

THE LEADING EDGE OF THE UNKNOWN IN THE HUMAN BEING

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Hello, my friends, this is Ken Wilber, and I want to say what an honor it is to be here with all of you for this incredibly important conversation. Now although the topic I'm presenting—and please don't change the channel when I say this—although the topic I'm presenting ends up being relatively quite simple, it starts out a little bit complex; and worse, we only have under an hour, so I'm going to have to proceed at a fairly brisk pace. But I promise you I will do everything I can to make this as simple and clear and straightforward as I possibly can. So please hang in there with me, because I honestly cannot think of a more urgent or important topic anywhere—which will become more and more obvious the more we proceed. So if you follow along, even if it starts a little slowly, I think its importance will become more and more apparent. It starts out with just spirituality, but winds up applying to virtually all human activity, with truly revolutionary results. See if you don't end up agreeing.

But I can start by summarizing the beginning of this discussion in a few sentences: we now have very compelling, cross-cultural evidence that human beings actually have two quite different—but equally important—types of spiritual engagement or types of spiritual awareness. Now it's not at all obvious at first, but the failure to grasp both of these ends up being literally catastrophic, affecting everything from education to politics to global warming to world terrorism, as we'll increasingly see. But one of these is often called *spiritual intelligence*, and this spiritual intelligence is one of perhaps a

dozen multiple intelligences that all human beings have (others include ones such as cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, moral intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, aesthetic intelligence—and, yes, spiritual intelligence). Spiritual intelligence is just that: our intelligent or intellectual approach to Spirit or an ultimate Reality—how we think about that Reality, the concepts and symbols we use to represent it, the ideas we form about it: our general worldview when it comes to religious or spiritual realities. When it comes to Spirit, it's our **talk**. The other type of engagement is not spiritual intelligence but direct *spiritual experience*. Our spiritual intelligence might tell us that, as one example, we are each intimately interwoven and interconnected with every thing and event in the entire Kosmos, that we are one with the All; and, to support this, we might bring in various spiritual texts, but also various other knowledge branches, such as modern physics, quantum mechanics, systems theory and complexity theory, evolutionary ideas, and so on. These are all ideas held in the mind as we conceive or think about Spirit.

But the other type of engagement is not spiritual intelligence but direct *spiritual experience*. This is not our talk, but our **walk**. It's not any content of Awareness, but Awareness itself. Where spiritual intelligence might tell us that we are one with the All, with spiritual experience we directly and fully *experience* that oneness with the All—we don't think it, we ARE it, so-called Kosmic consciousness or ultimate nondual unity consciousness or the Great Perfection or Christ consciousness or Yeshe or Ein Sof, and so on.

These are two very different paths. A person can have an incredibly elaborate theory or map or idea or intellectual understanding of the interwoven universe—bringing

in all sorts of leading-edge science discoveries from modern physics to ecology—but still *experience themselves* as a skin-encapsulated ego, as an irreducible separate-self sense existing on this side of one's face and looking at a set-apart, separate world out there. They may think that subject and object are one, unified, interwoven, or nondual system, but they still experience themselves as an isolated subject in here looking at a world of separate objects out there. In these cases, spiritual intelligence is high, spiritual experience is quite low.

On the other hand, a person can have a direct satori or awakening experience or Enlightenment-awareness or nondual realization and not really have any extensive ideas of why or how or what that experience is. Their spiritual experience is profound, but their spiritual intelligence is pretty mediocre (and often the ideas they use to explain what they experienced are embarrassingly archaic, out-of-date, or even childish and superstitious).

These two engagements are so different that spiritual intelligence is referred to as belonging to the overall path of *Growing Up*—because, like all multiple intelligences, spiritual intelligence goes through a series of stages of development (or Growing Up), becoming more and more complex, more whole, more inclusive, more sophisticated and more mature (I'll go over the actual stages of this development in just a moment). But that's the path of Growing Up, while direct spiritual experience or awareness is known as the path of *Waking Up*—a series of direct and immediate experiences that don't necessarily undergo growth, although they can, but that essentially are simply direct and immediate experiences that present themselves in their fullness from the very start, and although there are various forms of this, they often involve a direct experience of the

union of an individual's self with all of existence and its divine Ground. So we have both Waking Up and Growing Up, spiritual intelligence and spiritual experience, our spiritual talk and our spiritual walk.

Now what's so extraordinary about these two engagements—and one of the ways we can really see the difference between them—is the shocking difference in humankind's history between when these two paths were discovered—one, extremely early; the other, extremely recently. The path of Waking Up, because it is directly and immediately experienced, has been understood in various forms by humankind going back perhaps some 50,000 years, with the very first shamanic vision quests. And the founders of virtually all of the world's great wisdom traditions—from Moses to Christ to Buddha to Shankara to Lao Tzu—all had profound *spiritual experiences* of being one with an ultimate Reality or Divinity, and attempted to convey ways for their followers to have similar Waking-Up experiences. But the path of Growing Up, which is not so much a direct experience as an intellectual framework or interpretive grid—this path and its various stages were only discovered around 100 years ago; and only applied to spirituality in the last few decades—with profound, breakthrough results (as we'll soon see). But this path of Growing Up isn't a direct experience and it can't be seen by looking within or introspecting or examining one's own experience. It's much more like grammar, which definitely exists and is constantly active in us and governs how we put words together but cannot itself be seen by introspecting or looking within. Every person brought up in a particular culture ends up speaking that culture's language quite correctly—they put subject and verb together correctly, they use adjectives and adverbs correctly, and in general they follow that language's rules of grammar quite correctly.

But if you ask any of them to write down these rules that they are following so accurately, virtually none of them can do so. In other words, they are all following a fairly extensive set of rules, which governs how they use their language and thus in many ways how they experience their world, but they have no idea they are doing so. Well, the various levels or stages of the development of spiritual intelligence, those levels of Growing Up, are themselves quite like grammar in many ways; they are a set of rules and patterns that govern how we use our spiritual intelligence (or any intelligence). And it is this discovery—the various levels or stages of the basic rules or patterns governing our spiritual intelligence and our overall Growing Up—that were only discovered around 100 years ago and applied a few decades ago. (And again, we’ll see exactly what those levels or stages are in just a moment, so...please stay with me.)

Now, because these details of the developmental unfolding of spiritual intelligence—these stages in the path of Growing Up—cannot be discovered by looking within or introspecting or examining one’s experience or awareness (they were discovered essentially the same way grammar was—by examining large numbers of individuals and watching their behavior over extended periods of time, and carefully looking for repeating common patterns, and then watching how these patterns change over an entire lifespan)—and because those hidden patterns and stages were indeed only discovered about 100 years ago, this was much too recent to be included in any of the world’s great wisdom traditions or spiritual systems anywhere. Indeed, not a single spiritual or religious system anywhere in the world has anything like these stages of spiritual Growing Up, or shows any indication that they understand them at all. And this actually turns out to be... disastrous.

Have you ever wondered why religion has, on the one hand, everywhere been claimed to be the single greatest source of love, compassion, care, and morality in the world; and yet it is also, without doubt, the single largest source of hatred, murder, torture, and war that humans have ever known. How could the same basic human endeavor result in such diametrically opposed outcomes? How on earth could that even happen? Well, according to this more recent research, those at the lower stages of Growing Up almost always interpret their spirituality in power-driven, egocentric, and ethnocentric ways, thus actually predisposing them—causing them—to be hatred-driven and given to murder, torture, and warfare—and all, of course, in the name of the love of their God. Yet individuals at the higher stages of this Growing Up development almost always interpret their spirituality in open, loving, compassionate, and all-humans-included ways. The stunning breakthrough in the last century is that we finally discovered the major steps and stages that this overall Growing Up or development goes through. And thus, for the first time in history, we have some say as to whether a person's spiritual reality will incline them toward hatred and war, or toward love and compassion. We now know what causes that, and we know how to alter it. And this, although not yet well-known information, is truly revolutionary.

Notice that this also means that because, prior to this recent period, not a single human discipline anywhere in the world, including religion and spirituality—ever practiced both Waking Up and Growing Up together, but instead practiced only one or the other, and therefore human beings have heretofore actually been practicing to be partial, fragmented, and broken. They've been working at it. The entire history of humanity, East and West, is a history of brokenness. And yet, just recently, we now have

the understanding of how we can include both of those engagements in our overall spiritual understanding—indeed, our overall developmental growth and evolution in general. This, again, is absolutely revolutionary.

So what are these stages in the development or unfolding of our spiritual intelligence? And how can these stages of Growing Up be combined with the states of Waking Up to produce a whole and unified human being? First, let's notice that the theory and practice of developmental studies—which actually was a direct offshoot of the overall discovery of evolution itself, since development is basically just another view of evolution—but the interest in developmental studies began, as we said, about 100 years ago, toward the early part of the 20th century, with such towering figures as perhaps America's greatest psychologist, James Mark Baldwin. And note that while Baldwin was pioneering a study of the major stages of Growing Up, his contemporary William James (often thought of as America's greatest psychologist—I'd give him a close, and utterly brilliant, number two) but he was pioneering a study of the many states of Waking Up—as in his classic, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. **Experience**—direct spiritual experience. What nobody realized at the time was that these two major dimensions—the stages of Growing Up and the experiential states of Waking Up—were indeed two quite different but very real and equally important dimensions, and they unfolded independently of each other. As we'll see, this relative independence turns out to be of incredible importance, because what research indicates is that you can be at a high level of Waking Up experience and yet still be at a quite low level of Growing Up development—and if that is so, then, as we noted, your religious experience will actually tend to drive you toward some very negative outcomes, including hatred and aggression

(“in the name of God”). We’ll definitely come back to this, because here we are directly stepping into the realm of things like ethnocentric fundamentalism of a “chosen people” and religious terrorism from ISIS to Hezbollah to over-zealous Southern Baptists. No matter how profound your Waking Up experience, it is interpreted and reduced to very distorted terms by low levels of Growing Up. And since no system of spiritual Waking Up anywhere has any understanding of the specific stages of Growing Up, there was absolutely no way to check for this. The person simply felt, in both cases—high and low, genuine and distorted—that they were directly in touch with, even one with, an ultimate spiritual Reality—they had a Waking Up, even if their Growing Up was horrible; and that horrible Growing Up made for an equally horrible application of their Waking Up (and they had no way whatsoever to know that this was happening—because you can’t see these stages of Growing Up by looking within—and therefore they never had a way to correct it... and they still don’t). And virtually nobody today with any sort of Waking-Up practice also includes these crucial stages of Growing Up—we’re still fundamentally broken (although we no longer have to be!).

Now one last quick point before we get to those recently discovered stages of Growing Up. Developmental studies eventually disclosed that humans don’t have just one major intelligence—usually called cognitive intelligence and measured with the all-important IQ test. Rather, as we briefly mentioned, humans have up to a dozen different multiple intelligences. In addition to cognitive intelligence, they have emotional intelligence, moral intelligence, linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and, indeed, spiritual intelligence. Because all of these undergo growth and development, they are often called “lines of development.” And the key is that, although

these various multiple lines of development are indeed quite different from each other, they all go through the same basic levels of development. So, different lines, same levels. This uncovering of these various lines and their many levels of development was the groundbreaking discovery, one of the most central discoveries in all of psychology's history. And it was groundbreaking because these multiple intelligences (and their levels) cover virtually all of human activity—from ethics to education to politics to medicine to science to art to history to, indeed, our religious and spiritual ideas (and when it comes to spirituality, that's true whether we are theistic, atheistic, agnostic, or any other "tic"—whenever we are thinking about ultimates or ultimate realities—even if we decide there aren't any, and we're atheistic—we're still using our spiritual intelligence—that's what it evolved for, thinking about ultimate concern. Whenever you think about any sort of ultimate reality, you are using your spiritual intelligence—and the big discovery is, it grows and develops through a well-established sequence of stages, like virtually any natural, living phenomenon, from chickens to oaks to amoebas to pine trees—and you definitely want to make sure that you are not coming from the lower stages of this, unless you're 5 or 6 years old. More about that in just a moment, I think you can see it's profoundly important).

So, now to the crucial point: what exactly are these levels or stages that all multiple intelligences—including spiritual intelligence—go through? Because that was the key breakthrough discovery, these levels of Growing Up. But let me point out that coming up with accurate names for these levels is actually quite difficult. The reason is that these levels apply equally to all dozen or so multiple lines or intelligences, and yet any particular name will tend to favor just one or two lines—we have to come up with

terms that apply equally to cognition and morals and aesthetics and music and kinesthetics and so on—you can see the difficulty. For this reason, many developmentalists use just numbers or colors for these levels. The system I use—called Integral Metatheory—uses both. But there are a few terms that are relatively inoffensive, and as long as we don't take these terms too seriously, as long as we remember that a whole range of other terms can apply to these levels, then one set of fairly acceptable terms is a variation of those originally given by the developmental genius Jean Gebser. For Gebser, all humans—both over history and in today's individual development—move from an archaic stage to a magic stage to a mythic stage, then rational stage, then pluralistic stage, then integral stage (higher stages possible with future evolution; and again, don't let those names throw you if you don't like them; I'll go over each of these stages clearly in just a moment, give examples, and explain the enormous amount of research behind them). But this means that each multiple intelligence goes through each of those stages—and thus there is an archaic cognition, a magic cognition, a mythic cognition, a rational cognition, a pluralistic cognition, and an integral cognition. And there likewise is an archaic spiritual intelligence, a magic spiritual intelligence, a mythic spiritual intelligence, a rational spiritual intelligence, a pluralistic spiritual intelligence, and an integral spiritual intelligence—the many different levels of the ways that we interpret our spiritual realities, including how we interpret our Waking-Up experiences (I'll give some clear examples of each of those in just a moment). And this is true through all dozen multiple lines—each different line goes through these same basic levels—so these levels become profoundly important, and their discovery was that breakthrough event around 100 years ago. In many cases, these levels or stages in some

of the lines have been tested in over 40 different cultures, and no major exceptions to these stages have been found. One line has been tested in Amazonian rain forest tribes, Australian aborigines, Mexican workers, Indianapolis housewives, and Harvard professors—no major overall exceptions. This means that all humans, in their multiple intelligences—including spiritual intelligence—move through these major basic levels, and you can't skip stages or bypass stages. These stages are like letters, to words, to sentences, to paragraphs, to whole treatises. Each of those is necessary for the next higher level, and none can be skipped—you can't go from letters to sentences and skip words. The same is true in evolution itself—for example, quarks to atoms to molecules to cells to organisms (and you can't go from atoms to cells and skip molecules). And remember, you can't see these stages of Growing Up by looking within or introspecting, just as, if you look within right now, you can't see any of the rules of grammar. But when you are at one of these stages (in any line), that stage will govern how you see and interpret and experience the world—and you will have no idea whatsoever that this is happening. It's happening right now—and you can't see it, right? This is exactly why humanity didn't figure this out until just a hundred years ago. It's important to keep that in mind.

So how exactly do these stages of Growing Up relate to our overall spiritual awareness? How do these Growing-Up stages govern the ways that we will interpret our Waking-Up experiences? Because that is what research has found: no matter what degree of Waking Up we experience, if we are in anything other than a totally formless state of consciousness—or directly when we come out of that formless state—we will interpret that Waking-Up state according the stage of Growing Up we are at. Again,

these major Growing-Up stages are a type of hidden grammar—without us being aware of it at all, these stages, these grammars, will govern how we create the frameworks with which we interpret any and all experiences that we have—including sensory experience, and mental experience, and, yes, spiritual experience (or Waking-Up experience). So how does this happen exactly? And how can we spot this in ourselves and hopefully correct it?

Now, in a moment I'm going to give some very clear examples of some widespread types of spirituality that come from each one of those stages that I just listed. But to start, and in order to point out the incredibly fundamental nature of these stages of Growing Up and how they govern the way that we actually interpret and therefore experience our world, I'm going to use a simpler version of these stages, one that, instead of the standard 6-to-8 or so major stages that most models of Growing Up have—like Gebser's stages we just gave—instead has a simple 4 stages of overall Growing Up. These are just a condensed version of the more standard 6-to-8 levels that most models have; but they are a perfectly valid summary of them, and because they're so simple, they're a very good introduction, and they show very clearly what's involved here. This model of Growing Up is the one presented by Carol Gilligan. Gilligan became a feminist sensation with her book *In a Different Voice*, where she suggested that men and women reason in different terms—in a different voice—when it comes to moral problems. Men tend to think in terms of autonomy, rights, and justice, and women tend to think in terms of relationship, care, and responsibility (and, of course, anybody can be a mixture of any of those; these are simple averages). Gilligan, who engaged in actual research on this issue, maintained that both men and women went through the same 4 basic levels of

moral development, but each of them tended to reason in a somewhat different way—“in a different voice.” Since, at the time that she demonstrated this, the masculine version was usually privileged, this was a hugely liberating insight for women. So male or female, East or West, here are the major stages of Growing Up that all humans go through, but as described here especially in the female voice.

Stage 1, Gilligan calls *selfish*—the woman cares only for herself (we also call this stage “egocentric,” which means self-centered or narcissistic; all infants start out at this stage, what Freud called “primary narcissism”—it can’t take the role of other or be concerned with others’ needs, but is moved only by its own immediate needs and desires).

At stage 2, which Gilligan calls *care*, the woman extends care from herself to an entire group (from a “me” to an “us”—family, clan, tribe, nation, members of a religious family or political party and so on); and the woman identifies with this group (or groups) and extends care from just herself to all the group members, but there is a sharp division between this group of my people versus all those other groups of alien and different people, so there is a very strong “us versus them” attitude at this stage (we call this stage “ethnocentric,” or group-centered, and it’s also ethnocentric in the negative sense that, in identifying only with one group and its characteristics, it tends to exclude all other groups and their characteristics, so it tends to be racist or sexist or homophobic or xenophobic, harshly authoritarian and rigidly hierarchical; religiously, this is fundamentalism and the belief in a “chosen peoples” who have the one and only true God and the one and only true path, and so on). The world today is undergoing something of an explosion of identity at this level, with a vast number of people seeing themselves as being a special

and good group, and virtually everybody else—or certainly various other select groups—as being totally alien, different, problematic, to be avoided or denied, even being evil. We care enormously for our group; we do not care at all for those other groups; in fact, we’re usually frightened by them and we often loathe them. And social media doesn’t help with this. But worldwide, this is a direct result of arrested development at this essentially low level of Growing Up—and an alarming 60 or 70 percent of the world’s population is today at this ethnocentric or lower level of development. 3 out of 5, according to well-known Harvard developmentalist Robert Kegan).

That type of prejudiced and biased belief disappears at the next major stage, stage 3, which Gilligan calls, not “care,” but *universal care*—the woman extends care from just her group to all groups (a move from “us” to “all of us”—a stage we also call “worldcentric,” global or all-humans-centered). The person at this stage attempts to treat all people fairly, regardless of race, color, sex, or religious creed.

And finally, at stage 4, which Gilligan calls *integrated*, the woman integrates both the masculine and the feminine voices in herself, to produce a full and complete human being. (This integral stage, other developmentalists also see as expanding identity and moral care from all humans to all sentient beings and all life—what we also call “kosmocentric.”)

Thus each and every one of us grows and develops from egocentric to ethnocentric to worldcentric to kosmocentric—from “me” to “us” to “all of us” to “all being”—the ever-increasing and ever-more inclusive stages of Growing Up. And as our identity gets bigger and bigger and bigger, we will treat with moral care and concern those with whom we identify, and thus the more we morally Grow Up, the more beings

we will directly care for and treat morally, and hence we will move from caring only about myself, to caring about those in just my special group, to caring about those in all groups (or all humans), to caring about all beings and all life bar none. (And, let us note, any individual can stop their growth at any of those stages.)

So, for example, if you are Christian, and you have a powerful experience—perhaps a dream—of seeing a being of light, and you feel a oneness in love and bliss with that light and the entire universe—a real Waking-Up experience—how exactly will you interpret that experience? You very well might interpret this being of light as being Jesus Christ himself. But how precisely do you experience that?

If you are at stage 1, a selfish or egocentric stage, you might think that you yourself—and only you—are that being of light—that you yourself *are* the real Jesus Christ. So this ultimate Unity experience represented by Jesus Christ is occurring to you and just to you, and you are at the center of everything, you yourself alone *are* Christ. Our mental institutions are full of people with that belief. And the thing is, their actual experience is right—they *are* one with Jesus Christ; the problem is, so is everybody else, not just them—their Waking Up is right, their Growing Up is in the basement. So starting right there, in the very first stage, you can see the importance of Growing Up on Waking Up. No matter how deeply or profoundly this person experiences their union or even their pure identity with Christ, they simply cannot see that anybody else can also do this.

Now if you have moved up to stage 2, the ethnocentric care stage, you will think that this is the Savior of your special group, because your group are the chosen peoples, and this experience of religious Unity is available only if, in this example, you accept

Jesus as your personal savior. Even if you feel one with Divinity and one with the entire world, you'll think it is only people of your chosen group (who have accepted Jesus) that can have this experience in a *real* and *true* way. Others may *think* they have it, but they really don't. Your interpretation of the absolute necessity to accept Jesus Christ as your savior—the absolute certainty of that interpretation—governs your experience of it. You'll still feel oneness, but only your chosen people can join you in that. If it's an extreme version of this stage, you will think that it is your duty to directly convince or even coerce nonbelievers to accept this one true God—and now you have direct experiential proof of this one and only true God—the proof is this being of radiant light that is Christ himself and that you are now one with, precisely because you have accepted Jesus as your one and only savior, a salvation available to others if and only if they also accept Christ, otherwise they are bound for endless torment, pain, and suffering—and therefore “onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war” becomes your theme song. Jihad—crusades by whatever name—comes with this stage. You might get involved in direct violence in the name of your God, whether you are a Southern Baptist bombing abortion clinics in the South, or join a religious war like the incredibly vicious one that occurred between Irish Catholics and Protestants or is now occurring between Sinhala Buddhists and Tamil Hindus in Sri Lanka, or Israeli Jews and Palestinians, or Indian Hindus and Pakistanis Muslims, or engage in direct terrorism like ISIS or al Qaeda or Boko haram, or the Buddhist terrorist group that dumped poison sarin gas in the Tokyo subway system. In every one of these cases—and every major religion is fully susceptible to this—you believe that you and your group alone have access to the one and only true God or ultimate Reality or only real spiritual Path, and everybody else is just

some sort of hell-bound unbeliever or unenlightened, perpetually reincarnating sufferer; and it's your job to convert them or dispatch them.

That type of motivation comes to an end at the next stage, stage 3, where care expands to universal care—the *universal* care or worldcentric stage. If you have reached this stage in your Growing Up, you will attempt to treat all people fairly, regardless of race, color, sex, or religious creed. You have moved from “us” to “all of us,” and thus your moral care and concern has expanded from an ethnocentric “us” to a worldcentric “all of us.” You will start to see Jesus Christ, not as the one and only Son, of your one and only God, given to your one and only chosen people, but as a genuine World Teacher among several other genuine World Teachers, each of which has something profoundly important to teach us. This is actually a very difficult step to take in a person's spiritual intelligence—in this example, you mean Jesus is not the one and only savior? He's not the only Son of God, who died on the cross for our sins? If you have been taught, at this mythic or care stage, that your eternal salvation depends directly on you believing that myth—and if you don't believe it, you will burn forever in hell—then you will be extremely reluctant, even deeply frightened, to surrender that belief—this is agonizing for many people—it's described as “I'm losing my faith” or “I no longer believe in God” or “I'm losing my religion”—when all they are really losing is a lower level of their spiritual intelligence as they make room for a higher, more expansive, more inclusive level.

But keep in mind that this worldcentric stage of Growing Up is actually a fairly rare level of development in general and spiritual belief in particular. Notice that it was not until Vatican II, a mere few decades ago, that the Catholic Church itself

acknowledged that a salvation equally genuine was available in other religions besides Catholicism—the first time in its two-thousand year history it had done so, thus moving from an ethnocentric stage of spiritual Growing Up to a worldcentric stage of Growing Up—finally.

But, the attempt to treat all people fairly, regardless of race, color, sex, or creed, meant that, when this stage first emerged on the world scene on a significant scale about 300 years ago, every single worldcentric nation on the planet totally outlawed slavery, the first time in our entire history that anything like that had ever happened (even indigenous people had slavery—as a matter of fact, they invented it). This human emancipation and liberation was due directly to culture moving from an ethnocentric to a worldcentric level of development. At the same time that this occurred, there were the French and American revolutions, attempting to take power away from an ethnocentric monarchy and aristocracy, and put it in the hands of a worldcentric democracy. The overall number of changes as this stage emerged worldwide were extraordinary.

And this is not something that is of minor importance on the world scene right now—as we noted, somewhere between 60 and 70% of the worldwide population today is still at ethnocentric (or lower) stages of Growing Up. And in many cases, they are held at those ethnocentric stages by religions that have not themselves moved from ethnocentric to worldcentric. Note that most of the world's great religions were born during the mythic period of humankind's own overall development and evolution—and the mythic or mythic-literal level is a deeply ethnocentric level—and thus virtually all of them have some degree of ethnocentric, one-and-only-one true way, belief in their superior and solely divine status. And thus they freeze their own followers in the same

case of arrested development that they themselves have—and thus are open to terrorism, burnings or beheadings, torture and murder and holy war, all in the name of the one and only true God. This is perhaps the most inflamed cultural current anywhere in today's world. So this move from ethnocentric spiritual intelligence to worldcentric intelligence is one of the single most important transformations that faces humanity right now anywhere on this planet. But without any understanding of these stages of Growing Up, we have no way whatsoever to even recognize this problem—other than we can all see what a complete mess it is on the world stage.

Just as background information, how do the more standard 6-to-8 stages of development given by most developmental models—such as Gebser's (archaic, magic, mythic, rational, pluralistic, integral)—fit with Gilligan's stages (selfish, care, universal care, integrated—or egocentric, ethnocentric, worldcentric, kosmocentric)? Very straightforwardly: the archaic and magic stages are both egocentric; the mythic stage, as we just pointed out, is ethnocentric; the rational and pluralistic stages are worldcentric; and the integral stage is integrated or kosmocentric. We just gave some examples of religion from each of Gilligan's 4 stages, and in just a moment I'll do the same thing with Gebser's 6 major stages, in order to help make this developmental or evolutionary progression in spiritual intelligence or spiritual Growing Up very clear.

But first, with regard to that last and highest stage to emerge thus far in evolution—the integral or integrated or kosmocentric—let me mention a few items that research has found, because it turns out to be incredibly important information. This is the reason that, in looking for a more comprehensive and all-inclusive spiritual

awareness, we want to include not just Waking Up with Growing Up, but Waking Up with the higher or highest stages of Growing Up. Here's what that means.

To see this, let's go ahead and start by giving Gebser's overall stages and the varieties of religion that are found at, and supported by, each of those stages (archaic to magic to mythic to rational to pluralistic to integral): briefly, we have the archaic stage (which means an early, primitive stage of development, the transition from the great apes to humans—starting a million or so years ago—and experienced in today's individual only during the first year or so of life; no explicit religion at this stage).

Then the magic stage, which is also called things like “animistic,” which means that human awareness and the awareness of its surroundings are not fully differentiated, and thus to manipulate a mental image of a thing is to magically change that thing itself—as in voodoo or santieri, where if you make a doll image of a human person and stick a pin in that doll, the actual person will become sick. An example of magic Christianity is the snake charmer school, which believes that if you have true faith in Christ and you handle poisonous snakes, the snake won't be able to bite you. The leader of one of the largest congregations of snake charmers just died at a quite young age—from a rattlesnake bite. The magic stage first emerged around 200,000 years ago in collective evolution and in today's individuals from around ages 1 until 3 or 4.

Then the mythic or mythic-literal stage, which is just that: the myths are taken to be literally and absolutely true, not symbolic or metaphoric: Moses really did part the Red Sea, God really did rain locusts on the Egyptians, Lot's wife really was turned into a sack of salt, Lao Tzu really was 900 years old when he was born, and so on. Because the mythic stage is deeply ethnocentric, most fundamentalist “chosen people” religious

schools, as we noted, are mythic-literal; this stage emerged starting around 10,000 years ago and in today's development, occurs around ages 5 to 10—though the point is that today, although everybody begins their development at the first, the earliest, the archaic stage, they can stop their development at virtually any of the succeeding stages (magic, mythic-literal, rational, pluralistic, integral); which means that mythic-ethnocentric-fundamentalist religion has stopped its Growing Up at the mythic-literal level or stage in its spiritual intelligence. Now anybody at any of these stages can still have a genuine Waking-Up experience—as we saw with the psychotic “I alone am Christ” example; but, as that example also showed, they will interpret their Waking-Up experience from their stage of Growing Up—at this stage, mythic or mythic-literal, ethnocentric, moral-care extending to their fellow true believers and their chosen people only, all others are unbelievers, suspect, possibly evil, probably damned, often loathed (frequently disguised as “love”).

Then the rational stage—and rational doesn't mean drily abstract or analytical, it just means capable of a worldcentric or universal, 3rd-person perspective, the stage of *universal care*. Buddha had a very rational presentation of his spirituality; it was directly focused on a genuine experience of Waking Up or Enlightenment, but when Buddha spoke about it, he explained it in very rational or reasonable terms—he did not use magic terms, nor did he use mythic terms, he didn't talk about gods or goddesses or nature spirits or anything like that at all. Rather, he explained his meditation system and its effects in very rational terms, and then, when it came to that direct experience of Waking Up or Enlightenment itself, which is trans-rational, he simply said “I can't describe that”—and he refused to—and said simply that you have to experience that for

yourself—and then very rationally explained the meditative steps to take in order to experience that trans-rational Waking-Up reality. Because Buddha’s spiritual intelligence was rational or worldcentric or based in universal care, he made his spirituality available to all Indians, including the untouchables, which was unheard of—and also was responsible for Buddhism really taking off with a lot of people. But Buddha’s Waking Up was at a state known as turiya (awareness without an object) or pure formless extinction or nirodh or nirvana, and his Growing Up or spiritual intelligence was at a mature rational universal-care stage; in evolution, glimmers of the stage of reason first sprouted around the 6th or 7th centuries BCE (with the Greeks to Buddha) and first emerged on a widespread cultural level with the Western Enlightenment (which, like all stages, had its ups and downs, its positives and its negatives); in today’s individual, this rational stage is usually available starting in adolescence.

Then the pluralistic stage, which is also known as multicultural or diversity or relativistic, the stage that drives much of postmodernism, as rationality drove much of modernism. Religion at this stage recognizes a multicultural multiplicity and diversity of religious engagements, all of them potentially beneficial. This is increasingly the level of spiritual intelligence that more and more of the population is reaching, and—starting with the ‘60s boomer generation—has become quite obvious in many millennials. It first emerged in any sort of significant way with the revolution of the ‘60s, and is generally available to individuals starting in young adulthood.

Then finally, to date, the integral stage (which I’ll explain in just a moment).

Now those first 5 or 6 stages of Growing Up are together known as “1st-tier” stages, to distinguish them from the profoundly different integral stage, which is called “2nd tier.” The reason is that, as different as those 1st tier stages are, they all have one thing in common: each one of them thinks that its truth and values are the only real truth and values in existence; all the others are confused, infantile, goofy, or just plain wrong. But the integrated or integral stage—and this is the reason for its name—thinks that all of the stages have some sort of importance and significance, they all need to be included, if for no other reason than that all of them are parts of an overall human growth and development. Thus all of these stages need to be taken into account in any approach to any issue that is addressed. Leaving out the way that any one of these stages views the world is to completely leave out a significant number of people; because what research has found is that everybody is born at square one—the archaic—and has to start their development, in any and all lines, at that level and then move up from there—and, again, they can stop at any stage. So any given population will have people at all of those various stages and levels. And that fact alone changes our approach to every single human problem in existence. The integral stage, as today’s leading edge of human evolution—and which pushes for unifying, integrating, systemic, cross-paradigmatic, trans-disciplinary, all-inclusive metatheories and practices in everything it touches—is still relatively rare: only around 5% of the West’s population is at that stage—with around 20% at a pluralistic postmodern multicultural stage, around 30% at a modern rational stage, and around 40% (with some estimates, we saw, giving up to 60 percent) at a mythic-literal conventional religious stage—and the point is, a genuine Waking-Up

spiritual experience can and does occur at any one of those stages, but it will be interpreted according to the worldview of the Growing-Up stage that has the experience).

But we are starting to see, around the world, and in virtually all knowledge branches, the emergence of theories and practices that are originating from this integral level as it appears in the particular branch; and these new integral theories are systemic, unifying, more embracing and inclusive, trans-disciplinary and cross-paradigmatic, pulling together all sorts of unifying and integrating ideas into systemic holistic overviews, weaving together science and spirituality and virtually all other disciplines as well (as does, for example, SAND). But despite the enormous excitement that these leading-edge approaches are causing, there's still a relatively small number of people that can fully understand and advocate for these integral metatheoretical approaches—about 5% of the population, as we noted. (And by the way, that almost certainly includes you, if you've listened so far. It's nothing to brag about, it's just the way it is.) But the excited claims that humanity is about to undergo the greatest transformation in its entire history to this new integrally unifying understanding, are a bit premature. But this is humanity's extraordinary future, if we can survive the period until its more widespread evolutionary emergence. It's going to be a photo-finish.

In the meantime, what this research tells us is that, when it comes to any line—including spiritual intelligence—because we want to include all levels, we want to also be able to interpret our world from an integral, 2nd tier, all-inclusive level. And in spirituality, this means including all aspects of Waking Up as well as understanding how they are interpreted differently by each of the stages of Growing Up—and helping people transform their spiritual intelligence through these stages of Growing Up to higher and

wider and more all-inclusive levels (what we call a conveyor belt). And as for ourselves, ideally we want to engage in practices that will help us realize the most profound states of authentic Waking Up, AND we want to interpret those enlightenment experiences from an integral level of Growing Up. Anything less than that is less than a full-blown, authentic, all-inclusive spirituality.

And yet, of course, these overall stages and levels of human development, human Growing Up, are virtually unheard of in the world at large, including most of our thought leaders. There is not a single political system or economic market or military department or policy-determining approach or religion or spiritual practice that takes these stages into account. Yet including them is a complete game changer across the board—and is disastrously under-utilized.

Take, as only a simple but widespread example, the common statement that what Western culture desperately needs, because it is so patriarchal, is a largescale influx of feminine values. You've heard that a lot, yes? But look at Gilligan's feminine model itself. What this world definitely does NOT need is more female values at stage 1 and stage 2. We most certainly do not need more selfish and ethnocentric/racist/sexist views—clearly, we do not need those—but those are exactly what the feminine values at those early stages will give us. What we need badly—very badly—is more feminine values from stages 3 and 4—worldcentric and integral. Simply being female is not enough to automatically contribute something positive to society. In fact, if you are among the 60% or so of females at those early stages, you are probably not helping this culture very much. See how this changes the problem—and its real solution—entirely?

Now, by way of concluding this presentation, I'm going to just throw out one last piece of information, with little explanation, just a "this is worth noting" asterisk.

Several individuals who learned about these stages of Growing Up also began looking at the various systems of Waking Up around the world, and they noticed that a large majority of the more sophisticated systems (including Vajrayana Buddhism, Vedanta Hinduism, Christian Neoplatonic mysticism, Sufism, Kabbalah, among others) all described an overall course of Waking Up as also consisting of a sequence of progressively advanced stages of unfolding. Unlike the stages of the levels of Growing Up—which cannot be seen or experienced by looking within—these stages in Waking Up were stages in direct immediate experience, stages in spiritual experience or meditative awareness. What's more, the basic stages in all of these various systems worldwide show a great deal of similarity—from the 7 mansions of St. Teresa to the stages of St. John of the Cross to those of Mahamudra Buddhism, Patanjali's yogic system, Islamic Sufism, Jewish Kabbalah, among many others. Because these were stages of direct experience—not hidden grammar—many spiritual systems around the world have been fully aware of these stages for centuries, and almost all of them gave maps of these stages—and again, these maps show a remarkably similar sequence of stages of increasingly profound spiritual experience or awareness. One such map—explicitly found in Tibetan Buddhism and Vedanta Hinduism, among others—has the stages going from gross (or typical waking) consciousness, to subtle (or luminous) consciousness, to causal (or formless) consciousness, to pure awareness, to ultimate nondual consciousness (somewhat incorrectly often called unity consciousness, "incorrect" because it's technically radically unqualifiable, or as Zen puts it, "not two, not one").

Each of those stages has its own type of direct spiritual experience—going from gross nature mysticism to subtle deity mysticism to causal formless mysticism to ultimate nondual (or “unity”) mysticism. But the schools that are aware of that highest stage—that of nonduality, or radically all-inclusive, ever-present, all-pervading Suchness or Thusness or Isness—maintain that it indeed is the ultimate or highest potential of spiritual awareness available anywhere (simply because, in evolution so far, it is the highest stage yet experienced in any meditative or contemplative sequence anywhere in the world). This radical nonduality has become fairly well-known to a small but growing group of thought leaders and spiritual seekers around the world.

But the point that needs to be added is that the practices that help an individual realize a spiritual Waking Up to an ultimate nonduality, are not at all the same as those that help one move through the levels of Growing Up. And, in fact, one can be at any stage of Growing Up and have an experience of this ultimate nondual unity consciousness (or, indeed, an experience of any of the earlier stages of Waking Up as well). So the final conclusion to all of this is very simple: What we ideally want to do is experience this highest state of Waking Up from the highest level to date of Growing Up. Nondual interpreted by integral. Integral Nondualism (which is the foundation of Integral Metatheory and MetapRACTICE). But I think everything I’ve said up to this point should make that conclusion fairly clear. These highest stages in both Waking Up and Growing Up are simply the result of an all-pervading field of evolutionary development that touches absolutely everything in existence, what we might think of as “Spirit-in-action” in the overall universe.

But how you will actually interpret and thus *really* experience that ever-present Oneness or Nonduality or Waking Up depends upon the stage of Growing Up that you are at. Individuals who are strongly recommending this One Taste Great Perfection virtually never mention anything about the stage of Growing Up that has that experience. So you can look at a book like *Zen at War*, which contains the thoughts of several Zen masters highly respected for the depth of their nondual Enlightenment or Waking Up, and still find them advocating many ideas that are obviously and embarrassingly ethnocentric, prejudiced, and bigoted—and because no spiritual system contains these stages of Growing Up, and because you can't see them by merely looking within, these masters have no way of knowing their incredible deficiency. Do you think a Zen at war is helping the world?

So, our overall conclusion is simply that ideally we ought to remember at least two things: we don't want to just describe this ultimate nonduality, using our spiritual intelligence, and perhaps drawing on leading-edge branches in science itself—but we don't want just to talk that, or intellectually describe that (from whatever our stage of Growing Up), we also want to walk it: we want to have an actual, direct, spiritual experience or realization of this nondual unity or Waking Up—not just our ideas about it (or intellectual Growing Up). And point two, when it comes to that Growing Up, we want it to stem from the highest level of development we can manage, ideally the integral level. We want to include both the best of Waking Up and the highest of Growing Up. Why on earth would we actually aim for anything less—since each of those includes and embraces ALL of their predecessors? What's the point in deliberately aiming for much less than you can be?

(And by the way, if you're not comfortable with those stages of Waking Up, I'm not going to push it. Use whatever your version of a genuine spiritual experience or authentic Waking Up is, and that's fine. What is not as arguable is that, whatever your version of Waking Up, you will interpret it according to your stage of Growing Up. The evidence here is just unyielding.)

So the somewhat startling point is that—although from one perspective all of these stages in both of these paths are to be fully and genuinely accepted (and I truly mean that)—but at the same time, fall significantly short in either of those, and we're probably not really helping things that much; and, as we've seen, we might very well be hurting them. On the other hand, engaging a spirituality that comes from the deepest states of Waking Up and the highest stages of Growing Up is to come from the very best and brightest at the leading edge of evolution itself, a revolutionary stance that, for the first time in history, just recently became available. May we all take advantage of such an extraordinary occasion—remove spirituality once and for all from being an ethnocentric, jihad-inducing, racist and sexist, childhood fantasies of humanity, and allow it to fully shine in its best and brightest and most authentic forms, changing both humans and history in one of the most profound transformations yet to occur in evolution's ongoing unfolding. This is Ken, thank you very much, and please take care.