

By the time you finish this book, you may have yet another ethical problem on your hands, so consider this fair warning. You may walk away with not only an understanding of these developmental differences but also a desire to support people to grow. It is in fact my hope that you do acquire both of those things on our journey together. This leads us into even more complex ethical territory, though. Growing is difficult work, and it brings losses along with the gains (as we lose who we once were in order to become who we will be next). You may find that you suddenly have a long list of people you think could use a little push to get back onto the developmental highway. Or you might want to do as I suggest throughout and try to make our workplaces more supportive of people's growth.

It's one thing to try and grow when you have your eyes open about what you're doing and what the risks are. It's another thing to support others to grow when you're not sure they know what they're in for. And yet at the same time, it doesn't seem like a very helpful idea to withhold developmental possibilities and supports from people for fear that they won't like where they end up. You see the quandary. I've dealt with this by offering developmental supports and at the same time creating ways for collectives to work together to bring their highest capacities to the team. Ultimately, my hope would be that as we understood the journey of our lives and what was possible for us, we would be able to make good choices that help us live into our full potential, remembering that not every child who has an ear for music and long fingers that can span two octaves on a piano actually wants to be a concert pianist.

This all means that we will plunge ahead carefully, noticing the powerful things we can learn and the important things we cannot learn as we peer through this lens. If together we can be both open to these ideas and also skeptical, together we can shape this theory into a set of new and potentially transformative set of ideas and practices to support everyone who wants to change and grow on the job.

2 DIVING DEEPER

You are in an endless line, waiting to pass through security to get to your airplane. You've been inching forward, transferring your briefcase from hand to hand, shuffling to hold your book and coat and lunch. Finally, you get to the table and begin to load your things into bins to go through the X-ray machine. You chat with the people in front of you and behind you as you all take off coats and shoes and belts. Then, just as you lift your final bag toward the conveyer belt, a man three people behind you steps forward and begins putting his bags and trays on the belt in front of you. You watch, open-mouthed, as he finishes with his bags and then saunters through the metal detector. You shuffle through, watch your first bag come off the conveyer belt and then his, and finally, after he is long gone, your last. You are stuck between amusement and irritation, and you know that if you had been afraid of missing your plane, you would have felt rage.

People do selfish, thoughtless things every day. They do kind and generous things every day. Sometimes they do not even notice the difference. The question about the rude traveler above and all the other people whom you brush against isn't so much, "Why did you do that?" (although that might be a good question, too) but rather, "How did you make sense of your actions there?" The rude traveler does not think of himself as The Rude Traveler. He thinks of himself as the harried traveler, the frustrated-with-the-person-in-front-of-me-with-too-much-stuff traveler, the almost-missing-my-plane traveler. Or maybe he was lost in thought and did not notice that he had skipped ahead in line. Or maybe he was a flight attendant and used to skipping to the front of the line and forgetting that he was not in his uniform that day. In any case, your staying lost in *your* experience of him will never open up a profitable place for learning and change. In order to be a good help on someone's journey toward transformation, you need to understand the world as *he* sees the world, not as *you* see him.

In this chapter, we will dive more deeply into the four forms of mind of adulthood, and we will spend some time seeing how each of these forms of mind sees

TABLE 2.1 Strengths, blind spots, and central areas of growth for the self-sovereign form of mind

<i>Key strengths</i>	<i>Key blind spots</i>	<i>Central areas of growth</i>
When a straightforward job is important, the person with a self-sovereign form of mind is in her element. She is great when there are clear images of right and wrong, good and bad, that can be reinforced through external rules and rewards. She sees a direct connection between external rewards and external results—for this person, linking salary to productivity is likely to be a key incentive.	She is unable to take on the perspectives of other people or be influenced by abstractions. She does not have an orientation to her own inner psychological world—or anyone else's—and so isn't able to understand the subtleties of human interaction. She lives in a world with only two choices for every decision—us and them, right and wrong, what I want and what others want. She is likely to follow the rules of the organization to the extent that following such rules is in her own best interests rather than because of abstract concepts such as loyalty or duty.	The central issue for growth in the move from the self-sovereign to the socialized mind is for her to learn to understand—and internalize—the perspectives of others. This happens gradually as she begins to understand the connections between herself and others, and begins to want to affiliate with those others she considers most important.

the world. Because constructive-developmental theory deals with something most people rarely consider, each of these longer descriptions offers several different ways of helping you enter into the different forms of mind. To help you track a complex journey, the strengths, blind spots, and central areas of growth for each form of mind are summarized in each of Tables 2.1 through 2.4. As you read, think about the people in your life, and think about yourself.

SELF-SOVEREIGN FORM OF MIND

Anna was a supervisor for a clothing manufacturing company. She had dropped out of school when she was 16 to work on this shop floor herself, and now, at 41, was managing 20 shop-floor workers. Married with three children, Anna thought she was doing pretty well in the world—she had worked up through the ranks, her people listened to her and did what she said, she rarely got in trouble with the higher-ups, and she was making an excellent salary. Understanding the world through her self-sovereign form of mind, Anna knew that her job was to follow the rules and keep her people in line. As long as she didn't rock the boat, the higher-ups would leave her alone and she could do her own thing with her people. She had an understanding with those who worked under her; they knew that this was a world of give and take, of you-scratch-my-back-and-I'll-scratch-yours. As a manager, Anna knew that she could cut her people some slack

and that they'd return the favor, but she also knew that she needed to use her power to keep folks in line. She was enormously frustrated with her managers who sometimes asked her to do something outside her job responsibility "for the sake of the team." She felt great about this company and had worked here her whole adult life, but her job was her job—she knew it well, and if they wanted something done outside the parameters of the job, they'd better pay her outside the parameters of her job. Anna had the largest possible number of supervisees in a line position, and she knew that if she was going to get promoted, it would be off the shop floor and into a cubicle somewhere. Without direct connection to the people who were making the products, Anna figured she'd be unhappy. She didn't know what the higher-ups did, and she didn't much care as long as they stayed out of her way. Anna was happy staying right where she was.

Self-Sovereign Description

The person who sees the world through the self-sovereign form of mind may be curious about the perspectives of other people, but she cannot make sense of those perspectives by herself. She can try to imagine what others might feel, but that imagining is most interesting when she finds that she will benefit from thinking it through; she does not naturally or easily think about the inner workings of other people.

She does not think about her own inner workings, either. When asked to describe herself, she is likely to offer a list of things she likes or does not like, or things she is good at or not. She does not orient toward thinking in abstractions about herself. Looking out from a self-sovereign mind, the world seems teeming with confusion that needs to be cut through with black-and-white decisions. Perhaps the most confusing piece of all is the way other people make sense of the world and claim to see shades of gray that the self-sovereign mind does not see. At this form of mind, she can see that others claim to see a complex world, but she has no access to it herself. There are clear answers to everything as far as she is concerned; she can get frustrated when someone brings up "complex social problems" like abortion or assisted suicide. She and someone else making sense from the self-sovereign form of mind might disagree about what the obvious answer was to these problems, but they would both agree that the problems do not actually seem so complex and that politicians and others spin words around the problems just to confuse people.

Her way of seeing the world can prove wildly frustrating to colleagues who see a more-complex picture. They may find her "shallow" or "self-centered"; sometimes people with a self-sovereign form of mind are described as "obnoxious" or

even sometimes "stupid" (although people at any form of mind might be obnoxious or stupid, shallow or self-centered). None of these things is necessarily true. An adult with a self-sovereign form of mind is "over her head" in almost every venue of adult life. She is unlikely to be fully accepted in society, because she hasn't fully "socialized" or taken society into herself. This can result in her willingness to engage in a variety of self-serving behaviors, some of which can be unpleasant. Disproportionate numbers of people in prison see the world from this perspective. It is these people who steal from the rich because they would like to be rich themselves.¹

Sometimes we punish people simply for having this view of the world. Some years ago, I worked with the leader of the justice system in a district of a European country. As she learned about this theory, she became increasingly upset about the work in the courts, which, at that time, required certain changes in thinking as it required changes in behavior. She mentioned a common problem in the family court system: Young single mothers were leaving their young children at home alone while the mothers went to their jobs. The neighbors would complain, the family service organizations were brought in, and a hearing would be set to decide whether the children could return to their mother's house. In these cases, judges wanted two things from the mother: They wanted her to change her *actions* (and never leave young children alone again) and they also wanted her to change her *mind* (and understand that leaving children alone was a horrible thing to do). In some cases, this worked. But in many cases, the young mothers agreed to change their behaviors ("And you can check up on me whenever you want!" they would say), but they would not change their mind about their actions.

A typical case would have the judge asking the mother something like, "Do you see that what you did was wrong?"

The young woman might answer, "I didn't know it was against the law."

"But do you see that whether it is against the law or not, it is a dangerous and terrible thing to do to leave your young child alone?" the judge would ask again.

"It doesn't matter what I think, because you're telling me not to do it or you'll take my kids away."

As the judges pushed for some evidence of genuine regret and learning, they became more disturbed. The logic of the self-sovereign mother was clear: "I needed to work to support the children, I couldn't find someone to watch the children, so I left them alone so that I could go to work." The clear, cause-and-effect logic of this, uncomplicated by the feelings or the risk to the children, upset the judges. In many cases, they decided that the mother, even if she did stop the behavior, was unfit to be a mother, not necessarily because they thought she would

break this specific rule again but because they didn't trust mothers who *thought* this way.

As I teach about this to groups all over the world, I get a wide range of responses about these young mothers. Some people think the judges are unfair; others say, "But the judges were right—those women can't be trusted to take care of children if they don't understand what's wrong about what they did!" The point here—and often the point in organizations with employees who have a self-sovereign form of mind—is that we generally make laws and rules about *behavior* and then we become outraged and frustrated by what someone *believes*, or the way she makes sense of the world. You can legislate all kinds of behaviors (and of course, that is mostly what our legal system does), but you cannot legislate what or how someone must believe. And yet our beliefs, some of which are made possible by our form of mind, are the roots from which all actions grow. I do not pretend to have answers to all of these problems, but I think it is important for us to be asking good questions.

In the case above, if the "higher-ups" want Anna to *do* different things in her work, they just need to tell her and be sure that those new things fit inside the hours and the structure of the rules about her day. If they want her to *see* the company in new ways, be more loyal, be operating for the good of the team, then they will have to help Anna grow to meet those demands. It may, in fact, be possible that Anna needs to have a different set of beliefs about the company for her to be most effective; it is certainly true that in the complex and confusing world of parenting—especially when that parenting is taking place outside the cultures of extended family support that have helped parents for hundreds of generations—a more-nuanced perspective would be far more helpful. But it might be, in both of these cases, that this person, with the support of her environment and the structures around her, can do the job at hand while developing the capacities to do it without those supports. In any case, looking at these examples through a developmental lens helps us remember that nothing is ever really simple (an insight that would frustrate those with a self-sovereign mind!).

It's hard to be promoted into managerial responsibilities with this form of mind, so it is likely that the greatest concentration of this perspective will be found in the lowest rungs of the organization (in entry-level administrative positions, among the maintenance crew, or on the shop floor) in those who have had the least access to educational and other privileges that tend to promote development. This is not to suggest that these positions are likely to be *correlated* with a self-sovereign mind or that anyone should ever assume that a housekeeper sees the world from this perspective. It is merely to say that the responsibilities of a

more entry-level position leave more room for those with this form of mind than the responsibilities of a manager. And, because this form of mind is more generally associated with adolescence and very early adulthood, it is likely (although not guaranteed) that a 30-year-old who seems to have some self-sovereign ways of seeing the world is most likely in the midzone, on her way toward a socialized form of mind.

Self-Sovereign/Socialized Midzone

The transition between the self-sovereign and the socialized forms of mind is characterized by a growth in awareness of outside theories and perspectives—and a growth in ability to act from inside those perspectives and theories. Gradually, the world begins to become too complex to handle with the simple right/wrong of the self-sovereign mind, and people grow to identify with larger groups or ideas that can hold and explain some of the complexity. A person with a self-sovereign mind begins to move toward affiliation and expertise (even if the affiliation is with an antiestablishment or antisocial group, and even if the expertise is a theory or person who proclaims the futility of expertise). As the person with a self-sovereign mind becomes more willing and able to adopt the perspective of another and subordinate his own interests to the interests of the group, he begins to develop a socialized mind—not to replace the earlier mind, but to encompass it and gain perspective on it. At that time, when the socialized mind is *almost* fully developed, he has something of an allergy to anything that might threaten to pull him back to the self-sovereign mind. He is likely to be passionately clear about the perspective/community/theory in which he has become embedded, and he may be especially frustrated with or angry about anyone who sees the world differently.

SOCIALIZED FORM OF MIND

Charlie was a retired Army officer in his early 50s who was hired to direct the IT division of a financial services company. From his first days on the job, some of Charlie's direct reports joked that they could not walk into a room without feeling like they should salute before asking their question. Although Charlie was not an expert in the field of technology, the VP who hired him was impressed with his leadership style and felt that he could improve a division that many considered sloppy and without a good work ethic. Charlie agreed with this assessment, explaining that he felt he could lead any troops to victory, and whether that was in a peacekeeping mission or in a mission to keep the computers up and running did not matter much to him. Entering the division filled with ideas about what needed to happen, Charlie implemented a strict series

of work-order changes and clear work-flow design procedures. Some of the employees complained vehemently about these changes, but Charlie persevered; he had told the people who had hired him that this would be a tough transition for some of the staff and that he would cut all the deadwood he could. And Charlie seemed to be right; soon those who remained were following the new regulations, and the mess seemed to settle down, and the internal customers were marveling at how well IT was performing.

More than a year into Charlie's tenure, however, frustrations began to mount. Those who had been grateful to Charlie for his ability to get the IT support to fix a printer or install the right phone lines began to forget the difficulties of IT in the pre-Charlie days. Now they reminisced about the good-old days of IT when you could request a software program without filling out six different forms, and where an out-of-date laptop was replaced without hassle. And while other companies seemed to be moving forward and using technology to create a more knowledge-driven workplace, it seemed that Charlie treated technology as a simple tool like a pencil and not as new way to think about doing business. More and more people became frustrated with what they sensed was Charlie's lack of vision; it seemed he only wanted to implement mandates from his superiors and did not want to create new ways to influence the technology needs of the organization. Charlie ignored all such criticism, explaining that his manager consistently told him he was doing a good job. "And if your commanding officer says you're doing it right," Charlie said, "you're doing it right and you don't change it!"

TABLE 2.2 Strengths, blind spots, and central areas of growth for the socialized form of mind

Key strengths	Key blind spots	Central areas of growth
With the socialized form of mind, a person's strength is his ability to take on others' expectations for good performance. He can be reflective about the issues involved and perhaps name and value the perspectives of others. He is loyal to the idea, group, or organization with whom he identifies—so loyal that he subordinates his own interests to the interests of that group.	A person with a socialized form of mind lacks the ability to untangle divergent perspectives or resolve conflicting viewpoints; he cannot mediate between the perspectives of important others. Similarly, he cannot yet mediate between his own internal competing identifications, so that when his role as Good Son conflicts with his role as Good Employee, he is likely to feel stuck and unable to find an appropriate course of action.	As he moves toward the self-authored form of mind, he will benefit from opportunities to move away from external theories or rules of leadership and to reflect on overarching principles and values that can help him resolve the conflicting perspectives of others. He will grow to see that no one theory, group, or organization is infallible, and he will develop a more individual and nuanced set of beliefs and loyalties.

Roxana had trained as a management consultant at a prestigious graduate school. At the top of her class, Roxana was recruited right out of graduate school by a leading consulting firm and immediately became highly focused on her journey toward partner. Two years into her work as a consultant, Roxana used her wealth of knowledge of business systems and training techniques—as well as her tireless drive to know everything about the field in which she was operating—and contributed to some highly praised changes in the morale and effectiveness of several newly merged divisions in a large merger initiative her firm was running. Although she was doing well in the firm, a key mentor told her that her rise to the top might be aided by some time on the other side of the desk—as someone who was a manager inside an organization and not just a consultant on the outside. When the head of HR at the client organization let Roxana know that a position at her level was opening up in another division, she jumped at the chance, and got the job with ease.

Her new job—like her consulting—involved helping to merge disparate units into a single division. She got the position and moved into the job with the skill and competence that had marked her work as a consultant, and her direct reports were thrilled with their new manager. Several months later, however, the morale of the department began to decline as those in her division tired of what they thought was the party line from her previous consulting firm. While they had appreciated her clear dedication and obvious knowledge about management theories, they began to find her inflexible and not easily adaptable when situations arose that did not exactly fit within the boundaries of her theories. It felt to them that if an issue had not appeared in one of her graduate school cases, Roxana believed it could not exist. And while Roxana had been so effective in helping other managers shape their own mission statements and create a common vision for their departments, she had much more difficulty implementing these ideas for herself. She followed the plan from her previous consulting life and conferred with all of the players in the newly combined division, but found prioritizing the many different opinions and values enormously difficult. When even her own management team had widely divergent opinions, Roxana was ready to throw up her hands and name the task impossible. How was she supposed to craft a vision out of the mosh of multiple opinions? Her employees sensed her confusion, and the division became more scattered instead of more coherent.

Socialized Description

These leaders have little in common on the surface. Their ages, experiences, and leadership styles are extraordinarily different. It is likely that you have some key

hypotheses about what is wrong with these situations and how you think they could be fixed. You might see problems of personality, fit with past work experience, or team leadership, and you might already have formulated some sense of what you would suggest to these folks if you had a chance. I suggest that as valid as any other hypothesis might be, one other piece to pay attention to is the form of mind held by these leaders. While their direct reports might not recognize it at first if they discussed their managers over coffee one morning, these leaders experience their worlds in remarkably similar ways, as they see through the socialized form of mind. The socialized mind is common throughout adulthood and in people of all ages and at all places on the organizational chart.

Someone who sees the world through a socialized form of mind is far better able to deal with abstraction than he was when he saw the world through a self-sovereign mind. No longer locked in his own perspective, he can gain some distance from himself in order to see a bigger picture (as he steps up to the balcony to see much more of the play than was possible when he was on the floor with his self-sovereign view). In so doing, he has learned to take the perspectives of others—to walk a mile in their shoes. But this new and vital part of his development comes with some costs. Now that he has internalized the perspectives of others, he has become *fused* with those perspectives; and, in order to make this developmental step possible, his own internal perspective has been temporarily lost in the process.

When people first hear about developmental theories, they tend to recognize many things from their lives and experience. But this question about “losing” the inner voice often feels troubling. Where does this voice go? Where is the self? What happens to the *you* inside you when you make meaning from the socialized form of mind? And when do you get you back?

Someone with a socialized mind does not feel as though she has lost her self. She is being the very biggest, most complicated self she knows how to be, and that self is created by the incredibly complex network of cultural, relational, ideological external pieces. It feels—rightly so—as though she is bigger than she once was, that she contains far more than she once did. Before she grew to this point, she was locked in her own self-sovereign mind with only glimpses of other perspectives and points of view. She did not yet see the connections between things that are, to other people, extraordinarily well-connected (like, I know it’s important for me to do a good job, but I don’t understand why it is good for me, personally, that my whole team is successful). When she first glimpsed the connections between things and began to see the shades of gray that allow her to make better choices, she was delighted but also overwhelmed. How was she ever going to function, to make decisions, to figure things out? She looked for guidance in the theories,

cultures, and relationships around her, and some of what she found helped her make good decisions. She came to trust some theories/cultures/relationships, and she internalized them. They were the buffer between her growing sense of the complexity of the world and her panic that she did not yet know what to do with that complexity. She did not lose her self in this process; her self got larger and more complex as she was able to take in the ideas and perspectives of others.

Do we tend to honor this growth in adults, though? Do we say, "Hey, look at how exciting it is that this person is growing and can take on these new perspectives and ideas until she grows her own capacity to make sense of the complexity of the world!" No. Someone who seems overreliant on the perspectives and opinions of other people, theories, or cultures can be called a "yes man" (if he relies on his boss), a Stepford wife (if she seems too intent on the images of perfection from media and popular culture), or a militant (if he happens to be embedded in the teachings of a militant religion or group).

Let's look at what people might say about the two leaders whose stories began this section. Remember that those with a socialized mind can see many of the complexities of the world but cannot yet *do* anything about those complexities. Therefore, they adopt rules, guidelines, and perspectives that come from trusted others. What they cannot do yet, however, is write their own rules, guidelines, and perspectives. They do not know that people who are not "experts" (as the socialized-mind person defines "expert") could ever do such a thing. Even some sophisticated, thoughtful senior executives with whom I have worked consider someone else to be the expert. "We have a company policy that helps us make that decision," they will tell me. And if the policy does not help with the decision, they either model it on the policy or consult about the decision with someone whom they consider to have a higher level of authority.

This leadership style is sufficient in situations where the tasks are clear and well-defined, and where the hierarchy is obvious enough that a leader who does not know what to do in an unexpected situation can simply turn to someone with more authority who will have the right answers. In the first of the two examples above, Charlie found that his work in the military was a good enough fit with his new position so that he could make direct transfers. The upper-level managers in his agency were clear enough about what they wanted him to do so that he could carry out their orders in ways that felt familiar to his background and well within his capacity. His problems began when client groups (in this case, the internal customer) wanted more from him. They were not satisfied that he was following the rules of the game; they wanted him to rewrite the game, invent a new thing. Charlie did not have the technical expertise to find a sophisticated new guidebook

(on using IT to create new forms of corporate community and new wisdom sharing), so he relied on his own manager, who was happy getting the technology in working order and not pushing Charlie to create a vision (which, in fact, Charlie could not yet author).

Roxana, who also saw the world through her socialized form of mind, was less fortunate. While her consulting firm and graduate school classes had let her see leadership as a kind of exact science, the complex and organic world of day-to-day organizational life proved to be something of a mystery. Unable to create her own vision for what the mission of the newly combined division should be, Roxana looked for clarity all around her. Finding none, Roxana was lost in the fog. While her theories and her experience were solid, they could only guide her so far down the path of the day-to-day complexities of leadership. Her socialized form of mind left her unable to travel the rest of the path alone.

Notice that while we all spend some part of our lives, like Roxana and Charlie, embedded in the perspectives and ideas of important other relationships/theories/cultures, the particular cultures in which we find ourselves embedded vary wildly. Here is where the specifics of an individual's context make such a big difference. While perhaps we are, by our upbringing or psychology, predisposed to some kinds of cultures over others, much of the move from the self-sovereign to the socialized form of mind is a process of internalizing perspectives to which you have access. You cannot be embedded in any culture to which you have had no exposure. Teenagers who feel rebellious may find a nonconformist culture in which to find some solution to the complexity they cannot yet handle. In the absence an actual of a nonconformist culture with other people, they may seek one out in movies, on the Internet, or elsewhere. Those who go to college may find themselves embedded in the jock culture, the science-major culture, the fraternity culture. Those who head straight into the world of work may find themselves embedded in the organizational culture. In each of these cases, those who are socialized internalize and become made up by the key principles, theories, and rules of that culture.

Now the person with the socialized mind follows the rules because he believes in them and wants to belong, not because he is worried about the concrete consequences to himself. Note that this rule-following does not guarantee that he will be what you might think of as law-abiding or moral. Now that he is of a socialized mind, he is a full member of a group, and if that group finds illegal or destructive behavior acceptable or desirable, he is likely to engage in illegal or destructive behavior. And someone who with a socialized mind might not *sound* as though he is going along with the crowd, either. Indeed, he can sound very internally driven.

It's just that when he is pushed, he might explain that he knows it is best to make his own decisions, because that is what a trusted advisor or theory tells him is best.

Those who see the world through a socialized form of mind can have a complex, psychological understanding, and can describe some pieces of their internal dialogue in ways that they could not when they had more of a self-sovereign mind. Instead of simply lashing out in anger or fear, as those who see the world from the self-sovereign mind often do, the person with the socialized mind can name the anger and fear as the cause for the lashing out that she might do. This causal connection is tied very tightly, though. When the socialized person says, "You made me so angry," she really believes that you did something which *internally created* a feeling of anger inside her; she cannot imagine that she had any control over that experience herself (by noticing that you did something, after which she created a reaction in herself called "angry"). She feels her strings pulled by other people, and thus gives responsibility to other people for the actions that stem from that pulling. She can name her emotions (something those who are self-sovereign cannot always do) and even subtle shades of them (knowing the difference between frustration and anger, for example) but cannot control her emotions or use her own perspective on them to moderate those emotions. She might even describe herself as a person given to anger or impatience ("That's just the way I am!"), because major swaths of our personality feel out of our control when we see the world from this form of mind.

It is likely true that for tens of thousands of years, this form of mind was appropriate for nearly all the people in any given society. When people lived in extended families in homogeneous villages, and took on the same roles that their parents had had before them, there was less complexity to manage, and there were elders who could handle the managing. In today's complex, global world, there are far fewer reliable guides—and there are far more people wanting to claim to be guides (self-help book authors, talk show hosts, religious and political leaders, and so forth). There is no more "party line" to which all those leaders agree, and there is no clarity about which ones are more right than others. Because of this, Kegan² claims that we are "in over our heads" if we operate from a socialized perspective.

Perhaps one of the most powerful illustrations of the over-our-heads quality of being socialized in the modern world comes not from a work context but from a personal one. Rita, an unmarried graduate student in her mid-20s, discovered that she was pregnant. The father of the unborn child was her live-in boyfriend of more than a year. He was delighted about the news of the baby, and he urged Rita to marry him—something they had been talking about already—and begin

their family at this time. Rita's mother, Susan, on the other hand, had a very different perspective. Susan had married young and given up her career aspirations on behalf of starting a family, and she felt that loss in her own life deeply. Susan counseled her daughter to terminate this pregnancy so that she could be in control of her destiny, finish graduate school, and begin a family on her own timetable. Rita, loving and trusting both of these voices, had no way of knowing which direction to choose. She talked to each of them again and again, writing down the things they said and agonizing over the difference. When asked about how she would finally come to a decision, she was at a loss. Pushed to name some way out of this quandary—which was tearing her apart and causing her to be unable to eat or sleep or concentrate on her classes—she said that the only recourse she could imagine was to "flip a coin." Rita, with a socialized mind, is not to be faulted for this perspective. Her life became more complex than she could handle at this stage of development, and the intense pressure on her to grow would not speed her growth quickly enough to work her way out of this most wrenching decision.

The Socialized/Self-Authored Midzone

So what does the path from the socialized mind to the self-authored mind look like? The path begins, as Rita's may, when the socialized perspective is not large enough to make sense of her surroundings. She may find herself torn between two different people whose opinions she values, or between different external theories or cultural pulls. At other times, her journey toward a self-authored mind may begin (somewhat appropriately) with someone she trusts (again, this can be a person or a theory or a management book—or Oprah or other figure from popular culture) who tells her that it is time for her to start making up her own mind, time to start listening to the voice inside herself. In either case, the beginning of the journey is simply a noticing, a bumping up against differences between her own voice and that of other people.

In the socialized/self-authored midzone, things may get increasingly uncomfortable as her perspective shifts. As she becomes more aware of her own voice, she notices the very real rift—psychologically at least—that develops between her and those people/theories/cultures in which she has been embedded. She feels less in tune with them and spends more time questioning them. She begins to worry about becoming "selfish" and putting her own needs first. At times, this space in the socialized/self-authored midzone may feel disconnected from those important people/ideas/theories that were once so central to her identity.

You can imagine that this might cause some real conflict in those relationships, too. While some teachers/managers/partners/parents are delighted to see the bigger perspective that emerges during the move to a more self-authored mind, others (especially those who have been developmentally outpaced) are dismayed. As conflict becomes more palatable to the person with the emerging self-authored perspective, he may be more likely to question the actions of others, or to raise questions or concerns about particular ideas that his former self never questioned. He does this to be sure that he understands the full impact of whatever he is deciding (with his new perspective); but those questions can, at times, seem a challenge to others in his life, especially those relationships or cultures in which he has been embedded unquestioningly to this point.

Finally, on the brink of the self-authored form of mind, as less and less of the socialized surround pulls at her, she often becomes almost allergic to the socialized form of mind. A boss who has nearly finished her own transition to self-authored may have no patience for the socialized mind in one of her direct reports; a man who senses his partner's socialized form of mind may become easily exasperated. Developmentally, those on the brink of becoming fully self-authored know (at some level) that they do not yet have the capacity to effortlessly sustain the self-authored mind; it is always something of a struggle. To avoid that struggle in themselves, they typically try avoid those with a socialized mind (which, as I have pointed out, is a futile effort, since there is such a large percentage of people with a socialized mind in the adult population). When the person with a nearly solid self-authored mind necessarily bumps up against these people, she is likely to feel unusually irritated or frustrated with the interactions, projecting her fear of falling back onto the socialized mind before her, and finding herself out of sorts or unnecessarily critical in the socialized person's company. Soon enough, though, she finds herself able to hold on to the self-authored form of mind with relative ease.

THE SELF-AUTHORED FORM OF MIND

The self-authored form of mind looks most familiar to us, as what adults are *suggested* to look like. People with a self-authored mind are those who own their own work, make their own decisions, and mediate among different perspectives with relative ease. While someone with a socialized mind who is embedded in a particularly robust surround might look as though she "owns her own work," that image comes from the circular direction of someone else telling her to own her own work. Those with self-authored minds, by contrast, do not need (and often do not welcome) people to tell them how to make sense of their world.³

TABLE 2.3 Strengths, blind spots, and central areas of growth for the self-authored form of mind

Key strengths	Key blind spots	Growing edges
Those with a self-authored mind are likely to have a clear sense of personal mission that can be extended to the organizational realm. Similarly, they have the ability to hold on to many different perspectives and make an informed decision that takes competing perspectives into account but is driven by their own sense of mission or values.	People with a self-authored mind can have an attachment to their own mission that can become inflexible. This person may also have trouble dealing with the most complex situations, such as cross-cultural or cross-functional leadership, or any tasks that require her to examine and genuinely question her own system of values or principles.	This person will benefit from seeing the way her own personal theories and practices of leadership are limited and expanding her images to include other—even competing—theories and practices.

Samantha, who saw the world through her self-authored form of mind, was a middle manager in a small financial services company. She was hired by a manager she thought was wonderful, and he and Samantha collaborated very well. They didn't always agree—as she often said, she saw things her way and he saw things his way—but they always worked through their differences in ways that arrived at the best outcomes. After a company reorganization, though, Samantha acquired a manager whom she found overly rule-bound. Instead of encouraging her to have different opinions and work through the differences together as she had done in her previous position, Samantha's new manager, with a socialized mind, wanted them to think alike from the very beginning and seemed frustrated if her opinion was different from his. He seemed to think that if she were thinking about things in the right way (i.e., his way), then she would come to the same conclusions he had.

Samantha's employees mostly valued her enormously; they thought she had a coherent vision for the group and that she could keep track of the day-to-day details it took to implement that vision. Part of that vision was about letting her employees have lots of control over their own work—as long as they were contributing to the overall shared mission of the division. Some of her employees, though, seemed at sea when Samantha asked them to think of her as a resource and not as a boss. "But you are our boss!" they told her. "How can we be sure we're on the right track if you won't tell us how you want us to do things?" Samantha tried to reassure them by explaining that she trusted them to find their own particular paths toward the end goal they all shared, but some of them continued to want her input in ways Samantha thought were too dependent to her. Samantha, who didn't remember the time when she needed such

help herself, became frustrated with what she saw as a needy personality trait rather than a temporary form of mind.

Self-Authored Description

While the self-authored form of mind is stereotypically associated with adults in general (which is, of course, ironic in that the majority of adults have not yet become fully self-authored), there is still much to be learned from developmental theory about their strengths and weaknesses—and about how to help them grow. The person with a self-authored mind has grown from the socialized mind by weaving together a philosophy or a vision of who she is—what her work is, what her values are, what her strongest principles are. No longer does she look outside herself to know what the right way is. Instead, she turns inward, running everything through her internal judgment system.

Those with a self-authored mind may be upset when important others disagree, but the disagreement is unlikely to be devastating or tearing for them. Rather, it is when two important internal values conflict that this person will feel torn and have a hard time making a decision. That is because, for someone with a self-authored mind, the internal values and principles are the same as the person himself; he is made up of those values, and any time he is torn between them, he is torn between parts of himself. Similarly, if he does not enact his principles (whether those principles are ones we might think of as socially beneficial like environmental awareness or socially damaging like a belief in the supremacy of one race over another), he believes he is not being fully himself.

While people at almost every form of mind tend to believe that others do (or should) see the world with the same form of mind that they do, for people with a self-authored form of mind, these judgments can take on a different force. Self-authored people are likely to see their own form of mind as the way adults *should* be, and are likely to think of other ways of being as immature or shallow. Thus, their judgment of other forms of mind can be negative, and they can attribute the lack of self-authorship in others as a kind of moral or intellectual deficiency (which is why it is so helpful for them to understand the rhythm and trajectory of adult development). Notice that while they may have strong negative reactions against other frames of mind, they may or may not have strong reactions against any particular *idea* someone else might have. Some self-authored people impose their judgments on others; some try to remain open. With a self-authored mind, you can not only author your own values and opinions, but also you can author your stance on holding judgments in general.

Those with a self-authored form of mind are sometimes on a relatively constant self-improvement plan. They believe that if they work hard enough, they can come to develop a self-authored system that can handle all complexity and deal with every situation. They may tweak their own system according to new data from other people or situations, and they may make changes in how they choose to enact their ideals—or even which ideals they might choose to enact. They also have a different perspective on their emotions than they did when they had more of a socialized mind, and this means that they can see and reflect upon their emotions and notice that they themselves create their own reactions to other people. Instead of thinking, "When she does that, it makes me so angry," they are more likely to think, "I wonder what it is about me that makes me react in this angry way to her when she does that." Because of this new distance from their emotions, they are less likely to get caught up in them. However, they are more likely to believe that they should be able to overcome their emotions (and that other people should be able to do this as well).⁴

In the case study above, you see one of the largest frustrations that self-authored people suffer in organizational life: when their manager sees the world from an earlier form of mind. This can create an untenable situation for the self-authored person (unless the manager offers some appreciation for the self-authored perspective, and quite a long leash). Samantha found that the same form of mind that brought her so much success and happiness under her previous manager gave her the most trouble with her current manager. Because she could not be in the world the way he wanted her to be (and she did not want to be in the world in this way, and potentially even had some contempt for this way of being), she found her work situation more and more distasteful. Similarly, she was unaware that the mismatch she was experiencing with her manager was the same one she was experiencing as a leader, only in reverse. With the certainty that others could "step up to the plate" and be more self-authored if they really tried to (after all, she had done it), Samantha did not recognize the unrealistic pressure she was putting on her direct reports—nor did she have a way to think about supporting them to be able to do what she most wanted. While Samantha's self-authored mind was a good fit with the overall organizational context, the particulars of the job meant that she found herself frustrated and constrained.

THE SELF-TRANSFORMING FORM OF MIND⁵

Many adults do not live their way into the previously described fully self-authored mind, and far fewer enter the space beyond the self-authored mind. For those who do, though, the path toward the self-transforming form of mind can have a

different feel than earlier transformations. This is because it is rarely the context of their lives that pushes people to develop beyond the self-authored form of mind, as it is in the other transitions. Most theorists believe that modern society makes demands for the self-authored mind (or perhaps in the midzone between the socialized and the self-authored minds). In any case, there are few organizational or family contexts that push people beyond the self-authored mind and toward the self-transforming mind. Rather, the beginning of this path is marked by some sense that the self-authored system will actually never be sufficient to handle the complexities of life, the largest philosophical questions about personal purpose, mortality, and the meaning of life. In almost every case, this realization comes at midlife or beyond, when people are evaluating their past and making decisions about what might be possible for them in the future. As they come to understand that their current path is a tiny part of what the fullness of life offers—and that they will never develop a self-authored system large enough to grasp the fullness of life—they begin to reevaluate the direction of their lives, stop working on the self-improvement plan that has them perfecting their self-authored system, and begin to look across systems at what unites us as humans, or as members of a fragile planet.

TABLE 2.4 Strengths, blind spots, and central areas of growth for the self-transforming form of mind

Key strengths	Key blind spots	Areas of growth
The greatest strength of the person with a self-transforming form of mind is his ability to see connections everywhere. He is able to look at an issue from multiple sides and see the ways that the different perspectives overlap.	Because we do not yet know of a form of mind beyond the self-transforming, it is hard to know what his particular developmental blind spots might be (this doesn't mean that he doesn't have any—just that we haven't discovered them yet). What is clear, however, is that because this form of mind is so rare, these people have few peers who make meaning in similar ways. It also may be difficult for those who see the world through other forms of mind to fully understand this person's perspective, so his ideas may feel overwhelming, confusing, or just wrong.	Those at this form of mind are constantly working to grow, to question their own assumptions, to understand and cope with greater and greater amounts of complexity. Because of this, the world is a constant source of growth.

This transition can come with a loss, especially the loss of the single-minded dedication and the potential for (or hope for) certainty that they once had when they were of a more self-authored mind. This feeling can be frightening to executives who have been single-mindedly working toward goals they firmly believed in. They talk with fear about the loss of the "fire in the belly" they once had, and sometimes they can begin a quest for the job or project that will rekindle this fire. At this stage, people can become off-center as leaders, feeling that their previous strengths are lost to them, or that to make use of those old strengths would be inauthentic in some way. This transitional period, which can be marked by other life changes like the aging and death of friends and family and an increasing sense of mortality and the fleeting nature of life, is about holding on to the beauty of life along with the ugliness of it, the ways we are connected and disconnected, the strength of a vision and the knowledge that there could be 10 or 20 or 200 visions that would also accomplish wonderful things (and, conversely, that their cherished vision could be used to create harm).

José, an executive VP at an oil company, was widely respected for his intelligence, his ability to manage people effectively, and his clear vision about what he wanted the world to be like. Throughout the years, he had felt his vision becoming clearer and had worked to find staff members who could share and add to that vision. A few years ago, though, José had begun to notice what seemed to him to be his own inability to believe in his single-minded goals any longer. He found that instead of advocating strongly for a single position, he began to see the validity in all the positions around the table. And it wasn't just that his convictions were weakening; instead, it was as though the distinctions between his goals and other peoples' goals had dissolved; even when their goals were quite different, he had a progressively harder time knowing which one he believed in most strongly. He found himself questioning his assumptions about the way the world worked, noticing what assumptions others were making, and understanding the ways those assumptions shaped their ideas about right and wrong. As he noticed these connections, he began reshaping—and believing less in—his own assumptions.

As he developed, people began to be drawn to him in different ways. Instead of having only his direct reports come to him to tell them what to do, people all over the organization seemed to be coming to him for guidance or help in other ways—to get his perspective on an issue, to have him help them see where others were coming from. José really liked the new ways he and his colleagues were interacting, and he found himself less tied to organizational structures and opinions than ever before. He was also finding that he was less troubled by the daily irritations that used to bother him. Now when he felt irritated, he looked to himself to see where the problem lay, and he found that he was becoming more and more interested in the various reactions—even

negative ones—which he found himself having. Even his negative reactions seemed a sign of his interest and vitality, and he began to appreciate his quick angry response (because he still had the temper that had troubled him throughout his career) as a sign that there was some important assumption or value being challenged.

Still, with all that was good in his position and all the increased interaction with colleagues throughout the organization, José was finding himself more lonely than he had felt before. While he was able to offer help to colleagues throughout the organization, he found that there were few people in whom he could really confide. While he constantly tried to unearth and question his own assumptions and the assumptions of others, there wasn't anyone who helped him do that work. A bigger issue, though, was that José was noticing a major change in the boundaries around the persona he'd bring to work and the different persona that he thought of as his home-self. He was feeling like those boundaries—which he once fought hard to create and maintain—were detrimental to his work in some way. It felt as though he was only bringing part of himself to his job, and that meant he couldn't really be with his work in the way he'd most like to. He felt as if his whole sense of the work world was shifting and he was not sure what was going to take the place of his old images. Now, when at the top of his career, José couldn't find a place for himself anywhere. Sometimes he felt really sad about that, but sometimes it felt very exciting. It was amazingly liberating to be able to escape from the world he used to know and to forge his own path to a new place.

It may be that the self-transforming mind is the gift that lets people deal with the inevitable pain and sadness of the second half of life, as parents and other cherished people get sick and die, and your own body breaks down, as you come to terms with the fact that there is no hope that you will accomplish all of your goals (or, if you have accomplished all of them, the realization can come that your goals were too small and now it feels too late to pick up the largest hopes again). This is a gift because the person with a self-transforming mind sits with each of these painful occurrences and, *at the same time*, comes to have a new vision for and appreciation for the joys of life. With a fully self-transforming mind, people see connections everywhere. Distinctions between people and ideas that seemed so clear when seen through the self-authored mind become much more fluid and interconnected. Differences, rather than being fiercely held up as separate, are now placed on a relational scale, so that the distinctions themselves become less important than understanding and valuing the scale.⁵

While the self-transforming mind might be a gift to some people at a stage where joyfully accepting the full realities of life and death helps moderate the potential pain that lies before them, it is also a gift to any organizations lucky enough to have some of these people in their ranks. What do people who have

fully developed the self-transforming mind actually contribute to organizations? I don't know, because my experience often has been that as people approach this form of mind, they find organizations too constraining—and they leave.⁷ It is my strong opinion, though, that as organizations become more powerful and more global, and as the threats to our planet become far too large for any group or organization to manage, we will require people with self-transforming minds to be in leadership positions. Such leaders can look beyond their own reputation and their own needs—even their own need to see their vision realized—and hold on to a more connected, global sense of the world.⁸

Self-transforming leaders, like José above, give up on hoping to create the One Best Way to accomplish their goals; instead, they begin to focus on the many goals to be accomplished and the larger picture that moves beyond a single goal. Such leaders will be able to look to both shareholder value and also quality of life issues, will hold on to the seeming paradoxes of maximizing profits and also protecting workers and the environment, and will enlarge the scope of leadership beyond the having and creating of a powerful vision. What we see from José is not uncommon, though. The transition past the self-authored mind is a transition beyond the current paradigm of leadership, a transition beyond the current understanding of most organizations. To be able to hold on to these leaders and use their strengths, organizations need to develop new ways of thinking about leadership, new ways of thinking about the contributions of their increasingly aging (and perhaps increasingly developing) baby boomer population.

As the world becomes more complex, the complexity of the self-transforming mind is going to be pivotal inside organizations. Given the tiny percentage of the population that has even begun to develop beyond the self-authored mind, it is unlikely that any organization will have many people at this form of mind, and organizations need these leaders more than ever. It may be that people at a self-transforming form of mind need to have positions of some power in organizations (and governments) if we are to find solutions to the currently intractable problems of poverty, hatred, and environmental ruin. Most of us have heard the famous Albert Einstein quote: "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." Although Einstein didn't know about adult developmental theories, he could have been talking about the growth toward the self-transforming mind.

SO WHAT?

So if you have a deeper sense of the different ways people make sense of the world, and if you have begun to get a feel for the rhythms of that motion, and if you have

even begun to believe that the match between current organizational context and developmental form of mind is important to consider, what do you do next? You turn your mind to your own context—and maybe yourself—and you think about how to understand the sensemaking of those around you. The next chapter will help with that.

3 FINDING THE GROWTH EDGE

By this point in the book, you are likely beginning to ask yourself personal questions: With what form of mind does my boss see the world? My partner? How about me? In this chapter, you'll get a glimpse of the techniques researchers and theorists use to measure form of mind, and (if you want) you will begin to turn this lens on yourself and also on those with whom you closely interact. If you would like to focus more on particular interventions instead of on the subtleties of figuring out how you and others make sense of the world, feel free to skip this chapter and move right into the more obviously practical chapters in the next two parts.

A reminder here. This theory is not a bigger-is-better theory. It is a bigger-is-bigger theory, and the difference between these perspectives is important. More sophisticated forms of mind bring a variety of benefits, and they also bring losses. What counts most is the fit between what your life requires and what you are able to do. For example, people who are trained to fight fires are not necessarily better than other people, but there's no denying that they have capacities that most of us don't have. They have a set of knowledge and skill and a way of thinking about the world and the risks within it that non-firefighting people like me simply can't match. This difference doesn't matter much at the grocery store or in an office. If you have to fight a fire, however, it can mean the difference between life and death.¹ The context of the demand is what makes the major difference here.

Development is like that, too. If the context of your life doesn't call for sophisticated development, there is likely no advantage to having a sophisticated form of mind. Under some circumstances, having a bigger perspective is more useful; in some cases, having a bigger perspective might slow you down, might overcomplicate your life, might disturb precious relationships. Yet, if your context does require sophisticated sensemaking, one way to support that requirement is to have a map of the current terrain of your sensemaking and some support to help you move to a place that is a better fit with the demands of your life. This talk of fires