

# What Is Integral?

## *A Brief Introduction To Integral Theory & Practice*

v1.01

We all know the stages of development that human beings pass through. We are conceived and born into the world. Our bodies are fragile and undeveloped; our minds, emotions, and abilities are latent. We grow from newborns, to toddlers, to children, to adolescents, to young adults, to adults, to elders. At each stage of our physical development, we also develop mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, becoming more aware and increasingly capable of forming relationships, pursuing goals, building things, expressing ourselves in the world.

In addition to the general stages that all human beings pass through, there are also things we can do to assist our development. For example, we know that children who receive proper nutrition, who are loved, and who are provided with stimulating, creative environments tend to do better (develop into healthier, happier, more well-rounded human beings) than those who do not.

Now imagine that we are able to stand back far enough to see the human race as a whole -- to gather together our histories, cultures, religious traditions, social movements, scientific discoveries, psychological and philosophical perspectives. If we gather enough human experience together, and stand back far enough to see how it all fits together, we discover a similar pattern: that ideas, peoples, religions, and cultures pass through stages of development that are very similar to the stages of development that individual human beings pass through. Individually we tend to move from egocentric (focusing on ourselves), to ethnocentric (aligned with individuals and groups similar to us), to worldcentric (connected to the world), to cosmocentric (sensing everyone and everything is connected in the grand scheme of things); and collectively from archaic, to magic, to mythic, to rational, to pluralistic, to integral, to super-integral.

The idea that certain "best practices" produce happier, healthier human beings is becoming increasingly clear to all of us. In the same way that "best practices" can assist the development of individual human beings, so, too, there are "best practices" that can help collections of human beings develop faster, healthier, and with greater ease.

This, then, is what Integral Theory and Practice is about. It seeks to identify all the different ways that human beings grow -- individually and collectively, on the inside and out -- and discern which practices create the healthiest, happiest, most well-rounded human beings, in the most efficient way possible.

Championed by people like Ken Wilber, Don Beck, Michael Murphy, George Leonard and many others, this revolutionary idea is taking root all over the world. It is evolving as you read this, leaping into as yet unexplored dimensions of human experience. And it is gathering people like you, who wish to join with others to find ways to use these new understandings to increase our personal and collective development.

If these ideas excite you, we encourage you to join us in what many believe is not just a new field of study, but a major leap in human evolution.