

Barriers to Using the Constructive Developmental Framework:

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Today, many potential users of CDF (Laske, 1998-2000) are somewhat clueless as to how to begin using the insights it embodies and enables. That is not astonishing. The dominant culture is not one of thinking about human potential, except where certain specific skill sets are missing or hard to find, and these don't have much to do with human potential (although they are mysteriously rooted in it). Skills only have to do with what people "have" whereas potentials have to do with what people "are" (in terms of their present developmental profile and resources for future mental growth). Skills carry no label as to how they might be used by those who "have" them, since that use depends on people's level of mental growth.

This is the first hurdle.

The second hurdle would seem to be that the term "client" generally excludes the agent him- or herself, the person seeking to create value for the client. In addition, the question "how much do I care to do know about myself as my client" is considered highly unusual or esoteric, while in reality it is the foundational question for all those who want to be of help to others and/or want to create value for others.

That is the second hurdle.

While the first two hurdles are *epistemological*, having to do with how people construct their present "world", the third hurdle seems to be rather *behavioral*. It consists of the habit to work from an 'outside-in' rather than inside-out orientation, or perhaps more realistically, to be unable to work from both orientations at once. By 'from the outside in' I mean people's seemingly unshakable reliance on models, theories, goal sets, predictions, and abstractions offered by "the outside world", in whatever form -- thus on the culture one is embedded in and which its recipients ceaselessly re-create with every Facebook post they make or read.

Being stuck in an outside-in mode of being in the world is thus both a behavioral and cultural predicament, and the two are hard to separate. These hurdles are, to boot, intertwined with each other. Working from an 'outside-in' orientation, it is

hard or impossible to distinguish what I “have” and “am”, as hard as it is to move beyond an other-dependent mode where I define myself based on others’ expectation of me. Because in this developmental mode I have not yet synthesized a coherent and authentic value system based on which I could make that distinction.

So basically, all three intertwined hurdles to using CDF are rooted in the user’s own adult-developmental level, regardless of the skills s(he) might “have” (and which as a self-authorer s(he) can always decide not to use, as E. Jaques would say.)

What a quagmire, the reader will say. How can I escape it???

There is a way, and that way is a cognitive one, having to do with learning about the structure of one’s present thinking, more specifically, the four moments of dialectic and their associated thought forms, - a framework referred to as ‘Dialectical Thought Form Framework’, or DTF.

(As any framework, DTF can be misused since it is a theory or model which one can always reduce to its logical elements and go from there. Therefore, more than ‘knowing DTF’ is needed, and this More essentially consists of the ability to “listen developmentally”, both to oneself and others, and that is a whole other potential barrier)

The question ‘how do I think?’ cannot be answered by pointing to contents of thinking because such contents are inseparable from the structure of the movements-in-thought that produce them. This structure can be viewed, following Roy Bhaskar, as defined by what he called ‘four moments of dialectic’. These dimensions of thinking can be spelled out ‘epistemologically’, in terms of schemata (Basseches) or thought forms (Laske) that unfold the four moments in real time as we speak or write. In DTF, thought forms (TFs) have integer names and follow each other in the sequence of C[context] → P[process] → R[relationship], and → T[transformation], where each of these moments comprises, for historical reasons, 7 TFs, thus 28 in total.

Of course, to learn a table of 28 (or 12, or whatever) thought forms is not the solution, but only a path that begins with acquiring a visceral feeling for the

difference between the four moments, or perspectives to view the world. To enter this path equates to becoming aware of the fact that there are four very different but related perspectives from which to refer to real-world situations or events, namely viewing what is before us as:

- a. a static configuration
- b. in motion (and therefore partly absent)
- c. a component of a network
- d. a holistically transforming organism.

WOW! These perspectives introduce huge differences, don't they?

People usually strongly embrace mode (a) to see, and position themselves toward, the world. The fourth barrier consists of keeping these perspectives apart from each other. Their intrinsic relatedness led Bhaskar to set himself the goal of "re-totalizing" the four moments "in the sign of absence", by which he meant that to transcend *actuality* toward *reality*, and thus approach the real world for what it is, one will need to begin thinking in all four perspectives simultaneously. For Bhaskar, this entailed also that one would have to recognize that "reality is pervaded by absences", both in the form of what is no more or is not yet, or even of what will never be.

Since in its design, DTF is an integral part of CDF – cognitive being inseparable from social-emotional potential -- using CDF really begins with questioning one's cognitive assumptions about the world, in particular the assumption that it is a static configuration outside of me, and that therefore the tool of choice is simply logical thinking. That's where the "outside-in" mode of functioning in the world has its root, which to follow is like a hidden illness that is hard to be aware of and thus also, to cure.

To heal this illness, that is, **to wake up to a world in motion, partly absent, consisting of networks of dense relationships, and without fail holistically transforming itself** takes, however, more than a cognitive step. It comprises a motivational, thus a psychological, element which to activate is under the complete control, and thus responsibility, of every individual, and nothing outside of him- or her.

When an individual takes this step, it will dawn on him or her that the real world has always been the 'VUCA' world as which logical minds see it, not realizing that it is their own flawed construction of reality.