

## Chapter 13

### Unity

#### *Journey's End, Development Turned Upside Down*

We have explicated a Universal Model of Leadership Development, a consciousness-based model grounded in experience, theory, research, and psychometrics. However, any complete description of human development would be inadequate if not inclusive of, and grounded in, the Wisdom Traditions that describe the highest reaches of human consciousness.

Unity Consciousness is the highest *level* of consciousness in human experience. We do not consider it a *Stage of Development*, since from the Unitive perspective there are no stages. This paradox turns the development world upside down. The mind is unable to wrap itself around the *unknowable*—that which is prior to mind altogether.

This chapter will be brief for four good reasons: 1) it could be an entire book; 2) it seems wrong to write a lot of words about *oneness*; 3) we know very little about it; and 4) the vast majority of us are not living in Unity—we operate at other consciousness levels.

Hence, we can claim no authority about what we write here. We can only report from those who live from a Unity Consciousness and from our glimpses into that Unity—what can be seen, known, and experienced in these short tastes of the *One Taste*.

Moreover, we will make little attempt to relate Unity Consciousness to leadership, effectiveness, or mastery. We will provide no statistics or research. Honestly, we have no way of knowing how Unity Consciousness relates to leadership in practical terms. However, what we do know

is that those people who have most moved the world—Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, etc.—spoke from and as Unity Itself. The great saints and spiritual masters have given us a glimpse of what leadership looks like when the self is no more.

Although logic cannot apprehend Unity Consciousness, thinking about it logically may help. *Unity* means *one*—not two, not many, not diversity—only one. If there is Unity, then, there is only one. Therefore, when there is Unity Consciousness, there is awareness of only one. In this state of awareness, you and I are not two, but only one.

### WAVES ON THE OCEAN

The best metaphor we can think of for describing our relationship to Unity is that we are like waves on the ocean, not separate from the ocean. We are the *ocean-ness* itself. If we are identified with being separate waves, then we experience ourselves on a journey across the ocean. We are surfing on the ocean, and it is an adventurous ride. *Ocean* is seen to be separate from our *wave-ness*. As separate waves, we experience the ups and downs of wave life. We love the ups and strive for them. We fear the downs and work to avoid them.

From the perspective of our wave-ness, it appears that we are separate from other waves; after all, they are *over there* and look different. Looking out at other waves creates comparison. We want to be *more than, bigger than, faster than* other waves, and we think we are better off if we are. This creates desire for gains and fear of loss. Some waves appear friendly; other waves may appear to threaten our ability to get what we want, and so we fear them. We may even make them into an enemy. In addition, some waves are different enough that we think they are less of a wave. Therefore, we think they are not worthy of wave life. We enslave or ethnically cleanse these waves. We may treat them with bigotry and prejudice. Some waves are treated as second-class citizens and denied certain privileges or access to opportunity simply because they appear different. While some waves are privileged, other waves are allowed to live in poverty because they are *over there*, different, and not part of us. Competition, conflict, and even wars break out between waves. Such is ocean life when we lose touch with our ocean-ness.

As we travel, we wonder what happens when we reach the shore. We know this waveform has an end, and we fear our demise. Do we exist

after our death? All of this causes us to wonder if there is an Ocean. We search for the Ocean and strive to be in relationship with the Ocean in order that we might join the Ocean after we die. As we search for the Ocean, we suffer the loss of our ocean-ness. We may even forget altogether our inherent unity with the Ocean and with all waveforms arising on and as the ocean. Thus, we long for something, and we know not what. We long for forgotten Union. We try to fill in this longing with more of almost everything, but it does not fulfill. So we suffer.

When we suffer, we are like *thirsty water*. Striving for Unity Consciousness is like water trying to quench its thirst. As a separate wave, we are thirsty because we are caught in the illusion that we are separate from our source condition. We search for water to quench our thirst, not realizing that *we are the water*, and there is, in reality, no thirst. The search to become our *selves* is driven by this thirst. All longing, all desire, is for the *one* that we already are; therefore, all of our striving and searching for fulfillment to quench our thirst is in vain. It can never fulfill.

Ultimate fulfillment happens when we awake from the dream of our separate wave-ness. When we awake, the search ends. We realize that we never needed to search. All of the problems and dilemmas that seemed so important and unsolvable in the dream simply evaporate. We realize that we were always one with the Ocean, that we were never separate, and that all waves are one; we are all each other. There is only Ocean. We also realize that we are the eternal ocean itself, and, as this Unity, we know that there is no death. What we call *death* is only a change of form. The struggle and fear of separate ego life ends. There is only abiding love, bliss, joy, and freedom.

Simply put, there is only Unity, only the One. Nothing is other than this simplicity, not even you. You are not who you think you are. In fact, you have no idea who you are. As long as there is a you, you do not know who you are. Once you know who you really are, there is no you left to know.

### NO SELF, ALL GOD

In the Western spiritual traditions, the highest levels of experience are described as *union with God*. God is commonly referred to as a duality—a self in relationship to a Divine other. Yet if we are in union, then there is only one. To be completely in union is to be completely one with that with which we are in union. In Unity, then, duality dissolves.

## 298 Mastering Leadership

Meister Eckhart, the great 13th century Christian mystic, once said in a sermon that his most fervent prayer is, “God rid me of God” (Fox, 2014). He went on to describe his experience of Unity and the pain of slipping out of that state of union back into his separate ego self-sense. In praying, “God rid me of God,” he was praying to be permanently realized in God. In the state of Unity, it is as accurate to say that *there is no God* (as traditionally experienced as a self-other relationship) as it is to say that *there is only God*, and as accurate to say that *there is no you* as it is to say that *there is only you*. There is only *one*, and nothing is other than that *One*. In Divine union, only the Unity is astonishingly experienced as prior to the *God-you* duality, prior to *I-Thou*, prior to relatedness and all difference. This is why some Eastern spiritual traditions do not speak of God, only of the experience beyond mind, beyond self, beyond knowing, and beyond all difference. This is Satori, Nirvana, and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Taoist writer-philosopher Wei Wu Wei is credited with this provocative statement (Wei, 2002):

Why are you unhappy?  
 Because 99.9 percent of everything you think,  
 And of everything you do,  
 Is for yourself—  
 And there isn't one.

In Unity, the self is surrendered. The *self* moves from subject to object and, as an object, it is seen as mirage. From that perspective, the story of separate self, all of its gains and losses, desires and fears, problems and dilemmas are simply noticed as dreams from which we have awakened. The mirage of the ego, then, simply evaporates, and we are no longer subject to an ego at all. There is no objective, separate self, and there never was. There is only subject, only the ground of being, only the pure, undifferentiated Unity out of which all diversity arises. In this awareness, all diversity is recognized as a Unity. This is astonishingly obvious. This is the most joyous, free, love-blissful experience imaginable. It is *rapture*. It so obvious that it is no big deal. It is simply the utter nature of reality. There is only one. All diversity, including ourselves, arises from and as Unity. In that Unity, there is only joy, only love, only freedom, only bliss, only light, only silent stillness, and an emptiness that is radiant. This is the “pearl of great price.”

## DEVELOPMENT TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

The individual self is not the truth. This book has been about the journey of ego development as it relates to leadership effectiveness. Each progressive Structure of Mind is a more mature ego-identity structure. The movement into Unity is different. The ego is not *matured* into Unity—it is *surrendered*. You must forget yourself. Unity Consciousness is not a higher-order Structure of Mind, of ego, or identity. Unity Consciousness is identity-less.

In Unity, the individuated self—however mature, developed, and accomplished—is seen as not ultimate, not the truth. This is what turns developmental theory upside down. If there is no *self*, then *self-development* cannot lead to the highest Consciousness.

No amount of self-development work can help. You cannot get there from here. You cannot surrender the self by working hard to improve the self. In fact, all efforts at self-improvement actually prevent the transformation into Unity Consciousness. Seeking and striving do not help either. Only the separate self can seek and strive, and the seeking itself maintains the ego self that is searching. Seeking to improve, to change, to create, to move on, to become is all a defense against the ultimate surrender of the self. In this transformation, you are at journey's end, and there is nothing you can do except to surrender your very self.

With the end of ego, we are now living in and as the Unity that is always already inherently present. In this awareness, we realize that the Stages of Development were all part of the dream. There never was a separate ego self, and it was only from the perspective of the separate ego self that it appeared that we went on a development journey. The Structures of Mind through which we seemed to evolve were just structures of ego mind. Now we are living from and as our inherent Unity, which is beyond mind, prior to mind. We still have a body and a brain. We still think and act. However, we are not identified with any of that. We now view our wave-ness from the abiding perspective as the Ocean. We, our individuated forms, are just forms arising from and as Unity itself. That Self never went on a journey and never needed development.

Does this invalidate the first 12 chapters of this book (and all of the psychological, personal, and leadership development theory, research, and practice)? Perhaps. We cannot really know unless we are living from and as Unity.

## TWO ARGUMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Here is how we hold the dilemma of developing the self that is no-self. We will make two arguments for the necessity of development.

First, no amount of Unity Consciousness will equip you to design an aircraft if you have not deeply studied calculus, physics, and the principles of aeronautical engineering. By the same token, if you want to develop mastery in the art of leadership, a mature Structure of Mind is required. Most of us will not realize Unity Consciousness in this lifetime. So, we need something to do that helps. Why not develop? Why not become more effective? Furthermore, living as Unity will not necessarily make you a more effective leader. You still have to live, work, and lead in the complexities of the current business environment. You still need a complex Structure of Mind through which to translate insight into action and results. In other words, development is necessary to being effective and is insufficient for realizing Unity.

Second, only the mature ego can be surrendered. Egos too deeply caught in Reactivity can never surrender. Even if we glimpse, for a moment, a state experience of Unity, we quickly snap back to the center of gravity of our current Structure of Mind. In other words, we fall back asleep into the same dream we were having before we momentarily awakened. Integral Mind is the most evolved Structure of Mind that has been researched. We think that Integral Mind is mature enough and inclusive enough to surrender the illusion of diversity. Once we see that "we have met the enemy and they are us," the illusion of the separate self is now transparent enough to be seen through. As Rilke says in a poem, "And then God, from his place of ambush, leaps out" (Rilke, 1982). The highest and most hard-earned levels of human maturity may just be the optimal "place of ambush" where ego dies and we, astonished, see into our inherent Unity. In short, we think development into mature Structures of Mind and Identity is preliminary to the breakthrough to Unity. Development helps, but it is only preliminary practice for the arduous work of surrendering identity altogether.

## NOT ME, NOT ME

In Eastern tradition, the phrase used for this transformation is *Neti-Neti* (*not me, not me*). As we progress through the Stages of Development,

each transformation is a *Neti-Neti* realization. In the transition from adolescence to Reactive Mind, we realize we are not merely this independent capability to meet our egocentric needs. In the transition from Reactive to Creative Mind, we realize that we are not merely this externalized identity that depends on outside validation for worth and security. In the transition from Creative to Integral Mind, we realize that we are not just this hard-earned, self-authoring, authentic version of ourselves. We are many selves, perhaps even all selves.

Each Stage of Development is the death of a small version of our self for a larger version of our self. In the surrender into Unity, we face the big *Neti-Neti*. The separate self that we have worked so hard to improve is not me. This time, we do not surrender into a large version of our self, but we surrender the self altogether and live as Unity Itself. All prior surrenders of a smaller self for a larger self are simply practice rounds for the surrender of self-hood altogether.

#### UNITY LEADERSHIP

When the consciousness that animates us and our leadership is that of Unity, *justice* is our natural state: non-violence toward, acceptance of, and tolerance of difference is effortless. The other waves are not different. We are one Ocean. We are each other.

This is the state of being from which Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself," since your neighbor is your *Self*. When we live from the consciousness that we are all each other, war, poverty, bigotry, prejudice, and hatred simply cannot arise. We know that the suffering of another, *over there*, is our suffering. Another father/mother's children are our children. We become intolerant of systems that are not inclusive and keep *our children* worldwide trapped in poverty, injustice, and lack of opportunity. We become servants of humanity. We see that all creatures are one in that Unity, and we become stewards of the planet.

We will not reach a tipping point soon where a critical mass of leaders live and lead as Unity. This will not happen in time to prevent the global calamity for which we are heading. We believe that what is needed is for mature leadership to emerge that can make the critical difference in the outcome on this planet. We are convinced that this requires, at a minimum, Integral Mind leading from the presumption of our inherent Unity. Integral Mind is mature enough and complex enough to match

