

Actualize OS

10 WEEK TRAINING

WITH KEN WILBER



ACTUALIZE OS

Q & A

LOADING MODULE



Q&A

Ryan Parks: Welcome everybody. Welcome to the first Q&A! It's an honor to have all of you here. It's an honor to be a part of this. My name is Ryan Parks, I'm here to facilitate the call with Ken, and I am one of the co-founders of Sacred Media. The training is really a work of love, a work of passion from everybody who participated in it. It's a training that I've wanted to see for a really long time, and that I actually really feel very honored to be a part of. And I've always really wanted to see a training, a complete training in Ken's operating system that I could share with as many people as possible.

Ken Wilber: Hey, hey.

Ryan Parks: Hey there. How are you.

Ken Wilber: Good, good. How is everybody?

Ryan Parks: Good, good.

Ken Wilber: Excellent.

Ryan Parks: Very exciting to be here. I was just giving a bit of background and telling a bit about knowing you, going back to being your personal assistant over a decade now ago.

Ken Wilber: You bet. Excellent. Go right ahead.

Ryan Parks: Great. So it's been really an honor. We got together with you, Ken, and we spent a bit of time preparing this training, and it's been really awesome, and it's really, really impacting a lot

of people's lives, and it's really exciting because now we have a whole new group of people we're gathering together for these live events. It's actually a really special opportunity to be here today. I just want to thank everybody for being on the call.

Ken Wilber: Excellent. Thank you. The team here, I have to say, has done a really terrific job in creating the program. We spent several weeks going over it. We had over 100 hours of recorded interviews. They did an exquisite job of pulling the material together and organizing it. A terrific website, production. So I've been really delighted with the program, and the feedback that we've been getting from it is really just tremendous. I mean it's just awesome, and really does my heart good to see it having such an impact. I'm delighted to be here, and glad to have all of you joining us. It's going to be an exciting adventure, I can assure you.

Ryan Parks: Thank you, Ken. Thank you so much. Let's get started with the questions. We have a list of questions. I'm just going to ask you the question as it was written. Ken, the first question that we've got comes from George. George asks, "When you think of a world where this type of development is standard, what does that look like to you? For example, integral being taught in primary schools." And there's a part two of the question.

Ken Wilber: Go ahead and read it out.

Ryan Parks: Optional part two, "With that in mind, when we try to discuss these concepts that we learn in these courses with our peers, we tend to find that some people may dismiss them as just one mere set of ideas, so do you have any tips about how we can successfully communicate the importance of this understanding?"

Ken Wilber: The developmental component of a human being is a measure of the degree of growth, development and evolution that a person has managed to accomplish to date. The earlier stages of development actually represent a literal recapitulation of all the major past transformations that we as a species have made since our first emergence. The infrared archaic represents our evolution from the great apes to early humans. Magenta magic represents the earliest hunting and gathering humans, learning to use fire and crude technology and early language. Red magic mythic was the power stage, the warrior tribes that began to expand and conquest and increase their outreach. The amber mythic was the first great empires and the first major civilizations, the invention of the early major religious systems and the creation of towns of upwards of 50,000 or more people.

Then of course the orange rational was the modern enlightenment, the discovery of the major modern sciences, physics, chemistry, biology, geometry. It was the end of slavery for the first time in history, the rise of representative democracies and the beginning end of monarchy. The green pluralistic was the postmodern multicultural, the civil rights movement, the worldwide environmental movement, and so on.

All of those major transformations were marked by an increase in perspectives, a greater degree of consciousness, an increased capacity for love and care and concern, a greater wholeness and unity and diversity. And each person born today is born at square one, at infrared archaic, the physiological needs and basic biological drives, and then starts their growth from there, moving into magic then magic mythic then mythic and, if their growth continues, into modern, rational and then postmodern pluralistic. Each of those represents a major transformation and increase in consciousness that was gained by yesterday's evolution. Each of those stages is simply recapitulating what humanity on the whole has already gained.

But then there are new and novel stages that are just now beginning to emerge, and these represent the creatively new stages at evolution's leading edge that are just starting to come into existence now, and that mark not our past, but our future. For those individuals who have developed and evolved to green postmodern, they stand on the very verge of these new exciting higher stages of evolution, which carry even greater and larger degrees of consciousness, wholeness, unity, love, care, morality, creativity. And these new stages appear to have qualities, like being able to see larger and larger holes, that promise to help us solve some of humanity's truly wicked problems. Combined with things like a singularity in technology, we're actually facing in a sense singularity in consciousness and culture. All together this is a revolutionary development. It's a cataclysmic leap in meaning, and there's been nothing like this in the entire history of humanity. It's really staggering.

So simply being aware of this overall basic and fundamental developmental progression in humans alerts us to all these possibilities. It gives us a framework that can help us orient to what's actually happening in all humans, and shows us what we should be educating in humans around the world, if we want to have a truly peaceful and unified humanity in our future. This developmental component is just one of several crucial parameters in an overall integral view, as we see in subsequent sessions, but it's a central component. And each grade in the education system should be geared to mastering one of these major levels or stages, with earlier grades covering our past accomplishments and making sure students are proficient in those, and higher grades should be aimed at teaching the students the rudiments of what they will need in order to master the newly emerging future stages of evolution, teaching each student how to be a participant in the co-evolution of our tomorrow.

Each human being has access to their own highest self and spirit, which is infinitely creative, loving and caring, and which can directly participate in evolution itself. And that is what each of us should be awakened to and made aware of. The higher grades would be teaching things like the Superhuman operating system, so when you graduate from high school you would have these ideas and tools and capacities fully available to you, and you could pursue them in greater detail in college and graduate school. As it is now, almost none of these Superhuman capacities are understood or taught at all. I'm sure most of you have noticed.

So making this integral developmental understanding available to everybody would change our culture dramatically. It would alert us to our higher potentials and support the growth and

development of every single citizen in society. It would fundamentally change and enlarge our understanding of education, of exactly what we should be educating for in the first place. It would change all of our major professionals, from medicine to business to politics to science and spirituality. The world would truly never be the same again. And these aren't some far out occult or spooky notions. They are some of the most fundamental elements of every human being alive. They're elements of human 101. And yet, so far of human 101, cultures around the world demonstrate almost no significant awareness at all. It's a cultural catastrophe of the first magnitude.

If you are starting to study the operating system, which consist of the basic elements of human 101, you might start considering how you can take this fundamental and utterly basic information out into the world and help people become aware of their profound makeup, their own human 101 elements. This is starting to happen in all sorts of professions at the leading edge. Robert Keegan, the famous developmentalist at Harvard, has just released a book called Everyone Culture, and here, he looks at certain businesses that are what he calls DDOs, deliberately developmental organization. These are businesses where literally every employee from top to bottom is engaged in uniting their own personal growth with their actual business job or task, so that when they're working at a business task, they're also working at their own growth and development.

Each business has developed various practices and exercises for doing so, including various types of open feedback, which is constant and ongoing, and anybody can give feedback to anybody else. The lowest entry level person can give feedback to the CEO. All of this feedback is usually made public to everybody. It's usually on a website the company has that makes all of it public, so they're completely transparent. The individuals are engaged in their own growth and development. Then Keegan introduces of course his own model of development, which is basically referred to as the subject object model, and he has five major stages of growth and development, and he uses the upper three because those are the most common that you find at work.

It starts with what we would call amber, our self-socialized stage of development, where you have a conformist, wants to fit in, be part of a team attitude, a good employee and so on. Then that moves to what we would call orange or self-authoring, where the person becomes their own individual, and in a sense makes up their own decisions about what they think is right and what they think is wrong. And then onto a higher integral teal or turquoise stage, which he calls self-transforming. These companies do incredibly well. One of them for example is Bridgewater investing company which has been the leading hedge fund for 15 years in a row. All of them are engaged in personal growth and development, in addition to their business job or task.

Interestingly, in the last couple of chapters in the book, Keegan introduces the integral model, the four quadrant model, and he basically confesses that as developmental psychologists, they put most of their interest in the interior individual, what we call upper left quadrant, and we'll be going over the quadrants in subsequent presentations. But he confesses that they haven't really used the lower left quadrant as much as they should have, and he actually pointed out that several companies they were working with called them on this, and said you're not helping us enough down here. So they

immediately started developing approaches that worked with the collective we, and not just the individual I.

But it's going to show that these types of integral approaches, because they really are at the leading edge, and because they really are creating a much more productive, much more effective, much more profound approach to virtually any discipline that they're used at, are slowly starting to catch on. These deliberately developmental organizations are applying Superhuman operating system principles to their entire organization, and it's indeed paying off in just really stunning ways. We're starting to see this happen to a greater and greater degree. We can a jump on it right here with this particular program.

Then as for communicating these ideas, one of the things about these stages of development is that they're not just some idea that you can believe if you want to, or reject if you want to. They're not like something like deconstruction. You can believe deconstruction or not, however you wish. If you think there's some truth to it, you can believe it. If not, you can just reject it. But these stages of growth, including the integral stages, the very leading edge stages, these are stages that all human beings go through. They're not something that you can accept or reject. If you grow out of anything past stage one, if you grow into stage two or three or four or five, you are moving through these stages. It's not a choice. This is given to all human beings. Just like if you're a healthy human being, you have two lungs and one stomach and one heart and two kidneys and 208 bones. You don't have a choice about that. That's just simply the way it is structured if you're a human being.

These stages of development are the same way. They are literally an inherent part of a human being. So you'll go through those, whether you agree with them or not. Now most people don't even know they're going through them, because most people don't know about human 101, they don't know about developmental stages, and so they simply do it in kind of an unconscious and unaware fashion. But if you learn any developmental model, then these stages will become known to you.

Studies show, by the way, that simply learning any major developmental model will help you grow through those stages in a faster way. It actually accelerates your growth. We call them psychoactive. Learning the integral model is psychoactive. It will actually activate these elements in your own being, and make them start to grow and develop and manifest in a much more accelerated fashion. All you have to do is simply study the model, and that's what will start to happen.

Now of course, we do have the problem that, besides the fact that people are simply going through these stages whether they agree with them or not, communicating this to people can be delicate, because people will see the world according to the level of development they're at. So if you present material that's actually from a higher level, then as Robert Keegan puts it in one of his books, we're in over our heads. The material will simply not be understood, and so that's when people will tend to reject these ideas, because the developmental notion itself tends to come from just higher stages of development. That's where development was first understood. The basic structures of human development weren't really discovered until about 100 years ago, so humans

had been on this planet maybe a million years, and only in the last 100 years did we discover these developmental stages.

It's not something that simply comes with the territory. It's not something that you're aware of automatically if you're simply born a human. You actually have to learn it, and then generally it's the higher stages of development that are open to these ideas at all. If you're trying to explain this to people, you have to get a sense of where the person is in their own development, and that's not a judgment. I mean everybody's at higher or lower stages, and there are always higher stages to go, so all of us can continue to grow indefinitely really. But it does mean that we have to be careful about determining just where people are in their development, and then determining just how much of this type of material they're going to be able to hear, because we can't simply present facts and data and evidence. There's an enormous amount of evidence for developmental stages, for example. But if you're at amber or red stages of development, you very likely won't get it. It won't make sense to you. You'll disagree with it. It might even make you angry.

It's just something that we have to look at carefully and tiptoe our way into, and proceed delicately. And we certainly don't want to make people-

We certainly don't want to make people feel bad because they might be at a lower stage of development. As I say, every person has all of these stages available to them so nobody is being put down. It's not a negative judgment or a bias or a prejudice, but we do want to attempt to get a general understanding of where people are if we're trying to communicate with them clearly. Because by understanding the stage of development they're at, then we'll have a much better sense about how we can word something or language it so they'll better be able to hear what we're saying, and we can communicate more clearly with that person and make ourselves understood as much as we possibly can.

It's an important topic, how to communicate just these basics of human 101. Hopefully by the time you get through this course and have learned most of these basics yourself, then you'll start coming up with some ideas that will help facilitate how to communicate this material because that's definitely what the world needs.

Ryan: Awesome. Thank you, Ken. Thank you. I'm going to make two comments and add on that before following to the next question.

Ken: Sure.

Ryan: The first thing that I wanted to say is for anybody who is hearing some of this stuff for the first time where Ken is describing the level that we've all gone through historically and that are coming up, we're going to be going into that much more deeply in the next module. It's going to the levels. We touched on that during your training. You may understand it a bit, but don't worry about it. You don't have to be vigorously writing everything Ken is saying down because we'll cover more as the course progresses. Anything that you hear that you don't quite understand, just be a little patient

because it's coming. Ken is going to cover everything that he touches on in any of these calls further down the road, so just pay attention to that.

Secondly, you don't have to get it all at once. As Ken mentioned, this is psychoactive, so just learning this and getting the rough terrain is going to actually start changing the way that you see things. For a lot of people, they'll come back and they'll go in and look at more detail when they want to learn more about it. Just enjoy the ride.

Secondly, the thing that I wanted to say just about communicating this with other people. One of the things that I found myself personally is that oftentimes, you can tell when somebody has a curiosity about these kinds of things when they have a desire to grow or they have a desire to have a bigger perspective. It's a lot easier to communicate this stuff when people are interested and craving it than when they have no interest in hearing what you have to say. A lot of times, I just find myself biting my tongue where it's not going to add anything. With other people, I can have a great conversation and go through all this stuff and it's really awesome. It has a big impact and then it gets them very excited to learn more from Ken and some of the teachers that Ken references.

Great. Excellent. We'll go on to the next question. This one is from Derek. Derek D. asks Ken, I heard somewhere integral referred to as a meta map or a meta perspective or a meta philosophy. What does this mean? What does meta refer to in this context? How is it that having or learning a meta perspective or map or OS will actually help me evolve into superhuman or should we say meta human potentially?

Ken: If we look at say developmental psychology, there are several dozen different schools, Piaget, Kohlberg, Loevinger, Kegan, Fischer, Graves, Maslow, on and on. Each of these schools studies the behavior of individuals directly and then tries to deduce various facts about their behaviors such as the major stages of growth that they go through, the characteristics of each of the stages, how development itself occurs and so on. They create their models by studying humans directly. A meta model such as integral doesn't primarily study humans directly and make a model of them. It studies all of the models in existence and make some model of all those models.

For instance, I've taken over 100 developmental models, put them all on the table and study what all of them have in common, using each model to fill in any blanks in the others. The result is a supermodel, a meta model, a composite model that takes the very best of all the models and puts them together into a much more comprehensive framework than any one of them does on its own. That's what a meta model or meta theory or meta philosophy does. It's a model of models, a theory of theories, a philosophy of philosophies.

This makes it much more likely to be accurate, true and correct because it's drawing on all of the research of all of these various models to create the most accurate model available. To date, the actual integral meta model or meta theory is generally regarded as the most comprehensive meta theory in existence, and so it's a very powerful tool for us to use. This doesn't mean that individual models aren't important. They definitely are. Each individual model is usually addressing one or two

of the many multiple intelligences. Again, these are all topics that we will be covering, so just let it wash over you and if it doesn't make total sense now, it will.

Humans have not just one intelligence. They have multiple intelligences; emotional intelligence, moral intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, not just cognitive intelligence. Most of these models address one or two of the many multiple intelligences that we have. Those models are specific applications of developmental studies to particular lines of development, the cognitive line or the moral line or the needs line and so on. Piaget with the cognitive line. Kohlberg on the moral line. Maslow on the needs line and so on.

Thus, if the model is well constructed and has a fair amount of evidence supporting it, then it's a specific model that we can use in an integral approach if we are approaching those particular lines of development. We can use Loevinger's model for ego development or Kurt Fischer's for skillset or Bill Torbert's action-logic and so on. All of those are included in the overall framework of the integral meta model. By using a meta model like integral, we're getting the very best of all the individual models out there, and thus we're covering all the important bases and we aren't leaving out anything important, which happens if you use just one model itself.

Using the operating system is using a supermodel or meta model or meta map of our own inherent potentials and gifts and talents. By using a meta model, we make sure we don't leave out anything truly important. This is your life after all, and so we want to make sure we're hitting all the important bases, and that's what a meta model does. If you were to use just a single model like Loevinger's and you were to practice her stages, then you would end up developing the shelf line of development, ego development or so on, and you would have a fairly well-developed self system. All the other intelligences that you have, moral intelligence and cognitive intelligence, aesthetic intelligence, spiritual intelligence, none of those would be addressed necessarily.

We want to make sure that we're aware of all of those and that we're making those available to people if they want to pursue them. What we don't want is to go into this and be unaware of some of our important potentials because that means that we're going to do some practice or exercise and we think we're covering everything, but we're not. Because of that, not only are we missing out on other important potentials, we actually think we've got them covered, so we're making a double mistake. We're missing out on something, and we think we actually have it covered. Both of those cause problems.

What a meta model does is cover all of that. It takes all of that into account and creates an overall composite or super map, because it's actually based on real evidence from real models that use real research on real humans. That's the data that we use. We use the data that has all of that evidence and research and information that it has, each of those models have discovered. We take all of that seriously, and that's the data we work with. We really are a big data machine, and we're not leaving anything out that we're aware of. This includes models, east, west, north, south, pre-modern, modern and postmodern.

You can rest assured that when you go through the superhuman operating system, you really are getting a good fundamental basic coverage of virtually all of the potentials that you have available, and then you can decide which ones you want to work on. We'll be giving you some exercises and practices and ways that you can work on any of these that you want to. Of course you don't have to do all of them, but if you want to, you can. The ones that appeal most to you, the ones that you think you need to work on the most, the ones that are most attractive to you, then you can pursue those. They'll all be available to you, and you will be aware of all of them. You've got a good working super map under your belt here.

Ryan: Awesome. Thank you, Ken. That was great.

Ken: You bet.

Ryan: The next question comes from Christopher, and this one I think is a little ... I know that Christopher is asking a question about something that we actually get to in installation three.

Ken: Sure.

Ryan: I know he's already asking a question about something that's coming down the pike so he doesn't necessarily know all this, but it's a thought provoking question and I thought it'd be interesting to share with you.

Ken: Sure.

Ryan: Christopher says I really like your frame of waking up, throwing up, cleaning up and showing up. The frame really hits the nail on the head. At the same time, I would say that your frame lacks an additional category coming to terms with being. Coming to terms with being, I mean the divine spark within one that really needs to be addressed if one is going to come to a real vital fullness. Perhaps I'm jumping the gun, and you do talk about this later in the course. I haven't studied your work, but you haven't so far as the course started mentioned anything about the experiential cosmic actuality of a divine or deep spiritual background to life. My initial question for you is if there is anything and what he's referring to as a transpersonal OS?

Ken: Right. There will be obviously a lot of things in the superhuman operating system, the overall components of it that we'll be covering, and many of them still aren't obvious at this point. As you point out, this particular topic is one that we actually go into in quite a bit of detail, and it's actually a central part of what we call waking up. That's actually covered in a great deal of detail in the overall process of waking up. Waking up means waking up to our fundamental divine nature, our true self and ultimate spirit. In many ways, this is the most important process of all of them. We'll be going through exercises and practices to awaken this deep spiritual dimension in each of us and we'll give ways to apply it in our daily lives. It's definitely central to the whole integral approach. We want to stay tuned for that.

Again, what we've done here is we have a super map or supermodel approach to the spiritual

path, which means we've looked at all of the major spiritual, meditative, contemplative systems worldwide and going back some 20,000 or 30,000 years. We put them all together and created a master template of the various stages and various dimensions of spirituality that human beings have available to them. We make all of those available. We make people aware of all of these different dimensions. We have various practices and exercises that you can do to engage the very highest of these potentials. People really enjoy that. That's something that you want to stay tuned for that.

The difference between integral and transpersonal is that integral is just much more comprehensive than transpersonal psychology. Transpersonal tends to focus, as the name implies, on just the transpersonal or transcendental or spiritual dimensions of a human. It doesn't cover the other quadrants very well. We'll be going over quadrants. It doesn't cover pre-personal and personal dimensions very well. It tends to focus on states and ignore structures. There's an emphasis on drugs and psychedelics and less on direct stages of meditation and contemplation.

I know this because I started my career as a transpersonal psychologist. In fact, at that time, I was probably considered the leading transpersonal psychologist in the world, but I kept finding more and more factors that it just didn't cover. As I kept expanding, I naturally moved into an integral or truly comprehensive approach, and I made a fairly well-announced and explained break with the field some, I don't know, 15, 20 years ago. About half the field came over and created integral psychology and its approaches, and about half the field remained with transpersonal psychology but it tended to lose ground and became a very minor movement basically.

The transpersonal field has some very, very good stuff to it. I'm definitely fond of the ground that it does cover. It's a very, very narrow and partial and limited approach to psychology and therefore to human beings and therefore to the world at large. We would actually consider transpersonal to be a small component subset of a larger integral approach.

Ryan: That was great. Cool. We're going to move on to the question. I think that was a pretty clear answer. Just to clarify one more time, we're going to cover this stuff in depth later in the course. Actually, for a lot of people, that's been really mind block stuff. It's very exciting. I love that question of course and I think I'm saying that right, Pontis Meyer says, Ken, I'm currently reading your book, *The Integral Vision and Integral Meditation*. I can already feel how powerful they are and how in the fact they make me grow as a human in indescribable ways. Increasingly, I can feel how much life guide me to take part of this integral movement, and I know it's an inevitable outcome for me. I'm already passionately studying the integral theory and the clarity I'm gaining on how to apply it in business, relationships, music or project grows every day.

Do you think this core OS, which covers integral theory, would speed up my growth even more because I'm already studying and practicing your books? Perhaps this is enough for probable transformation to take place, reading books. Since my intention is to provide the world with the highest potential of me so that I can contribute to the world in the best possible way, I always remain open for different directions like it's planning me toward. What's your advice? Does it take ... Is being

in this course going to make a significant difference than what he has been doing with reading books?

Ken: Yeah. Pontis, we can gain an understanding of integral from many different sources, and all of them can be very useful. The first place people often start is indeed with books since those are basic source materials in almost every field. I'm really glad that people usually find my books very helpful and sometimes life changing. I'm delighted when that happens and very grateful actually. You can also advance your understanding of integral in several other ways. You can get a graduate degree in integral studies at, say, Meridian University. There are video sources on various websites, and sometimes you're seeing a human being communicating some of these ideas can be very exciting.

It's not a matter of choosing just one or the other, just reading the books or just taking this course because naturally, you can do both, and you'll have a different learning experience with each. You know what you're getting with the books. With the live course, you'll get, in addition to some of the same information, an entirely different context in which to learn. You'll be doing this as part of a learning community. You'll meet dozens and dozens of other individuals, all deeply interested in learning and applying these ideas to their lives and to the world itself. You'll be able to interact with other students, share your understanding and gain a chance to hear theirs. You can form study teams and interact with teachers. You'll be tested in various ways to see how your understanding is coming along, and you'll be able to question aspects of the theory that you don't understand or that you disagree with.

The communal dimension is much richer than just reading by yourself. Although, of course, reading can be a deeply effective mode of learning and will always remain central in many ways, but now you've entered the integral world and you'll find an enormous number of different environments that it's operating in. From books to classrooms to for-profit businesses, including ones like integral coaching, integral therapy, integral education, integral business. We just heard Robert Kegan's everyone culture. There's integral medicine, integral politics and so on. All sorts of websites there are conferences and journals and integral organizations.

It sounds like you want to dedicate your life to an integral approach, and so you'll likely be involved with any number of those engagements. I think the course, along with your reading, will make a very good start in that direction. I definitely recommended it. Good luck, my friend, in all of that.

Ryan: Awesome. Thank you, Ken. I think the piece about community, Ken, I don't really think that can be overstated for a lot of people. Hitting an integral worldview can be kind of lonely, because it's not a common conversation happening in everyday life. For me, when I was in my hometown, and I was learning all this stuff, I found it very difficult at first because I couldn't really share it with people. That kind of goes back to our first question. It gets hard to share it with people when you're having all of these major ah-hahs. Being in a community where you're having all these huge internal transformations, and you're also able to share these with other people who are having the same

transformations, it kind of has a compounding effect, which has been really cool to see, and cool for me to be a part of with my life. I just wanted to add that piece.

Let's move on to the next question. This one's from Andy. I think I'm saying that right. "Ken, I understand the idea of broadening my own perspective by assuming the role of other." This is the practice that we're doing this week. "However, I think we should be cautious about assuming the position or perspective of another person, as it can create problems and challenges when confronted with a personality or shadows," which we go into later in the course, "or shadows of that person, as I don't want to integrate their qualities into my own. Can you elaborate on this practice of assuming a role of other and clarify if my thoughts make sense or not?"

Ken: Sure. There is a big difference between assuming the role of other and agreeing with the role of other, or adopting the role of other, or identifying with the role of other. We definitely want to be able to take the role of other to see how they're seeing the world, to be able to walk a mile in their shoes. But we don't necessarily want to agree with what we see, and we certainly don't want to identify with what we see.

Now, of course, if we see a truly noble quality, if we're trying to see the world the way Mahatma Gandhi saw it, for example, then we would probably want to identify with some of that. But in many cases, as you point out, there are numerous shadow elements, or less developed structures, or low levels of morality, and so on. In those cases, we're simply trying to understand that person as clearly as we can. We might want to be able to offer them help, but we certainly do not want to identify with those crude or pathological elements.

It's an important question, and it's something we want to keep in mind. It's an important distinction. Taking the role of other is not necessarily agreeing with it or adopting it or identifying with it. Big, big difference.

Ryan: Great, yes. Thank you. I think later we go into the course about shadows, and how shadow is often a disintegrated aspect of ourself. So actually reintegrating things is actually what helps us address our own shadow issues.

Ken: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, it's an important part of that.

Ryan: Yeah. We're going to go onto the final question of the day. This one is from Kion. Kion says, "The assignment after this first week's session is to take the role of other. Can I do this with beings other than humans? Would it help or hurt to take the role of, say, a cat or a tree, or say, maybe, the Pyramids of Giza? What's the best way to do this to expand my consciousness?"

Ken: Right. Now, theoretically, a human being, a human holon ... Now, a holon is a whole that's part of other wholes. A whole atom is part of a whole molecule. A whole molecule is part of a whole cell. A whole cell is part of a whole organism, and so on. The universe is made of holons at all levels, but they're all wholes that are parts of other wholes, indefinitely.

So theoretically, a human being, a human holon, contains all of the holons that have emerged ever since the Big Bang 14 billion years ago. The human body today literally contains quarks, it contains subatomic particles, it contains atoms, molecules, cells, organisms, and then the entire tree of life. It contains the neurochords, the fishes, biochemistry of plant life, reptilian brainstem and its instincts, mammalian limbic system and its emotions, primate cortex and its symbols, and human neocortex and its logic.

Each one of those holons, as Whitehead points out, has a little bit of prehension. That is, it has a little bit of consciousness, or awareness, or proto-feelings. Humans have access to all of those levels of consciousness. All of them are literally within us. Of course, the lower we go in that scale, the harder it is to feel the awareness of the lower holon. It's very hard to be aware of an atom's consciousness, for example, even though we contain atoms in our own being. But sometimes people on psychedelics will actually experience being an atom, and then seeing and feeling the world the way an atom does.

By the time we get to mammals, like cats and dogs, we have emotional limbic systems, they have emotional limbic systems, and we feel that we can communicate with them to some degree. Some people feel very close to their dogs, for example, and they're sure that their dogs are communicating with them in non-symbolic ways. If the owner's sad, the dog seems to get sad too, and if the owner's happy, the dog seems to get happy. This is because humans and dogs both share the same basic type of emotional limbic system, and those systems can communicate with each other.

So if you bracket out your higher cognitive capacities, your language and your logic and your reason, and you just focus on certain fundamental emotions, joy, happiness, sadness, and so on, you'll likely be able to share those with your dog. So you're taking the role of other with your dog.

Theoretically, you can do this with any holon in existence, because as I said, humans literally contain all the basic holons in existence since the Big Bang. It's astonishing, but we transcend and include everything, going back to the Big Bang. Of course, as we were saying, the simpler they are, atoms, molecules, single cells, the harder that is to do. But you still have little snippets of their awareness throughout your body. And the higher up the tree of life those holons are, dogs, chimpanzees, gorillas, the more you can communicate with them and take their role.

Fundamentally, human beings really are at home in the universe. We contain every holon ever created. They're literally the building blocks of our own being, and we contain them at all levels. So we can resonate with them at all levels. Thus, we have their awareness all compounded inside of us, which is why, when we have a genuine experience of, say, ultimate unity consciousness, we're one not only with spirit, but with the entire universe and all of its beings, because we are intimately interwoven with all of them anyway.

It's truly an integral world, top to bottom, so it's really amazing. And yes, you can practice communing with virtually any individual entity or organism in existence, and you're going to be

more or less successful. As we say, the lower and simpler the holons are, the harder it is to do, but that doesn't mean that you can't imagine that you're doing it, because you really do contain them. You really do have their little proto-feeling and proto-awareness wrapped up within your own being.

All of their prehensions add up to create your awareness right now. Your awareness right now as you look out on the world contains quark awareness inside of atom awareness inside of molecule awareness inside of cell awareness inside of plant, fish, amphibian, reptile, mammal awareness. All of that summates in your own consciousness, in your own awareness right now. You contain all of that.

By the way, this is why artificial intelligence, why AI researchers have such a hard time getting computers to think like humans, because right now, AI doesn't think the way humans think, and their computer simulations don't think the way humans think. They just use algorithms that simulate similar results to how humans think, but they don't think the way humans think.

And they can't, not the way they're doing it now, because a human being has hundreds of holons going all the way down to quarks and atoms whose consciousness adds up to produce human consciousness. AI folks just skim off the top of that chain and take things like logic or rationality, and then get the computer to simulate that. But that's leaving out the hundreds of other awarenesses and feelings that go into human thinking. That's why we're quite certain that computers don't feel, and so computers don't actually act the way human beings act or think or feel.

So AI has a long, long way to go before they're matching human thinking in any sort of accurate fashion. This is a conversation I'm having with several Silicon Valley folks now, and it's pretty interesting. But an integral approach helps us see some of the gaps in the typical approaches to this topic.

But theoretically, human beings are a compound individual that is compounded of every major previous individual holon that's emerged ever since the Big Bang. It's really astonishing, actually.

Ryan: Yeah, Ken. When you say it that way, it's really ... It is astonishing. It's mind-blowing to really think about what has come together to create every single one of us individual human beings. We're kind of the result of billions and billions and billions of years of all of this evolution, and here we are sitting on the phone having this conversation.

Ken: Yeah, and it's transcend and include, transcend and include, transcend and include. And man, that include part is just as wild as the transcend part.

Ryan: Yeah. It's amazing. I'm just going to add another piece on this, the taking the role of other exercise. The exercise that Ken gave us is really an exercise in capacity development. It's not much different than going to the gym and doing strength training with weights, except we're doing it with our ability to empathize, with our ability to expand our consciousness, to see other people's point of view. Just like starting to go to the gym, not everything is familiar and easy and comfortable at first. Sometimes, a new exercise can be very difficult as you're starting to do it, and you may not know

if it's working immediately. You don't go to the gym and do sit-ups, and then come home and have six-pack abs. It takes a while of actually doing the exercise before sit-ups become something you're confident with, and before they start having the results that you're anticipating.

Ken: It's a muscle. It will get bigger the more you exercise it. It's funny, because as fundamental as that process is, of taking the role of other, not everybody is really aware of it like that, and doesn't really pay attention to it. When we're in, like, a romantic relationship, one of the most common complaints ... Women especially make this with men, but both sides often feel it. But the person, the partner, will say, "My partner doesn't really see me."

Now, they mean something very specific by that. They don't mean, "My partner doesn't see me as an object." In other words, they don't mean, "They don't see how tall I am, or they don't see that I have a nice body, they don't see my hair, they don't see my teeth." They mean, "They don't see the way I see things. They don't understand how I see the world. They don't understand how I feel about that thing."

So, they don't see my subject, is the complaint, not that they don't see my object. They probably see your object. Well, they're aware of you. Yeah, there you are, and they talk at you as an object. But they don't take the role that you take. They don't see the world through your eyes. Therefore, they don't see you. You don't feel seen, because they're not seeing how you see. So they feel that you don't really know them, and you don't. If you're not taking the role of theirs and seeing the world the way they see it and feel about something the way they feel about it, then you're really not seeing them. You're seeing them as an object. You're not seeing their self, their subject, the way they look at the world.

That's probably one of the most bitter and common complaints that partners make about each other. It's just this fundamental process, and we just don't do it enough. We don't exercise that muscle enough. Therefore, we don't really see the people around us enough. We just see them as objects, as its. We have an I-it relationship, and not an I-thou relationship, of relating to the person as a subject that's seeing the world in a particular way. What is that way? How are they seeing it?

So taking the role of other is absolutely crucial. And it's crucial in our own growth, because each higher stage can take more perspectives into account. So we're not just understanding the other person better, we're engaging in our own growth more rapidly. It's very, in a sense, self-serving to be able to see other selves.

Ryan: Yeah. It's really amazing. The practice continues to expand, so it's a really powerful practice that you're sharing with us. We've been doing this course for a while, and for Leif and I, who work on this project year-round, taking the role of other is a very important practice for how we work together as business partners on developing this project. It's really how we build synergy and collaboration, and it's a continually powerful growth process for us in every dimension of our life. So thank you.

Ken: Yeah. It goes all the way up.

Ryan: Yeah. So that's the call.

Ken: Okay.

Ryan: Thank you, Ken. Thank you so much.

Ken: Excellent. All righty.

Ryan: It's been really awesome. Thank you, everybody, and thank you Ken.

Ken: You bet. Bye bye.



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