

Stages of adult development

	Identity and beliefs	Behaviours	Questions that define this stage	Questions that assess if still operating at this stage	Leadership implications
Adolescent	- I am my needs - My needs, desires and interests are primary - I follow rules and norms of society for external reward and punishment, not because I believe in them	- Relationships are transactional – I relate to others to get my needs met - Limited ability to consider other perspectives - Selfish behaviour (no awareness)	- What's in it for me? - How can I get my needs met? - What are the consequences of my actions for me personally?	- Are my decisions and behaviours primarily based on what is best for me in any given situation? - Do I consider the needs of others? - Do I struggle with self-reflection?	6% adults - Autocratic and controlling - My way or the highway - Foster oppressive and destructive cultures
Socialised	- I am my capabilities - I have needs but I am not my needs - My self-worth and security is defined by my capabilities (relationships, intellect, results) - I need outside validation	- Team player - Faithful follower - Seeks direction - Aligns with tribe - Capable of goal setting, planning, self-reflection - Able to think abstractly and reflect on other's actions	- What do they think of me? - Do they approve of me/my actions? - What is expected of me? - How will my actions affect them?	- Is it important that I fit in and am accepted? - Do I feel responsible for how others perceive or experience me? - Do I need external validation to feel worthy?	58% adults - Care for employees but don't engage them in decision-making process - Benevolent parent role - Foster efficient but bureaucratic and hierarchical cultures

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Self-Authoring	• I know who I am • I am not defined by my relationships, capabilities, or environment • I construct my own narrative • I know myself and am not defined by external sources	• Agenda-driving • Has own internal compass • Problem-solving • Independent • Identifies values and aims to contribute meaningfully • Self-guided, self-evaluative and responsible	• Who am I? • What do I really believe, want, feel? • What do I stand for? • Am I being my authentic self? • How can I inspire, challenge and advance others?	• Am I open to perspectives and ideas that fundamentally differ from my own? • Am I willing to disappoint people, be seen as less valuable or contradict accepted norms to honour my values and beliefs?	• 35% adults • Visionary leaders • Developing other leaders becomes the main job of leadership • Foster cultures of creativity, engagement, innovation and cooperation
Self-Transforming	• I am constantly evolving • My sense of self evolves through every interaction • I am not a complete self, rather I am many selves • I can reinvent my identity • I can hold multiple and conflicting thoughts and ideologies at once	• Meta-leader • Problem-finding • Interdependent • Able to regard multiple ideologies simultaneously • Able to think systematically and embrace complexity • Attentive to multiple levels (self, collective, system)	• Who am I in this moment? • How can I better understand myself and the world through interconnection with others? • What is the bigger picture, beyond me/my organisation? • How can I best serve my whole community?	• Can I hold different perspectives without reacting or championing one over the other? • Can I accept the complexity of my personality, good and bad, light and dark, without being defensive? • Do I see all people as equal, multi-dimensional beings of intrinsic value?	• 1% adults • Leadership vision extends beyond organisation to include systemic welfare • Fosters culture of authenticity, diversity, transformation and systemic breakthrough thinking and action

Source: Robert Keegan, Robert Anderson and William Adams, adapted by Yo&Co