

The Interpenetration of Individual and Collective Transformation: A Framework for Development, Collective Intelligence, and Emergence

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INTRODUCTION

We are one, after all, you and I. Together we suffer, together exist, and
forever will recreate each other.

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

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This chapter focuses on the relationship between individual and collective development and how to support this development in transformative learning communities. We describe a framework that arose out of 16 years of practice and research in the Generating Transformative Change (GTC) program. The framework guides the curriculum and maps the principles and practices we engage with to support participants' and cohorts' development. It supports the development of capacities for what we call "subtle community," which is founded in contextual and systemic understanding, personal self-awareness, interpersonal differentiation and skills, and, eventually, access to transpersonal states and stages of consciousness.

GTC is a 9-month, developmentally informed leadership program offered by Pacific Integral. It consists of four residential retreats, as well as inter-session learning, coaching, and application. It has been delivered on three continents (North America, Oceania, and Africa), with 30 cohorts and over 350 graduates. GTC is a multi-disciplinary, action-learning program which focuses on transformative approaches to leadership and human development. Rooted in integral psychology and whole person learning, GTC helps participants grow the inner capacities necessary for effective leadership in complex and demanding contexts.

To support transformation within GTC, we start with the principle that individuals grow and develop in the context of relationships and groups, and vice versa. By integrating intrapersonal, interpersonal, and collective development, all can be reciprocally deepened. Another primary orienting principle that informs and guides transformation in the program is adult stage development (Cook-Greuter, 2013; O'Fallon, 2016). In GTC, we attend, as constructive developmental theorist Robert Kegan puts it, to the form that transforms (Kegan, 2000).

As we delivered and evolved GTC, we engaged in inquiry around the questions: How do people develop or transform? What is the relationship between the individual and the collective's development? How are the two interdependent? These inquiries developed into an ongoing longitudinal research project in adult development. They resulted in our theory

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and practice of Causal Leadership (Ramirez et al., 2013) as well as the STAGES model, a new integral theory of development, articulated by Terri O'Fallon (2016). The STAGES model was developed based on the discoveries we made about how people conceive of and relate to “I” and “We” as they evolve, how they engage in collectives, how they connect and make sense together from diverse perspectives, and what supports healthy growth in both.

Through our observations of the interpenetration of I and We (individuals and collectives), we began to see the implications for transformative change. *Interpenetration* refers to a move beyond both/and toward a recognition of “one within the other” (O'Fallon & Barta, 2018). For example, because no one is truly independent of the collectives in which they are a part, they cannot truly change without a change in their relationships; likewise, no social system can transform without a transformation of the individuals involved (Fitch & Lynam, 2019). This perspective eventually includes an understanding of unity beyond distinctions.

GTC and Transformative Development

Our approach to transformative change is based in and informed by integral theory and adult development theory. Transformative learning is distinguished from other forms of learning by describing a more profound and long-lasting shift in worldview, perspective, or consciousness. O'Sullivan et al. describes transformation as “a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world” (O'Sullivan et al., 2002, p. 11). In GTC we work with adult development theory as a map to guide these deep structural shifts in individuals and collectives and as a method to assess the development.

However, we view transformation as something that does not only happen along a single dimension such as a particular ego development stage shift. We view transformational shifts in consciousness as complex, multidimensional, and multi-leveled, with a movement toward greater wholeness, health, and justice. Given our developmental orientation, we mark these shifts in multiple ways, including movements within a developmental stage along a particular line of growth and as a reorganization of a system at a higher order of complexity.

Given the multiple perspectives we hold on development, transformative change occurs in different ways for different people and groups. For example, for one individual it might involve a significant shift in ego development, and for another the healing of a long-standing trauma with a corresponding shift in self-conception. However, similar to O'Sullivan and many others in the field of transformative learning, change is conceptualized and experienced as involving a significant and lasting shift in form or perspective.

The epistemological and ontological orientation of our approach is most closely aligned with integral methodological pluralism (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2010; Wilber, 2006). We account for transformative change as phenomena in which multiple perspectives and methods are continuously revealing (and enacting) aspects of what are complex and potentially multiple objects. Also, following Barad (2007), we include an understanding that this enactment is innately ethically founded, as how we see and engage reality is deeply intertwined with the justness of our outcomes.

The principles that guide the design of GTC are that it be integral (encompassing as much of reality as possible), developmental (not merely asserting a single worldview, but situated in an ongoing, evolutionary trajectory of perspective-taking capacity), and motivated by universal compassion (serving to reduce suffering and increase fulfillment and justice in the largest span and depth imaginable). Key theoretical underpinnings and areas of learning include: adult development theory and practice (Cook-Greuter, 2013; O'Fallon, 2016); Theory U and Presence (Scharmer, 2018); integral theory (Wilber, 2006); integral polarity practice (Kesler, 2014); awareness and somatic practices (Brown, 2006; Pierrakos, 2005; Porges, 2011); developmental action inquiry (Torbert et al., 2004); complex systems and paradoxes of group life (Smith & Berg, 1997); collective evolution (Gunnlaugson & Brabant, 2016); communication, truthfulness, and intimacy practices (Golabuk, 2012; Richo, 2014); and individual and collective trauma-informed shadow work (Hubl & Avritt, 2020; Masters, 2018; Menakem, 2017).

STAGES of Adult Development

Our approach to transformative change and specifically the notions of subtle community and the interpenetration of I and We are based on key aspects of the STAGES model of adult development. Building on the

ego development lineage of Loevinger and Cook-Greuter, the STAGES model identifies underlying repeating patterns in development and adds two additional later-level stages (Cook-Greuter, 2013; O'Fallon, 2016). It reveals a natural sequence of deep “vertical” structures, as well as iterating, wave-like patterns in the development or transformation of individuals (Fig. 38.1).

There are three tiers of development in the STAGES model: the Concrete, Subtle, and MetAware tiers. Each tier includes two shifts in a core perspective-taking view (called “person perspective”), such as the 1st- and 2nd- person perspectives in the Concrete tier. Each of these person perspectives has two stages (for instance, 1.0 Impulsive and 1.5 Egocentric for 1st-person perspective), for a total of 4 stages per tier. The

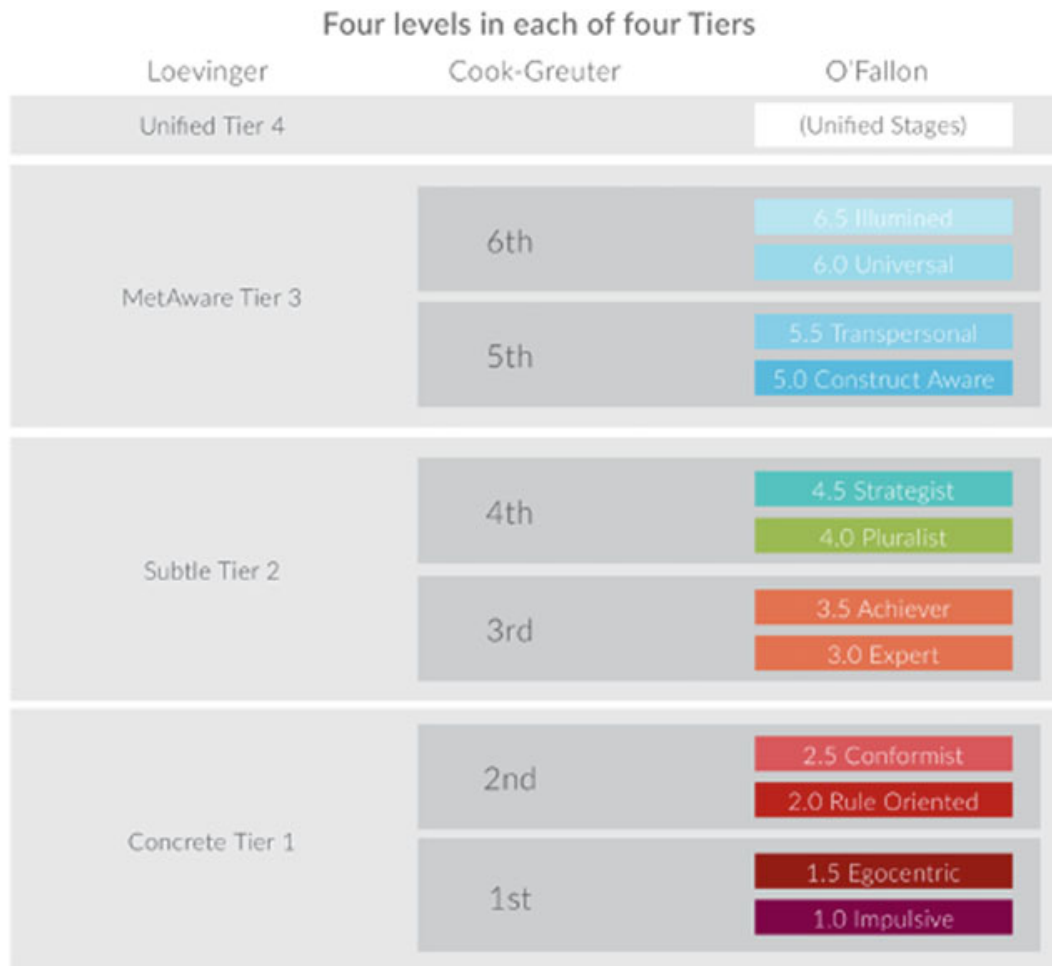


Fig. 38.1 STAGES model (O'Fallon & Barta, 2018)

first stage of each person perspective is more receptive to the new dimensions and awareness of the self and the second is more active with the capacities. In each tier, the first of the person perspectives is individually oriented and the second is collectively oriented (i.e., 1st-person perspective is individually oriented and 2nd-person perspective is collectively oriented).

In the Concrete tier, we engage and understand with the physical world perceived through our senses and more basic emotions. The first-person perspective, which includes the 1.0 and 1.5 stages, is “all about me”; there is no understanding yet of a “We.” The second-person perspective (2.0 Rule-Oriented and 2.5 Conformist stages) includes the recognition of others and is the beginning of the social self. These stages are all about group norms, fitting in, rules, and negotiating for fairness.

In the Subtle tier, we understand and engage with the world of ideas, thoughts, subtle feelings, abstractions, contexts, systems, and self-awareness. The 3.0 Expert and 3.5 Achiever are individually oriented stages and give rise to the subtle “I,” where a person realizes they have a self beyond the body: the thoughts and emotions independent of rational consciousness. The collective for these stages is still the concrete collective: relationship, family, organization, country, etc. The pattern continues as the 4.0 Pluralist and 4.5 Strategist are collectively oriented stages and bring in the subtle awareness of contexts—how individuals and groups are shaped by culture, identity, values, and systems, etc.

People in the MetAware tier are oriented to awareness of awareness itself, the witness self, and transpersonal wholeness. Individuals first awaken (in the 5.0 Construct Aware and 5.5 Transpersonal stages) to their ever-present awareness beyond the ordinary subtle self, as the ground of their being. The “I,” however, is the MetAware self, the limitless open horizon of awareness that we paradoxically seem to share with everyone and everything. The collective remains the subtle community that develops from the post-conventional 4th-person perspective. After the 5th-person perspective, later MetAware collective stages develop. MetAware collectives complexify to embrace all that is—the Concrete, Subtle, and the Kosmos.

I/WE MODEL

Principles and Features

Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning, and under every deep, a lower deep opens.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The I/We model was developed out of our work with GTC cohorts. It reflects our learning from supporting the transformative development of individuals and collectives (Lynam et al., 2020). The I/We model (distinct from the STAGES model although it integrates it) describes (and then guides) how individuals and collectives form and in-form each other's experience and development. We distinguish individual and collective emergence because doing so reveals the capacities of each that supports their development. But this does not mean that we see the individual-collective as a dichotomy. Both are in a constant process of co-evolving, with and as each other. They interpenetrate and are distinguished from a prior unity: a whole in which individual and collective occupy the same space (Kesler, 2014; Smith & Berg, 1997). Similarly, we distinguish the process of development, in which one stage (way of being and meaning making) builds on the next, and yet we do not view this as a linear step-by-step process. We see it as a dynamic cycle of becoming or unfolding for both individuals and collectives. As one changes so does the other, and vice versa. It is hard to tell which comes first.

The cycle of becoming described by the I/We model builds on a process of differentiation and integration and is refined into four phases (see Fig. 38.2). As the function of a phase is completed, the next phase in the cycle becomes available. This can, however, be a multi-directional process, as prior phases sometimes need to be revisited to address gaps, or for further integration. As individuals or collectives move from one phase to another, there are often transitional disorientations. These are included in the descriptions that follow.

- **Differentiation.** Forming of identity (individual or collective) distinct from its environment or constituent parts, stably sustaining that identity in the face of challenges and change. Transitioning

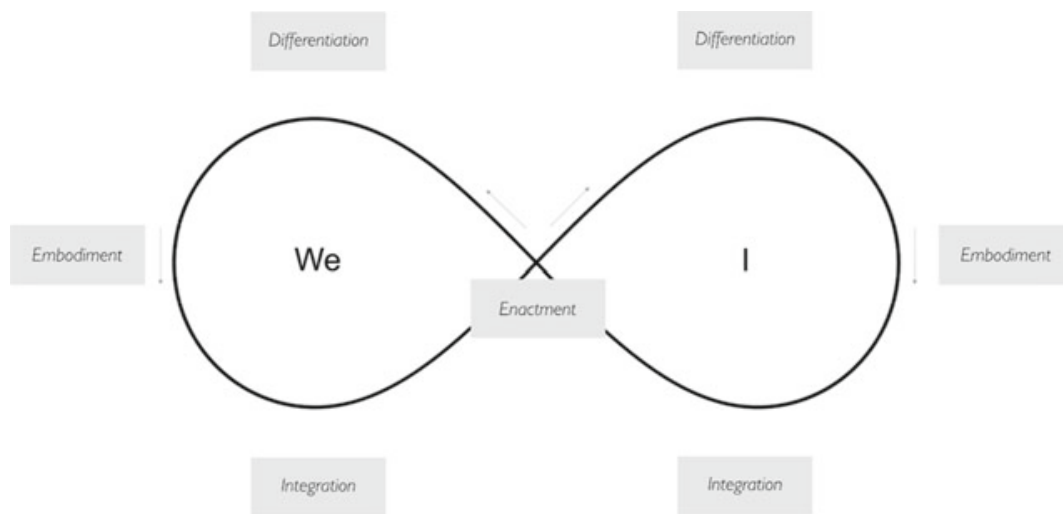


Fig. 38.2 I/We model: four phases

out of differentiation requires developing confidence in the newly formed identity, including daring to give it voice.

- **Embodiment.** Bringing that identity fully into form in a variety of contexts, and making it visible through body, speech, and mind. Transitioning out of embodiment involves opening the boundaries of the identity—having enough confidence to hold it lightly while inter-relating with the world.
- **Integration.** Embracing, attuning to, and dynamically collaborating with one's environment and constituent parts, while stably sustaining a flow of movement and information, toward becoming. The transitional disorientation here is to risk the attainment of a degree of happiness or intimacy for a deeper accomplishment or creativity.
- **Enactment.** Realizing one's purpose (individually and collectively) and expressing it in the world. As this completes a cycle of becoming, the transitional disorientation of this stage is the completion or dissolution of identity, setting up the potential for differentiation of a new form.

MetAwareness and Subtle Collectives

While we theorize that the phases described in this model pertain to all stages of development, our application of the framework is focused primarily on the 4th- and 5th-person perspective stages. Individually, the

I/We model highlights the development of capacities at these stages, the transition into the MetAware tier, and the maturation of the 5th-person perspective stages. Collectively, the focus is on the development of subtle community, which is the collective territory of these stages.

The subtle We consists of the perception of being situated in and arising out of a plurality of contexts. The We is not then a specific group of people, but is a relational space, a quality brought to relationships, or a relational field. For example, in a particular form of dialogical inquiry, there may be a certain quality of depth and intimacy. It is the practice itself that creates the conditions for the particular quality of relationships. Therefore, one can engage this practice with different individuals or groups and encounter a similar relational field. The quality of the connection is not wholly dependent on who the participants are; at the same time, it is shaped and influenced by the individuals' uniqueness. The relational field of subtle collectives is shaped by outer manifestations, such as the room; the systems in which the collective is embedded; the cultural contexts; and also inner manifestations, such as the attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, states of awareness, and ontological dispositions individuals bring to the moment. It is at these stages of development (4.0 Pluralist, 4.5 Strategist, 5.0 Construct Aware, and 5.5 Transpersonal) that the notions of we-space, collective intelligence, transformative change for individuals and collectives, and collective evolution begin to be of interest (Fitch, 2016; Ramirez et al., 2013).

At the 5th-person perspective, the beginning of the MetAware tier, individuals awaken to their ever-present awareness and begin to identify with a new self, one that is both empty and full, transcendent, and immanent. In these stages (5.0 and 5.5), the I is foregrounded, but the subtle We remains as a context for this I. Knowing that even deeper subtle we-spaces are possible (deeper than is generated from the 4th-person perspective), individuals in these MetAware stages often want to experience them, collaborate within them, and act from them. This experience in a group is often described as having some of the following qualities: spacious (including more silence), creative, easeful, adaptive, flowing, less effort, more shared and shifting leadership, less ego or attachment to particular ideas or people, greater ease in addressing and resolving conflict, integrating body, mind, and spirit, and generative.

Now we turn to the four phases of the I/We model and describe the foundations, experiences, and practices of each: Differentiation, Embodiment, Integration, and Enactment.

DIFFERENTIATION

The phase of differentiation supports the emergence of a mature identity of the individual and the collective, that is stable and able to sustain challenges while remaining open and fluid.

Engaging with Shadow and Trauma

The interaction between the I and the We offers the opportunity to work with shadow material. Shadow is what has been repressed, hidden, denied, or disowned in an individual or a collective. In GTC, as participants deepen their individual and collective growth, they learn to become more intimately engaged with shadow as a normal part of being human. In this intimacy, there can be healing (a movement toward wholeness), which provides a deeper sense of aliveness and engagement with all of life.

Shadow can take the form of maps or concepts of self and group that are taken in, or introjected, from early life experiences, often in the relational context in the concrete stages of development. These maps help us navigate how to belong and be safe in a group. Our culture and families are like an “ecosystem,” to which we adapt. They shape our sense of self and, in turn, our nervous systems. What is and is not allowed by the standards of the culture and family are repressed, disowned, or hidden, to not disturb the attachment we have to our caregivers and community. These disowned parts may be projected on others and the outer world. What is disowned is also patterned in the nervous system as something that is dangerous and therefore triggers our fight/freeze/flight response (Porges, 2011). These formative experiences shape the initial ways we relate in a group, how safe it feels to reveal what we authentically think and feel, and how able we are to self-regulate our interior processes in the face of different perspectives, challenges, and conflict.

In this phase of differentiation, individuals can learn, heal, and expand their capacities to be autonomous while being emotionally connected to the group. Likewise, groups can learn to form, deepen, and adapt, in the face of a diversity of individual perspectives, intentions, and energies. As they work with the unconscious shadow, individuals begin to heal, integrate, and regulate their nervous systems in ways that provide more embodiment, capacity, and space. As one individual learns to regulate their nervous system, they can help others to begin to do the same (Porges, 2011).

Developing the capacity to rest in the awareness of awareness provides a spacious and still presence that is energetically coherent. The nervous system is calm in this state, which offers to others who are not calm the space to feel what it is like to be witnessed, which can help them find their regulation. It offers the freedom to be more curious rather than judgmental, and to be more open rather than closed. As this capacity is deepened, it is easier to let shadow material emerge without triggering a reactive response, or if triggered, knowing what to do to regulate, calm down, allow, and re-engage. As individuals become adept at this, the collective field is deepened, which in turn can tolerate and explore more shadow. It is a dance that is always in service of healing and growth, collectively and individually (Fitch, 2016; Siegel, 2012).

It is in this rich, subtle collective that habit patterns, once in shadow, can be observed internally and externally, and individually and collectively. These patterns include trauma that has been held inside our bodies and nervous systems, and passed from one generation to the next, and throughout history (Hubl & Avritt, 2020; Menakem, 2017).

We support this phase of differentiation through personal and interpersonal and collective practices, including authentic communication, expressions of truthfulness and vulnerability, individual and collective shadow processes, awareness practices, working with habit patterns as they form in the group, and attending to the developmental patterns of individuals and the collective. We endeavor to hold all of this in a field grounded in trust, love, honesty, and awareness.

Surrendering into the Self and Collective

Engaging with shadow work opens the doorway to deeply embrace one's limitations and gifts as a whole human being and to reside in one's truth, moment to moment. This movement paradoxically also frees one up to take more responsibility for one's limitations and impact on others. This deeper, existential self-acceptance becomes the ground from which relaxing into the collective is possible, which in turn allows the collective to form and accept itself in light of its members. The need to control and defend oneself from the collective is replaced with openness and more agile and permeable boundaries. One can then truly surrender to an expanded sense of I and We—the expansive subtle field infused with boundless meta-awareness—the mature subtle collective. One can have a sense of surrender to life itself as this moment. Concurrently, the We

allows itself to exist with its limitations and gifts. Here the interpenetration of I and We can be experienced as the collective and its unique set of individuals reside as a coherent subtle field experienced through a boundless meta-awareness.

EMBODIMENT

The phase of embodiment supports the individual and collective to fully inhabit themselves and to express themselves in their truth: clearly, vibrantly, and wholeheartedly.

The Embodiment of the True Self and the Collective Field

As differentiation supports the individual to relax into the collective as their true self, they can more freely and fully express themselves through their body, speech, and mind. This is a process of deepening, supported in GTC through an invitation to use the space of the program as a territory to experiment with new ways of being and doing. We endeavor to invite, support, and reflect the true expression of each participant and of the collective itself. We practice noticing and releasing the assumptions and projections we hold. We also engage in practices such as movement, dance, and play that support opening habitual ways of being. These practices support individual embodiment as well as collective cohesion and expression.

As embodiment deepens in a collective field that is subtle and informed by an awareness of awareness, a shift in both listening and participation in the collective can develop. A felt sense that the collective is a system that has its own intelligence beyond the self and yet completely includes the self can emerge. From a MetAware perspective, the collective may be seen as a fractal of the larger system of intelligence that comprises all systems, including human and more than human systems. The self can be experienced both as part of, and yet distinct from, the whole. From this place it is possible to have a felt sense of speaking from a place that is personal and true—deeply embodied, authentic, and yet beyond the habitual patterns of the self that occur just through the ego. One can experience that everyone in the collective is a voice for the intelligence that moves through all of life, a piece of the puzzle necessary for the emergence and for collective intelligence.

Speaking and Listening from the Self and Collective

When we engage in a practice of the interpenetration of I and We, speaking for the self and for the collective are not merely seen to coexist but are experienced as interdependent and co-emerging. Even expressions that seem to contradict the collective intention, such as “I don’t want to be part of this!” if held from an interpenetrative perspective, paradoxically reinforce the collective cohesion. We understand that intent can only exist with its contradiction, and we welcome it with humor (Smith & Berg, 1997). The expression of both the individual’s unique voice and the collective’s cohesion, intelligence, and intention is allowed to move more freely.

This interpenetration of the I and the We in a deep subtle collective, informed and supported by MetAware capacities, is the embodied potential that we work toward in GTC. It is an ever-unfolding practice to access these moments of grace. And it is a journey that we are on together, ever falling short, and ever aspiring toward. It is not about the attainment as much as it is attending to the practice of “walking each other home” (Dass & Bush, 2018).

INTEGRATION

The phase of integration supports the deepening of the dynamic collaboration with and attunement to one’s environment and constituent parts while sustaining a flow of movement and information toward becoming.

Supporting Self and We-Space from the Meta-Awareness

The work of differentiation and embodiment of the prior phases deepens in the process of integration. As attention is given to shadows, blocks, and unwanted patterns, as well as emergent potentials, experiences can be engaged with from the deeper ground of awareness and a differentiated self.

Supporting the self from meta-awareness allows us to see ourselves through the spaciousness of witnessing awareness, rather than solely identifying with the contents of awareness (such as body sensations, thoughts, and feelings). We do not ignore or bypass these, but instead include them, so that awareness, mind, and body are an integrated whole. Grounded in awareness of awareness, we are freer of our patterns but also able

to directly see them as they arise. We can support the self and collective through this conscious awareness by engaging with work to open and shift these patterns, in support of individual and collective learning and growth. Ultimately, this may support us to notice patterns of the mind perceiving and constructing and support the gradual unfolding of the structures of self that open identity into an experience beyond the ordinary boundaries we impose on reality.

Similarly, as a collective, we can experience this awareness as shared in our subtle field. In a sense, it is the same in all things. Just as with self-awareness, through meta-awareness and meta sense-making at the collective level, we can develop a kind of in-the-moment witnessing that supports the emergence of new insight and potentials. We can notice the subtle collective patterns, such as group formation and identity, dynamics that may evolve into cultural forms, collective shadows, and the influence of past and present trauma. We witness what the collective is aware or not aware of, and where the collective is placing its attention. We may ultimately see that the collective is an expression of a larger We that includes the broader, global socio-cultural-economic consciousness, and forces that exist now, in the past, and are yet to be.

Attuning and Freeing Energy and Perspectives

From this awareness, we can learn to track the energetic felt sense and practice to free the energetic movement of the I and We. Individual members of the collective can begin to have a felt sense of release, stillness, and truth when one person speaks as the whole. When this occurs, both the individual and collective become embodied as a more profound truth and whole. What earlier might have been seen as grounds for contradiction or conflict now gets resolved in a deeper order and experienced in a spacious coherence. The capacity of the collective to hold and engage problems this way can allow for the emergence of novel solutions, as well as new ways of being and doing together. Practices we engage with to support this process include awareness and somatic practices to move energy, improv, spontaneous leadership, identifying and shifting habitual roles, and emergent creative processes.

ENACTMENT

The phase of enactment has the individuals and collectives engaging and directing their identity and energy in the world, through an authentic impulse toward a future that is calling.

Individual/Collective Presencing

We draw on Scharmer's Theory U (2018) in GTC as a map for the depth of change one can go through in a transformative process. The term *presencing* refers to the deepest and most profound form of change where novelty emerges from source or ground of being. Before presencing, the process involves examining, encountering, and letting go of what has been. Through willingness and surrender into a deeper source or ground of being, the collective can perceive a sense of the future that wants to emerge. In the I/We model, enactment begins as individuals and collectives emerge into a process of sensing and bringing their future into form in the world.

As one opens to this deeper form of change, we can come to more fully encounter "what is," which in itself can also be transformative. We observe non-judgmentally with meta-awareness and open our hearts to enter into an intimate and committed inter-relatedness with what is—the truth of how things are rather than how we want them to be. The next step is to allow ourselves to let go of fear and trust the deeper unfolding of change, which prompts us to let go more deeply into the ground of being, through the doorway of the boundless silence of meta-awareness. This releasing into presencing is not an act of will, but rather of willingness. It occurs in its own time and allows us to become receptive to the promptings of a future that wants to emerge into the present (Fitch & Lynam, 2019).

This part of the process is chaotic, not in the ordinary sense of being undesirably confusing or disordered, but rather in the original understanding: "the primordial state that precedes Creation. Chaos is an emptiness, but a fertile emptiness, a nothingness that contains the mysterious seeds of all that is, a vast and formless potential capable of bringing forth all form into expression" (Golabuk, 2012). This space of presencing is unpredictable but inevitably gives rise to insight, sensing, and a calling toward an emergent and transformative future.

This process of presencing occurs individually and collectively. The world that wants to emerge is a world of both I and We. We can engage deliberately in presencing for the self and the collective by allowing ourselves to be receptive to their futures and give them voice. Ultimately, these futures are one, so in the complexity that emerges from the presencing, it is important to hold these emergent futures sincerely but lightly as they take shape and cohere.

In the evolution of transformative change in individual/collectives, this phase emerges into the mature form of a system, which has cohered into a new order and begins to live and act in the world from this place. We co-enact the emerging ontology, by taking as real the future that wants to emerge: speaking, thinking, feeling, and working from it. This requires a sincere and vulnerable caring for that nascent future while being in relationship with the realities of the present. We practice to sustain a connection to the ground of being that is birthing this future, without becoming cynical or pessimistic, and while creatively engaging it.

Initially, it is helpful to engage in prototyping and experimentation and to continue the transformative exploration of this future (Scharmer, 2018). Through this process, we revisit and deepen all elements of the work to differentiate, embody, integrate, and enact. Presencing and enactment prompt us to engage with the emergent future creatively, and we can experience individual and collective dimensions of this. Conflict can arise as our passions toward this future take form. We may need to revisit the work of generative conflict, intimacy, shadow, self-acceptance, allowing coherence and flow, and so on. While creatively engaging our work together, the whole of the emergence depends on and develops strength to move into the world with its impulses.

Our deeper purpose or plan unfolds through the I and We and is expressed and offered in the broader context of life and history. The process of presencing depends on developing a greater trust in the self, the world, and in each other, so that our creation will be received and valued. We not only embody our new work in the world, as Scharmer puts it, but also need to participate in creating a new world to receive that work—one that is whole and friendly to the future that wants to emerge (Fig. 38.3).

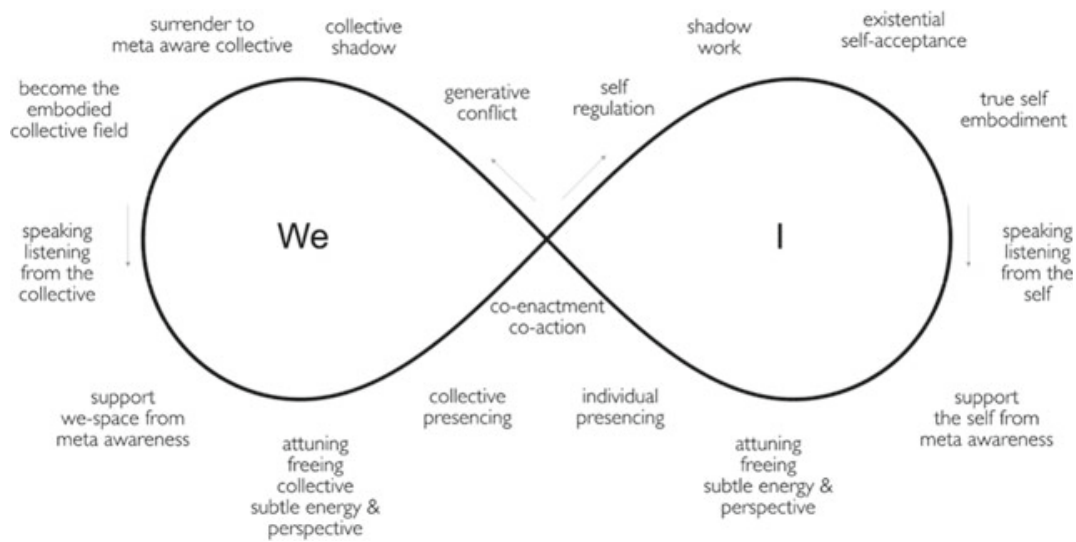


Fig. 38.3 I/We model

CONCLUSION

Through the process of differentiation, embodiment, integration, and enactment, we continue to deepen our learning about the transformative co-evolution of the I and the We. Realizing the interpenetration of the I and We and their ultimate unity in a deeper ground of awareness makes possible a form of healing and coming home to our true nature that is life-affirming and life-giving. Identification with a self and collective beyond the personal allows for the emergence of novel futures, and fluid, creative engagement in service of a greater whole. This approach also helps to work with and integrate polarities including cultural tendencies to be more individually oriented or more collectively oriented; in developmental orientations toward the individual or the collective; in political leanings between liberal and conservative; in divides between the personal and the transpersonal; the ecological and the social, and the spiritual and the secular. It also reveals how conflict and shadow work and how other forms of working with patterns of differentiation can also serve a greater whole.

We seek to develop capacities for mature subtle community, founded in contextual and systemic understanding, personal self-awareness, interpersonal differentiation and skills, and access to transpersonal states and stages of consciousness. This engagement can also help to realize the promise and potential of subtle capacities—to be with each other in our

uniqueness, differences, and similarities, and aware of how internal and external contexts shape how we relate to and understand one another. It makes possible a deeper form of inter-relating, self-regulation, and transformative change. The spaciousness and ground that meta-awareness brings can also support the capacities to work with shadow and conflict in creative and generative ways. It can also enhance collaboration, collective intelligence, and develop new forms of leadership and systemic change so needed in a world of complex and interconnected global challenges.

MetAware subtle collectives also have the potential to reach into the past to heal personal and collective trauma. We can reach toward the future with new forms and ways of being together. And yet, these are potentials that are challenging to realize. We carry with us the harms of the past and the present. We need to cultivate these capacities for new ways of being human together. We may, at times, fail. Yet it is by turning toward our so-called failures with more honesty, compassion, and responsibility, that we can begin to enact new futures, new stories, new potentials as individuals and collectives. We also come to realize the perfection that exists in our being and becoming. We see this in the essence of our being that is not implicated by these challenges: the boundless ground of awareness itself.

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