

Actualize OS

10 WEEK TRAINING

WITH KEN WILBER



ACTUALIZE OS

TRANSCRIPT

INSTALLATION FIVE
INITIALIZATION



5

INITIALIZATION MODULE ACTIVATING YOUR MULTIDIMENSIONAL PERCEPTION

Susannah: Welcome to Installation Five of the Actualize OS program, with Ken Wilber.

The component we're exploring today is called quadrants or dimensions – and we believe that this is one of the most exciting parts of the entire program.

With quadrants, we're about to dive into the four primary perspectives of the world that we hold, an examination of which will provide an even deeper and more penetrating overview of life and how we live.

The beauty of Ken's work will become particularly apparent with this discussion of Quadrants, because it charts both individual and cultural or global change, interrelating them in brilliant and illuminating ways.

Ken will begin by explaining what these four primary quadrants or dimensions, are all about.

Ken: One of the strange native reactions that people have as they look around the world is that they're just looking at a world that is given and they have an awareness, and that awareness is also just given, and this one awareness looks at this one world. Everybody else has essentially the same kind of awareness and they're looking at the same kind of world.

What we find as we look at it is that there are really very different types of perspectives or dimensions that individuals have. This actually changes the way the world looks. Before that starts to sound too academic or complicated, you can look at these in terms of the pronouns that have developed in every major language the world over that encapsulate these different perspectives and dimensions. These are often referred to as, only one example: first, second, and third person.

First person is the person speaking, which is represented with pronouns like I, or me, or mine. Then there's the person being spoken to, which is you, or thou. Then there's the person or thing being spoken about: him, her, they, them, it - or in plural, its.

Those actually are very, very different ways to look at reality, very different ways to think about it. If you say, for example, "I prefer chocolate shake," that's an "I" statement and that's your opinion. That can't be challenged; that's your taste; that's how you feel; that's fine. But if you say "Chocolate shakes are better than vanilla shakes," now that's a claim; that's an objective truth claim. Now you have to offer proof for it, and of course there isn't any. If you don't see the difference between "I" statements and "it" statements, subjective statements and objective statements, then you can get into enormous types of conflicts and difficulties. This happens particularly in relationships.

One of the first things that relationship counselors teach is the "I" word. They'll teach you to don't just make absolute pronouncements. Don't just say "you're controlling" or "you're close-minded." Just say "I experience you as being close-minded sometimes. Let's discuss that. Is that me? Is that my own shadow projection? Am I the one that's close-minded and I'm projecting onto you? Or do you find other people sometimes tell you that you're the same way? Maybe you do have a few of these characteristics that you haven't looked at."

You can go into that discussion and decide how much of it is real, a real it statement, a real objective, scientific, true statement, or whether it's referring more to the person making the charge. It's more referring to their "I", that they're projecting. That's a very simple example of what people are doing all the time. They do it in politics; they do it in education; they do it in entertainment; they do it in any number of areas where they confuse "I" statements with "it" statements.

In addition to those, which are sort of two of the quadrants, and refer to the individual quadrants, there's the collective quadrants: a "we" space and a "its" space. Those also have very, very different ways of looking at them. They have different types of truth and they have different types of knowledge claims, and there are different types of human disciplines that specialize in them. Disciplines specializing in a "we" space are things like history, or group dynamics, or cultural studies. These are the ways that human beings have a common background set of values, and ethics, and norms that allows them to come together in a group and actually have mutual understanding and mutual agreement, and recognize themselves as part of a group.

Obviously we couldn't have societies or organizations or anything without some sort of "we" awareness. That's a very crucial dimension as well. Then there are a lot of individuals that just look at the exterior of groups or the exterior of individuals. They look at it in objective, scientific terms, and they come up with systems theory. Systems deal with all of the exteriors of individual items and how they all fit together in a functional mesh, in a systems mesh. If they don't mesh, then the system falls apart.

This becomes very important for societies as well. They not only have to have mutual understanding and shared ethics and norms and values. They have to have all of their systems, their political, economic, legal, environmental systems fitting together and working and meshing. What most people don't do is take these four different perspectives - the "I" space, the "it" space (the exterior of an individual), the "we" space (the interior of a collective), and the "its" space (the exterior of a collective) - and realize that all of those give very different perspectives. They have very different kinds of truth. They are very different skills that it takes for you to be able to operate in any one of these different quadrants, and without understanding the skills to operate in these quadrants, then you'll start to fall down in that area.

What often happens is a person will tend to come from just one quadrant, and if you look at human disciplines, many of them think that only one quadrant is real and all the others aren't real. As a matter of fact, they're all real. They all exist. Every one of these quadrants has hundreds of disciplines in it that have enormous amounts of data and evidence and resources. The problem is most quadrants don't know about the others or they try to poo-poo them. They try to say "my quadrant is the real quadrant." You can go around the quadrants and see dozens of different disciplines that think that their quadrant alone is real.

The upper left, which is simply how we refer to these because we usually write them down on paper and they form boxes, so we refer to the upper left box as the interior of the individual and the upper right box as the exterior of the individual. The lower left is the interior of the group and the lower right is the exterior of the group. In the upper left there are things like subjective idealism that thinks that only an individual's consciousness is real, and that all the other quadrants are derivative. Bishop Berkeley and subjective idealism is a classic example.

In the upper right quadrant, which is the individual organism and brain and kidneys and heart and lungs. If you look at the upper left interior of an individual, you see thoughts and emotions and feelings and awareness. If you get into meditation you start to see higher transpersonal states of consciousness, all the way up to states known as enlightenment and awakening. Clearly very, very important states of consciousness. Those are all denied by the other quadrants.

When we get to the upper right and we get to the scientific view of the individual organism, all we have are things, again, like a triune brain and a central nervous system, and two kidneys, and one heart, and two lungs, and brain synapses, and neurotransmitters, and all of those - none of which are experienced. When somebody looks inside and wakes up and it's a beautiful morning, they don't say "Oh, what a serotonin morning!" Strict scientists believe that consciousness is produced by the brain and that the decisions in that upper right quadrant actually determine all of the realities in all of the other quadrants.

They're trying to say that their quadrant is real and all the others aren't. Then you get to the lower right quadrant, which is the material, exterior interactions. This is a very important quadrant. If you look at work that's been done on it and you divide this quadrant - and each quadrant can be subdivided in many ways - if you divide this quadrant into its techno-economic base, how it earns its economic living, it's widely accepted that it evolves through stages of foraging to horticultural to agrarian to industrial to informational, with maritime and herding being two alternative views.

In each of those cases, the type of practices that are done are remarkably similar. We're talking simple things like the number of these societies that have bride price, that have games of chance, that have warfare, that have slavery, that have a polarization of the sexes, ranging from a relative equality among sexes to a violent inequality between the sexes. The single factor most responsible for those differences is the lower right techno-economic mode. It has a profound impact on how we experience ourselves.

It's such a powerful impact that theorists like Karl Marx do a quadrant absolutism. They tend to make that the only reality: historical materialism. Then you go to the lower left, the cultural quadrant, and post-modernism came in and took the cultural quadrant and made it the only real quadrant. An individual I? Not real. It's subsumed in the network of social relations. If you look at all knowledge, including science, and art, and history, and so on, they're all reduced to social constructions of the cultural we. There is no ultimate truth; they're just fashions and they go up and down the same way hems do on a woman's dress. There's no more reality to them than that. Science doesn't have any more reality than does poetry. That comes from only looking at the lower left quadrant.

Then you can predict all of that. Just like if you look at the upper left, you can predict all of subjective idealism and those sorts. If you look at the upper right, you can predict behaviorism, empiricism, cognitive structuralism. If you look at the lower right you can predict Marxism, historical materialism, Gerhard Lenski's work and so on. The question in academic studies is which of these is real? Integral theory answers: all of them. All of these have something to say. Every phenomenon in the world can be looked at through those four perspectives. Every time you do it, you see something different.

Most importantly, this is impacting your life. Every quadrant is hitting your life with its different truths, its different forces, its different impacts. It's governing how you act and most people don't even know about them. They have an extraordinary controlling power over your life. The main thing that you want to do, two choices: be unaware of the quadrants and have your life pushed around by them indefinitely, or learn the quadrants and learn a handful of skills and techniques that will allow you to master those quadrants, or at least to understand them and to be able to play by their rules, and therefore be able to make the most out of it. Instead of those quadrants having you, you have those quadrants.

Susannah: So in other words, most people are identified exclusively, or to a large extent, with only one of the four quadrants? The million-dollar question is what happens when someone listening to this course proverbially puts on the psychoactive “goggles” and is able to see their life, for the first time, with four-dimensional vision. What happens then?

Ken: The first thing that happens is that you go from leading a life where only one type of truth is recognized, one type of motivation is recognized, one type of discipline is recognized, and therefore one type of fulfillment is given to you. For every quadrant you add, you add another truth and therefore another fulfillment. Your life gets fuller and fuller and fuller because it's adding more and more and more reality.

These realities, once you recognize them, they just don't sit there. They move into you; they start showing you their truths; they start showing you how to move and to understand them, and to use them to understand life, and to make decisions based on a complete map and not just a broken map. It's like if you're flying over the Rocky Mountains and you have a map and an airplane and you're looking at it. One-fourth of the map is present of the map is present and the other three fourths is blacked out.

This is one of the things we find in the five major elements of integral theory, is that by and far most people just don't know about the existence of these dimensions. Simply learning these quadrants activates them in your being. It actually goes through your system and wherever this isn't working a red flag goes up. It comes online, it gets downloaded, and it starts functioning in your body mind. That happens in all four quadrants.

This is the map that is the most complete, the most comprehensive, in terms of governing the major dimensions of your life and how you can interact with them. It doesn't take an enormous amount of work. The reason is they're psychoactive. Once you just learn a few basics, it takes over. It goes through your system, it lights up the areas that aren't being used, it shows you what to do, and within a matter of weeks to months most people report a fundamental change in their being. They see the world entirely differently and it is positive in every aspect, and useful in every aspect. It's an extraordinary realization.

Susannah: And to bring it even closer to home – the majority of people who were surveyed in developing this course brought up the issue of purpose in unleashing their potential, whether it was in their career, success, relationships, or another area of life. So, Ken, how does the idea of purpose and unleashing our potential show up via the quadrants?

Ken: The standard view is that the universe is winding down, but what we see when we look at evolution is something is winding it up. It is cranking into higher and higher orders of complexity. You start out, you've got the big bang, you've got quarks. Quarks are wandering

around by themselves for a million years, or whatnot. Several of them start to come together and form electrons, protons, and neutrons. Those further come together and form atoms. Atoms come together and form molecules, which is a big, big step because now these molecules start to develop. Not just the same, but very different ones that you can see ultimately have some sort of different purpose. It's not clear at the beginning, but these are very different strings of proteins.

All of a sudden one day they arrange into certain shapes, a wall falls down over them and you have a living cell. Unbelievable that that would happen. It's astonishing. There is nothing chaotic or random about that. That is driven by a very high degree of self-organization. Then it becomes astonishing as those molecules come together and forms cells, these cells come together and form multicellular organisms. Those start to form very complex tissue systems and overall bodily systems. As the plants and animals get more complex, particularly animals, you get respiratory systems and digestive systems and nervous systems, autonomic nervous system – outrageous!

You have this extraordinary Eros. You have this drive. You have spirit in action. You have self-organization in action. We got from dirt to Shakespeare for heaven's sake! That wasn't the universe running down -- it was the universe running up. Purpose then, is something that if you look at it like so many other things, will show up in four different quadrants. When you look at the upper left, if you look at the "I", then purpose tends to show up as just that. It's how can an individual find what is their purpose? Why am I alive? How can I make a difference? What am I doing here?

That can be one of the most important questions that are asked. If people find that, they're some of the luckiest people in the world because purpose will keep you going through all sorts of ups and downs and delays and problems and so on. If you don't have purpose, you just give up. If you've got a purpose that won't let go, then neither will you. In some ways what we're looking at here is an overall meaning that the entire organism is having. That's, in a sense - although the person who's usually thinking about purpose doesn't think this way - what it's really about is what's their role in evolution.

That tends to show up in the upper right. How that translates, how they become aware of it or they become conscious of it in the upper left, is how they get their individual purpose. Some people call it their calling, finding their vocation, realizing what they were meant to do, coming home. All of those kinds of factors. People that have that clearly have an edge and they have something that's going to be moving them forward almost all the time. That also brings in enormous meaning, because I'm not just here wandering around doing god knows what. It's I have a purpose, therefore this is my meaning in life.

That's one of the things that can happen when all four quadrants become psychoactive, is that this is going to be active in the upper right, it's going to be active in the lower right, it's going to

be active in lower left. It's also going to be active in the upper left. The question here is, can the person listen in such a way as to hear what's going on in all of these quadrants? Again, purpose is the phenomenon and that purpose is part of what evolution's doing. It is in itself, an organizing drive. Every event has four dimensions. These four quadrants are not four separate things brought together. They're four different views of the same thing. Purpose is coming up and it's manifesting as I, we, it, and its. If the person can hear it in their upper left, they can say "Oh, I'm starting to get what I'm meant for."

Susannah: Then, can we also see purpose in the upper right, the lower left, and the lower right quadrants?

Ken: Sure. What happens in the upper right is the material correlates of purpose in the upper left. What that means in the upper right is that certain brain components, and other bodily components ... One of the things that we've learned that is so interesting is that there are several "brains" located throughout the body. There's the gut brain that Candace Pert noticed when she found neuropeptides located throughout the stomach region.

That's what we mean when you say you have a gut feeling or something like that. It's actual brain tissue doing that. The heart produces more energy than any organ in the body and has its own brain. Then there's of course the brain component itself. All of those tend to come online and light up when purpose is involved. All of them, particularly if they're integrated at all, all of them are pushing in a sense the same way.

That combines with your conscious awareness of it to make this very strong body-mind purpose. You're having not just these ideas but, your whole bodily system is oriented towards helping to deliver that purpose.

Susannah: So the purpose is stored in the physical body too? That's an incredibly potent insight. And now moving on, what about the lower two quadrants?

Ken: What we are finding in the lower right is that all of these bodily components ... all four are related but we particularly find the two right hand and the two left hand often go together in profound ways. If you have, just briefly for example, although it actually would apply here. It's a little bit farther out, but it's the notion of bioenergy or subtle energy. All the traditions maintain that human beings have at least three bodies: gross body, subtle body, and causal body. Each of those are important for contributing to the overall bodily sensation.

When any one individual -- with its energy thumbprint, gross, subtle, and causal -- comes together with another individual, those energies overlap. That twosome forms a social holon that is now sharing those energies. One of the things that happens as we're looking at just purpose, is that as individuals come together where there might be a shared purpose - Apple or original Google or

items like that - these energies actually align and correlate to make a social holon with a particular energetic fingerprint.

What that does is, in a sense, energetically support every body that's part of that group. First of all, that's in part how they actually evolved. Once that's happened, it's how they manifest and keep moving forward energizing this purpose.

Susannah: In other words, from a lower right-hand quadrant perspective, partnership and coming together in community, or collaborating, are amplifying the potential of the human being, correct?

Ken: Absolutely. That's what we find across the board. We find it in relationships and we find it's often why a man and a woman fit together and help each other, carry their work forward. We find it's why some companies really have a togetherness that they feel, and really it helps them move forward together. All of this is energetic combining and joining to create something that's really bigger than individuals. Every individual can tap into it but it is moving forward very powerfully.

If you could actually see your energies, you would see a single fingerprint of gross, subtle, and causal energies all coherently – and that's the key -- coherently woven together. That, of course, is why so many of the business consultants spend so much time trying to get a corporate culture headed vaguely in the same direction. They're trying to line up all of these energies. They don't often understand it that way but that's one of the major things that they're trying to do. If it works, it's astonishing. The company changes, sometimes dramatically.

Susannah: And last but not least, we have the lower left quadrant.

Ken: The lower left is the fundamental mutual understanding that individuals generate about their purpose. They can look at each other and say "What do you think the purpose of this is?" Whatever the other person says, generally when it's working right, they'll say, "that makes sense to me. I agree. You and I understand what we want." That's the whole key to the lower left, is getting separate "I" to say "we."

And when that "we" comes together, mountains get moved. It's everything from the American Revolution to companies that start out and do just astonishingly. They have this "we" that's moving together. If you look at the lower right quadrant, the energies are all lined up pushing them. That combination is extraordinary. It's added to by the individual and their energies. Those all come together and that's what's being brought together in this magic gathering.

Susannah: It's truly fascinating to hear how to unleash the potential of a human being. There's the subjective or internal individual and their individual physical sense; and the community aspect, the "we" from both the internal and external perspectives. And the beauty of it all is that once you start understanding this map, it works on you to help you unleash more of that potential.

Ken: Right, absolutely. The more dimensions that the individual understands in themselves, the more those become psychoactive, the more these become online, then that's what they bring to the "we." The more individuals are self-actualized in a group, the more powerful that can become, because they're all bringing the whole smorgasbord to play. Whereas if you have just two or three individuals that are really covering it all and you have twenty that are just dorking around, you're not going to get much benefit out of that.

Susannah: This is such an important lesson. Going back to levels for a moment — we talked about the idea of the 10% tipping point, that once 10% of the world is actually at an integral level things might really change, because there emerges a kind of radical acceptance, where all the levels of development are seen to hold partial, but valid, truths.

This comes into play here with quadrants, too: as people start looking at the world and their lives with four-dimensional vision, this psychoactive power spreads, facilitating and accelerating the tipping point of not only the "I" but of the "we."

To start the process, how does someone listening to this Installation begin to assess where they're most identified in the quadrants?

Ken: That comes from a simple, brief study of the quadrants and the characteristics, and then a straightforward looking at yourself. As you go through and look at the quadrants, you'd simply be asking as you're looking at the "I" quadrant, honestly look at how much of that applies to me. As you're looking at the "it" quadrant, is it I'm more just facts and data and I don't get involved with interiors that well. I believe that changes occur as we learn about brain structure and so on.

As you look at the lower right, it's people who are dedicated to the relational worldview, and that's a halfway step, so to speak, in the right direction because things are, to some degree, related to everything else. We talked about ways in which they're not totally related, like all of the higher and the lower, but not all the lower and the higher. You do have to take that into account, but just starting to see how relationships are so important and start looking at that, is a step in the right direction and can be very important.

When you look at the lower left, of course some people come simply from that and simply from aligning their views with their peer group. That lessens their own creativity, and their own addition, and their own real capacity for growth. We don't want that. We want them to actually use the lower left as a way to explore their own creativity and what they can add to the "we," not just how they can stand in a shadow.

That can be very, very, very important and can be a trial ground for them on an almost daily basis to grow, to grow in their own "I" component. All of these tend to work together and you can use one to check how you're doing in the others, and then move to the others and then use that and see how

that fits. The quadrants are something that, let's say unlike lines, because we have up to maybe two dozen lines, and there's no reason to master all of those - but quadrants, it's a good idea to master those.

Susannah: Thank you Ken for this illuminating installation on quadrants.

As we continue to dive deeper into the transformational perspectives Ken is describing throughout this program, we suggest you take a moment to appreciate the wisdom of looking at life, and at our own individual lives, using all four perspectives. If we truly do the work of understanding and absorbing these four perspectives, that is when our perspective can really start to change, bringing more joy, more creativity, more purpose, more understanding, and more compassion for all beings, into our life.



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