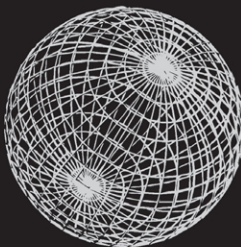




AGILE TRANSFORMATION

USING THE INTEGRAL AGILE TRANSFORMATION
FRAMEWORK™ TO THINK AND LEAD **DIFFERENTLY**



MICHAEL K. **SPAYD** | MICHELE **MADORE**

Praise for *Agile Transformation*

"Agile Transformation is a wonderful, very readable, and very important book. What makes virtually all other books on transformation, leadership, and business so inadequate is their partial, incomplete, and non-inclusive character. This is exactly the inadequacy handled by *Agile Transformation* through the use of Integral metatheory, a systemic framework built to be as comprehensive as possible. Thus, *Agile Transformation* is as inclusive as can be, and that is what makes this book so incredibly important. So if you are engaged in a transformation, I strongly recommend that you not continue to be fractured and broken in your own approach, but step up to the wholeness and completeness of *Agile Transformation*."

—Ken Wilber, *The Integral Vision*

"This book does not pull its punches. From the first page to the last, the Agile Transformation operating system works the simple and core truth about transforming an organization—it depends on you being transformed. There will be no Agile organizational transformation otherwise. There is much in this book that will help you learn about how to implement a successful Agile Transformation, but it is all for naught if you don't embody and lead the change. You are the vessel. It won't change unless you do. If you're serious about having your Agile Transformation succeed, read this book."

—Bob Anderson, chairman, The Leadership Circle

"It's difficult to keep your focus sharp while broadening your perspective, but that is what Michele and Michael have pulled off in their new book on leading Agile Transformation. Impressively succinct, they provide straightforward tools and essential advice that will be useful for all leaders of transformation initiatives. So how did they do it? Well, for one thing, rather than positioning traditional and Agile-inspired management viewpoints as locked in combat, as many of their predecessors have done, they show how they are equally important, complementary features of a single unifying framework. Just as important, they know what is imperative, what to simplify, and what to ignore, the kind of knowledge that can only be distilled from decades of experience."

—Charlie Rudd, chairman and CEO, SolutionsIQ, an Accenture company

"This is a must-read for any leader embarking on or in the midst of an Agile Transformation. Michele Madore and Michael Spayd's integral approach provides organizations with tremendous insights into how to overcome the pitfalls of process-centric transformations that are all too common. They have done a brilliant job of making clear, relatable, and actionable what many see as the most nebulous aspects of leading transformation."

—Shannon Ewan, managing director, ICAgile

"Michele and Michael have written a beautiful book about change, intertwining their in-depth knowledge and vast experience with Agile Transformations. It gave me a vocabulary and understanding of the change territory, so now I have a way to navigate, too, and at the same time, it has nudged me gently to start exploring the same and go for my own development journey."

—Zvonimir Durcevic, enterprise Agile coach

one type of people but failed miserably in another environment. (Schneider [1994] made a parallel discovery with his idea of core cultures and the fit of given management approaches to one type of culture but not to others.) *This is a wakeup call for us as transformational leaders.* Think about the challenges we face when we implement a Pluralistic-Green or Evolutionary-Teal management approach like Agile into an Achievement-Orange or Conformist-Amber organization and expect it to work.

In a talk given at an organizational conference in 1971, the YMCA Management Forum, Graves articulated the finding that people who are in what he termed an *open*, growing state prefer to be managed using the management style of the altitude *above* the one they are at. So, for instance, an open individual centered in the Conformist-Amber level prefers to be led in a *consultative* way (an Achievement-Orange approach), whereas a closed individual (one stopped at a particular level, who does not appear to be moving on) at the same stage prefers to be led in the style natural to that level, namely, a *paternalistic* approach. Likewise, open individuals at the Achievement-Orange level prefer to be managed in a *participative* way, those at the Pluralistic-Green level prefer *facilitative* management, and those at the Evolutionary-Teal level want to be led in a *systemic* manner.

Wow! What a shock to our Agile sensibilities! People centered in the Conformist-Amber level, even if they are growing, do not want to be managed in a facilitative or participative manner but are happy with being consulted on their opinion before the authority makes the decision. Only an open, growing person in the Achievement-Orange level will appreciate the participative approach of an Agile team. Even worse (we may lament), someone centered in the Amber level who has stopped growing, and is basically just living life day-to-day, will prefer to be managed in a paternalistic way! A similar person centered in the Orange level will prefer a consultative management approach. This helps us make sense of the reports from many Agile coaches that some of their team members just want to be told what to do, so how can they self-organize? It begs the question for us as transformational leaders of how we can respect people who are centered in altitudes other than our own, appreciating the views and qualities they offer, and allowing them their own destiny.

Spiral Dynamics: Continuing Graves's Work

Don Beck and Chris Cowan, former students of Clare Graves, took his research further into more modern times. They called their model and book *Spiral Dynamics* (1996) and updated Graves's conceptions with work from psychology, biology, complexity and systems science, and other fields. A key concept they introduced sheds light on the evolution of both people and cultures, as originally discovered by Graves—namely, *memes*.

In biology, genes are a prime mechanism of evolution. In the psychosocial world, evolution can be said to be carried by memes. **Mememes** are ideas, behaviors, or styles that spread from person to person through imitation. Fashions are a good (if somewhat trivial) example of memes. Internet memes are the latest subset of this idea. Strong memes replicate, whereas weak ones tend to die out (thus the connection to evolution and survival of the fittest). The Agile paradigm can be seen as a set of related memes, which will have great relevance for us in finding fertile ground for planting Agile meme "seeds."

The term *meme* was first introduced by Richard Dawkins in 1976, then used by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi to identify the origins of human behavior, in contrast with a gene's relationship to our physical characteristics (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 30). John Perry Barlow further articulated how this social evolution progressed, saying that memes are self-replicating and reproduce across human ecosystems, mentally and socially, similarly to how genes reproduce and mutate.

Beck and Cowan (1996) expanded this theory, proposing the existence of a kind of “meta-meme,” which they called a *systems or values meme* (vMEME). These vMEMEs act like attractors for thinking styles within people and cultures, coalescing into what Integral calls altitudes. With the concept of vMEMEs, Beck and Cowan articulate the mechanism by which Graves's findings apply to individual development (the I quadrant structure of our mindsets) as well as how Graves's conceptions act like a cultural attractor (the WE quadrant), bringing together beliefs, value systems, and worldviews into coherent wholes that form organizational cultures.

According to Beck and Cowan, certain vMEMEs that are in harmony resonate like notes in a musical chord, while vMEMEs in conflict lead to troubled individuals, companies, and civilizations. In other words, certain vMEME stacks (or layered collections) work in harmony, whereas others conflict with each other. Further, vMEMEs can be expressed in both healthy and unhealthy ways. Beck and the late Cowan maintained separate websites and various training and applications using these concepts.

Now that we've presented the basic idea of altitudes within the context of organizations—the context most familiar to us—we want to broaden this concept and talk about evolution within each quadrant, a concept we will return to in Chapter 9 in more detail.

Evolution Across Quadrants

As Wilber (2008, p. 77) states:

The emergence of the complex neocortex in the Upper-Right quadrant [IT] corresponded with the arising of higher intelligence in the Upper-Left quadrant [I]. All four dimensions evolved simultaneously (and continue to do so!) into higher waves of consciousness and complexity.

Tracing the history of evolution in all four quadrants, Wilber goes on to say:

This deepening from simpler to more complex, less conscious to more conscious, can be traced across the billions of years of Kosmic evolution. Each new level transcended and included all that went before, always growing into ever-greater degrees of novelty and awareness. For instance, in the I quadrant, the self evolved from *instinctual* to *magical* to *egocentric* to *achiever* to *sensitive* to *holistic*; correspondingly in IT, from the *reptilian* to *mammalian* to the *complex neocortex* brains (and into *SF1*, *SF2*, and *SF3*); in WE, from *archaic* to *magical* to *early mythic* to *late mythic* to *scientific-rational* to *pluralistic* to *holistic*; and finally in the ITS quadrant from *survival clans* to *ethnic tribes* to *feudal empires* to *early nations* to *corporate states* to *value communities* to *holistic commons*.

Figure 3.1 provides a representation of this evolution within each of the four quadrants, with corresponding names for the appropriate developmental scheme that is applicable within each quadrant. Note the correspondence across quadrants at a similar level, whereas altitudes across quadrants address very different things (e.g., the mind of an individual in the I quadrant versus a social structure or socioeconomic system in the ITS quadrant).

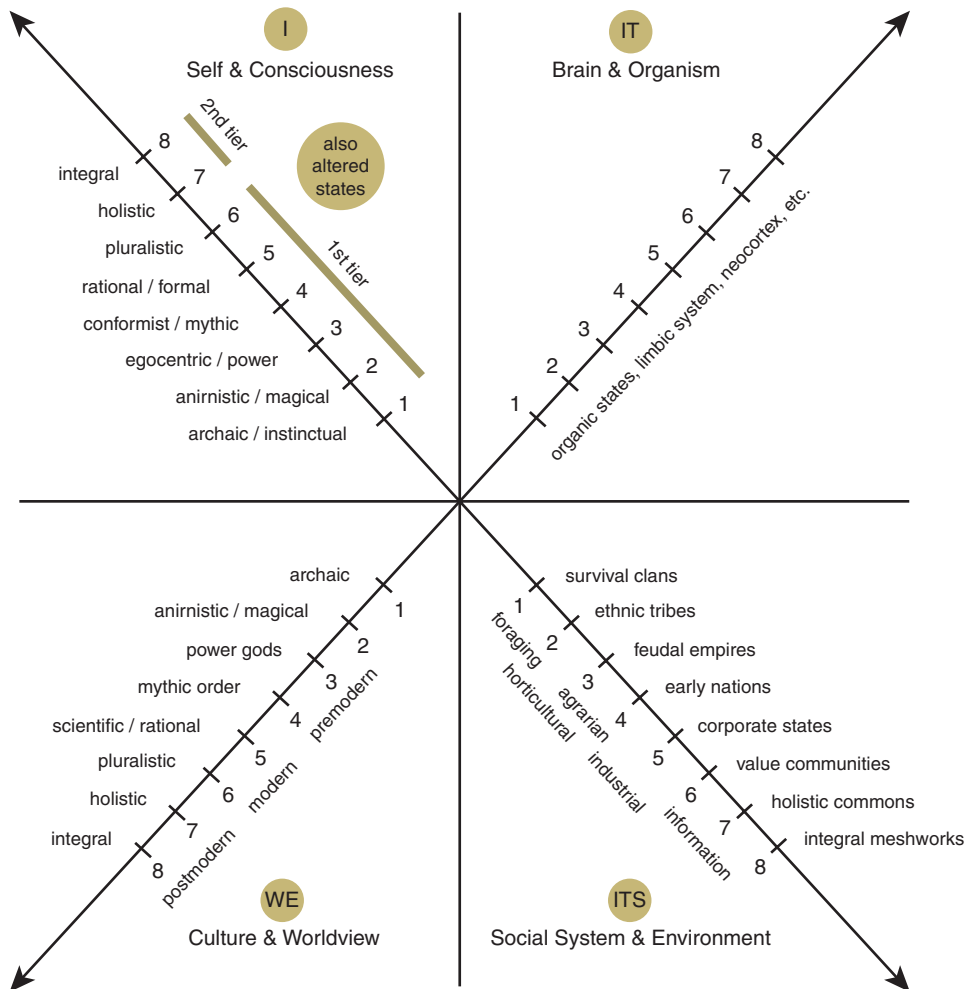


Figure 3.1

Example names for developmental stages within each quadrant, from Wilber

Generic Altitude Names

Figure 3.1 shows a different evolutionary schema for each quadrant. While this approach is the most accurate for representing evolutionary progress within each quadrant, it is a bit cumbersome to have four different labels, each of which corresponds to the relevant level of complexity within its corresponding quadrant. When Wilber devised the Integral Model, he wanted a unifying concept for altitude that had meaningful application across quadrants. He tends to use various generic names depending on context but always anchors them with a specific set of colors. These colors were originally taken from Spiral Dynamics, but Wilber later adapted them to be more neutral in terms of methodology and to correspond to the order in the colors of the rainbow. The colors are otherwise arbitrary, having no inherent meaning.

Laloux addresses altitudes that concern organizations, as well as the individuals within those organizations (rather than the whole world, as Wilber does). We could say they focus primarily on the WE quadrant and to some extent on the I quadrant. In working with Agile Transformations, we are concerned with business processes, Agile and other practices, organizational policies, structures, systems, culture, mindsets, and other phenomena. It will simplify things if we can reference a generic, neutral concept of altitude, regardless of which quadrant it addresses. This cross-quadrant altitude gives us a single point of access to the evolution of any given phenomenon, regardless of which quadrant perspective we are taking at the moment. This is the power of the Integral Model, as it provides a comprehensive meta-map of all phenomena. In doing so, it offers a type of Cartesian addressing system for any given thing, by specifying its quadrant and its altitude; Integral calls this a *cosmic address*.

Since our use of Integral is concerned with organizational life, we have decided to restrict ourselves to four or five Integral colors—namely, (in order of complexity) Red, Amber, Orange, Green, and Teal. In Table 3.2, we list the color and an identifying name for each altitude, after Laloux, who largely adapted the Integral and Spiral Dynamics traditions. These name and color combinations are Impulsive-Red, Traditional-Amber, Achievement-Orange, Pluralistic-Green, and Evolutionary-Teal. In *Integral Psychology* (2000b), Wilber maps many different developmental schemes to others taken from psychology, sociology, brain science, anthropology, and various Eastern and Western wisdom traditions. Table 3.2, in turn, maps various researchers focusing on different quadrants to our generic altitude to give readers a mapping for other schemas they may encounter.

Taking one example and following a row across in Table 3.2, the generic Integral name of Traditional-Amber corresponds to what Graves called *D-Q* (with respect to the I quadrant development of individuals, and later called *blue* in Spiral Dynamics), and also to what Kegan calls the *socialized mind* in his mental complexity (*orders of mind*) scheme, to *expert* leadership in Bill Joiner's leadership Agility system, to Conformist-Amber in Laloux's organizational name, and to *mythic* in Gebser's schema regarding the evolution of social structures (corresponding to the Agrarian Age and early states in sociocultural terms). Each of these could also be described in the term relevant to their quadrant or by a generic Integral label, such as Traditional-Amber.

Table 3.2 Adapted in part from Wilber (2000b), plus reviews of Graves, Beck, Kegan, Laloux, Joiner, and others

Generic Altitude Name	Values/ Personality: Graves (Beck)	Sense of Self: Kegan	Leadership: Torbert (Joiner)	Organizations: Laloux	Worldviews (Sociocultural): Gebser (Wilber)
Mature Integral: Turquoise	B'-O' Wholeview (Turquoise)	Self-Transforming Mind	Ironist	[Hinted at, but not named]	(Global) Integral (Informational)
Emergent Integral: Teal	A'-N' Flex Flow (Yellow)			Evolutionary-Teal	(Nation)
Postmodern: Green	F-S Human Bond (Green)	Self-Authoring Mind	Existentialist (Catalyst)	Pluralistic-Green	(Industrial) (Empire) Mental (Adv-agrarian)
Modernist: Orange	E-R Strive Drive (Orange)			Achievement-Orange	
Traditional: Amber	D-Q Truth Force (Blue)	Socialized Mind	Technician (Expert) Diplomat	Conformist-Amber	(Early State) (Agrarian) Mythic (Village) (Horticultural)
Warrior: Red	C-P Power Gods (Red)			Organizations at this altitude are generally engaged in illegal activities or corruption	
Tribal: Magenta	B-O Kin Spirits (Purple)	Impulsive Self		Insufficient complexity to form an "organization" as such	Magic (Tribes) (Foraging)
Archaic: Infrared	A-N Survival Sense (Beige)				Archaic

Integral Altitude and Agile Transformations

Let's return to the topic of evolution across the four quadrants and how that evolution impacts organizational transformation. Here's Wilber (1996) again:

All 4 quadrants show evolutionary levels. The left-hand quadrants measure development in terms of interior depth, or awareness (consciousness). The right-hand quadrants measure development in terms of exterior complexity. However, because all 4 quadrants tetra-arise, an increase in interior consciousness corresponds, at least generally, with an increase in exterior complexity.

It is this comment—that evolution happens “at least generally” in a consistent way across quadrants—that concerns us in organizational transformations. In saying this, Wilber is referring to a scale measured in decades (or even longer). Evolution within the four quadrants proceeds largely in parallel, but not in lockstep, especially not within a short time scale like years. The exterior complexity of the environment around our organizations has increased dramatically, particularly in the last 10–15 years (just think about the Internet, social media, changing international political landscapes, and COVID-19). Meanwhile, the related consciousness development of people and organizations (the I and WE quadrants) has not kept pace. We are out of whack! In specific terms, the internal awareness or complexity that drives our leadership—and the values and ways of thinking that create our organizational cultures—has lagged behind the development of sophisticated processes and frameworks for developing products like software. As Robert Kegan (1994) says, we are “in over our heads” because we are not up to the challenge in some fundamental way. When leadership recognizes this deficit, it becomes a wake-up call, and an opportunity to pursue further personal development.

A colleague of ours, Al Shalloway, made this point quite succinctly. Al has worked with a large range of clients implementing Lean and Agile methods for many years. Here’s how he captured the dilemma:

We have been quite clear for a number of years about how to produce the best results in software through Lean and Agile processes, quantifying cost of delay, etc. [pointing to IT and ITS]. What is much less clear is how to do the leadership and cultural pieces to match.” (Personal communication)

In our experience working with leaders and organizational culture, we see this dynamic play out repeatedly.

Michael’s Take

From the very first Agile Transformation effort I worked back in 2001, there has always been a gap between the level of the Agile practices we were implementing (Pluralistic-Green and sometimes Evolutionary-Teal) and the level of leadership mindset and organizational culture that was prevalent. With only a few exceptions, the organizational cultures were centered in Achievement-Orange with some Traditional-Amber subcultures; if there were pockets of Pluralistic-Green culture, it was largely within the internal Agile community or the occasional small organization with a more visionary leader. Generally speaking, the leaders were a mix of Achievement-Orange moving to some extent into Pluralistic-Green. This caused a mismatch between the practices I was teaching and coaching and the mindset of the leaders and their culture. A notable exception was a Green-Teal leader in charge of a business unit of 200-plus people who took upon himself to learn Lean thinking and practices in detail, so that he could lead classes for his people. He was totally committed to this way of thinking and to empowering his people. The coaching team thrived under his leadership. Another exception was the leader of the engineering department of a medium-size business, who was probably centered in Orange but moving strongly into Green. He gave his full commitment to the Agile implementation and saw the need to change the culture; he was in part successful but had strong headwinds within the overall Orange nature of his organization’s culture.