a political perspective
  - a human resource perspective
  - a cultural perspective
- Self House: Please tell me a little bit about how you see your present work context and the professional agenda that grows out of it. (E.g., how does this occupation fit your background and personal culture?)

# Interview Probe Questions



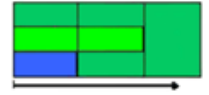
- Probe questions have the purpose of gauging the structure of the client's thinking.
- Keeping close to the "train of thought" of the client, the coach chooses questions that are focused around a particular class of thought forms; s(he) reinforces thought form classes chosen by the client (P, C, R; T).
- See volume 2, Appendix, for available tools for leading cognitive coaching conversations.



## The Three Houses in More Detail

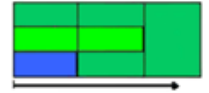
The Three Houses are useful not only in cognitive interviewing, but also in consulting and coaching. They help focus attention on one of three parts of the client's mental space.

# The Self House



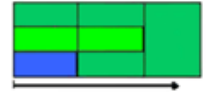
- Both client and coach 'reside' in this House, being professionals each in their own way.
- For each party, the Self House expresses the 'upper first quadrant,' of intention. It comprises four "Floors" (internal dimensions):
  - level of self development (Meaning Making System)
  - work context
  - professional agenda (goals and objectives)
  - (idiosyncratic) personal culture

# Work Context



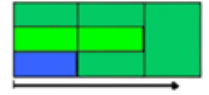
- The client is functioning in a specific work context that includes his/her relationship to the coach.
- The context is a result of mental processes by which the client construes his/her relationship to the organization in practical, action-oriented terms, within the time horizon s(he) is capable of on account of his/her cognitive profile.
- On this floor, we are dealing with the images of 'sponsor,' 'boss,' 'colleague,' and 'management'.
- Also part of this Floor is the client's support system (peers, reports, sponsors).

# The Professional Agenda



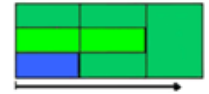
- Central to coaching is the client's *Professional Agenda*.
- The Agenda is a set of unconsciously held ASSUMPTIONS about how to "get things done," by navigating within each of three HOUSES.
- The Agenda is an internal template for action in an organizational or life environment, and derives from (is sourced by) the client's present thinking and developmental level.
- The Agenda comprises: relationship to work, personal mission (mandate), formulation of goals and objectives, approach to tasks, and ways of translating theoretical and ideological convictions into concrete actions.

# Personal Culture



- Personal culture is to be distinguished from organizational culture as dealt with in the Organizational House.
- Since as a leader the client is also the bearer of organizational culture, the line between the two cultures may be difficult to draw. However, the two cultures can be in conflict.
- Topical here are the client's value system and ethical convictions, as well as the coach's ethical responsibilities.
- Personal culture also includes the "cognitive fingerprint" of both coach and executive.

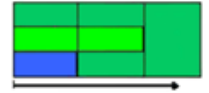
# The (Client's) Organizational House



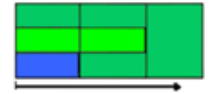
- Only the client has direct access to this House, while the coach learns about this House *indirectly*, via the client.
- In the Organizational House, the client does not act as a performer of roles (as in the Task House), but as a “thinker-in-action” who holds certain conceptions of the organizational environment.
- These “mental frames” give rise to peculiar action schemes specific to the frame.
- We can distinguish four FRAMES (Bolman & Deal, 1991):
  - the structural frame
  - the political frame
  - the human resource frame
  - the symbolic (cultural) frame.
- Importantly, to achieve integrated leadership, the client must be able to hold more than a single frame at the same time, thus taking multiple perspectives on what happens inside him- or herself, and inside the organization.



# The Structural Frame

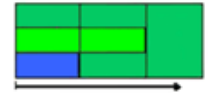


- Focus: division of labor; task and reward systems, hierarchical layering of control, vertical and horizontal command structure, structure of the internal business process.
- Salience: goals and information inside the information are clear; low conflict and ambiguity; legitimate authority.
- Change Policy Initiatives Required: realign and renegotiate formal patterns, to establish clarity in organizational roles and relationships.



# The Political Frame

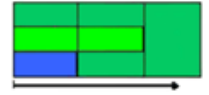
- Focus: scarce resources; enduring differences between constituencies and coalitions; mismatch of organizational and individual needs.
- Salience: goal and value conflict; diversity high or increasing; diffuse, unstable power.
- Change Policy Initiatives Required: create arenas where issues can be negotiated; help unearth divisive issues and make them fully conscious.



# The Human Resources Frame

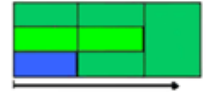
- Focus: fulfilment of human needs; conflict between individual and organizational development; reduction of people's "frustration index" (calibrated by Need/Press); improve "organizational climate."
- Salience: goal and value conflict; diversity high or increasing; diffuse, unstable power; low morale
- Change Policy Initiatives Required: increase employee leverage, heighten morale, manage diversity; clarify power structure; empower clients to engage with company strategy; teach clients that are constructing the organization as they go.

# The Symbolic (Cultural) Frame



- Focus: organization as theater, held together by ritual, story, myth, giving direction to events; mission; culture
- Salience: goals and information ambiguous; cause-effect poorly understood; weak technology; high diversity
- Change Policy Initiatives Required: sensitize to diversity issues through 'cross cultural coaching;' support the grieving of loss of meaning and purpose; create new symbols of attachment; encourage spontaneous forms of symbolic activity.

# Interdevelopmental Institute



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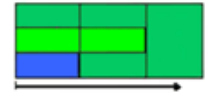
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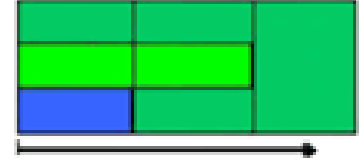
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## Books and Links

**Interdevelopmental Institute:** [www.interdevelopmentals.org](http://www.interdevelopmentals.org)

- Laske, Otto E. (2006): *Measuring hidden dimensions. The art and science of fully engaging adults*. Volume 1. Medford: Interdevelopmental Institute Press.
- Laske, Otto E. (2009): *Measuring hidden dimensions. Foundations of requisite organization*. Volume 2. Medford: Interdevelopmental Institute Press.
- Wikipedia: *Constructive Developmental Framework (CDF)*.  
Wikipedia (07.06.2013):  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructive\\_Developmental\\_Framework](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructive_Developmental_Framework)



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