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# Career Frontiers: New Conceptions of Working Lives

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## Performance, Learning, and Development as Modes of Growth and Adaptation throughout our Lives and Careers

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Growth occurs throughout our jobs and careers in many forms. The elimination of mandatory retirement in some countries, the flattening of organizations, global competition, the changing composition of the workforce, the complexity of balancing work and family roles, and the shifting values of the workforce are among the many forces contributing to a changing landscape of jobs and careers. This drives a need to understand what excites and stimulates an individual toward growth and adaptation throughout his or her life. In the current economic and social milieu, people are changing careers at an increasing rate (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). Different definitions of career that trace a person's progression through several stages, such as those of Dalton and Thompson (1986), are not sufficient to provide insight into the complexity of the paths through multiple careers. To address this need, a general model of growth and adaptation is presented in this chapter, as applied to life and career development.

Related to our model is a broad conception of management. If people enter management from jobs as individual contributors, such as being a salesperson, an engineer, a physician, or a student, the challenge of continuous growth appears dramatic. The manager's degree of growth, excitement, commitment, and performance affects other people's careers and lives. This multiplier effect perpetuates a preoccupation with exploring continuous growth of those who engage in management, but the underlying challenges of adaptation and continuous growth are the same for people in all jobs. In addition, because people enter management at many points in their life and careers, development of managerial competencies is needed and should be available for people throughout their lives and careers.

In the past, contemplation of career-long, or lifelong, growth has often led to models in which growth is a function of experience and time. The more experience a person has, the more developed we believe him or her to be. The more time a person is in a job, or alive, the more learning we believe is gained. *But experience does not imply learning or adaptation.* People can be performing jobs and not growing or adapting. If this were not the case, we would seldom see people repeat a mistake or confound one by continuing to act as if the earlier error had not occurred. Hindsight, reflection, and the study of history provide an overwhelming set of examples of individuals (even organizations and nations) that do not appear to learn from experience.

It has been noted that often people who have abilities or competencies do not use them in certain settings. Competencies are defined here as those characteristics of the person (for example, skills, values, motives, traits, social roles, and so on) that lead to or cause effective or superior performance in specific jobs (Boyatzis 1982); others refer to these characteristics as 'abilities' (Boyatzis *et al.* 1995) or 'capabilities' (Stevenson 1994). Over twenty years, competency studies in organizations, especially on middle-management and executive jobs, have focused on the top 3 per cent of the job-holders in any organization, who appeared truly outstanding in all aspects of the job (Boyatzis 1982; Spencer and Spencer 1993). Frequently, the observation has been made that many individuals in management jobs had these competencies (that is, abilities or capabilities) but did not use them at work (Boyatzis 1993, 1996). The confusion increased when it was later discovered that the same people *did use* these competencies in volunteer work, small businesses, professional, and avocational activities outside their 'main' job.

Over twenty years of managing hundreds of consultants and dozens of professors in several consulting companies and university departments, we have been puzzled by a Jekyll-and-Hyde phenomenon. Many of these consultants or professors would demonstrate all of the competencies characteristic of outstanding and effective managers and leaders while interacting with their clients or students but then seemed to 'check them at the door' when they entered the consulting company offices or faculty meetings. The same people who could demonstrate competencies involving collaboration, empowerment, sensitivity, and inspired motivation with clients and students turned into individualistic martinets who avoided people, or sometimes treated their colleagues like furniture. Colleagues in other professional service organizations, such as hospitals and law firms, have reported observing a similar process.

These puzzles haunted us. Assuming that the current models had missed some vital ingredient, we looked for yet another competency. When that search proved futile, we looked for other levels of the competencies. This search also failed to account for these differences in behavior. The answer was far simpler than we thought at first: *these people were choosing not to use*

their abilities (that is, their competencies or capabilities). This was particularly evident in advanced professionals and executives, and helped to explain the absence of leadership felt in a number of organizations. The misleading concept in this search was the assumption that everyone would want to use their abilities and capability whenever they had the opportunity. Career-long or lifelong theories of growth must take into account and explain such choices and dynamics.

### Frustrations with Existing Theories

Many theories and models of growth are hierarchical and time dependent: with the passage of time, one is expected to progress along the path, rising higher in the sequence of stages. Time may be good as a model for physical growth, but it is inappropriate as a model for intellectual, emotional, or spiritual growth. Hierarchical theories do not appear to explain many of the dynamics people experience in their careers and lives regarding growth. Alexander, Druker, and Langer (1990) identified four characteristics of hierarchical, developmental theories, based on their analysis of Piaget's theory. They were: (1) each successive stage integrates schemata of the previous stages; (2) the end points are the logical culmination of stages preceding them; (3) there is an inevitable movement through the stages; and (4) movement to the next stage is an attempt to attain equilibrium. The last point of such theories assumes that: (a) attempts to assimilate experiences and challenges characteristic of a stage often (b) result in an imperfect fit, which (c) leads to realization of a conflict, which (d) leads to attempts to accommodate the conflict, which (e) leads to a new equilibrium.

As a person who has changed careers is observed or interviewed, it is often noted that he or she seems energized, revitalized, and excited by the challenge of the new career. The same observation can often be made of people changing organizations, industries, or becoming 'boundaryless' (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). In this new arena, they demonstrate many of the behaviors they showed much earlier during a former career or in a former organization. They identify where they can make a difference, identify standards of performance, and seek ways to meet or exceed the standards, to be sensitive to others, to build relationships, and to find ways to innovate or approach the issues in a new manner. These conditions do not appear to incorporate all prior moods about their former job, career, or organization, but in fact replace the mood in which they found themselves immediately prior to the change. Instead of being bored, or feeling underutilized, they show spirit and excitement.

The movement from one career to another (or the less dramatic change of organizations or industries), although often associated with 'mid-life crisis' or the loss of a job, appears most often to be associated with a growing

restlessness inside the person. He or she may express it as boredom, fatigue, a loss of purpose, direction, or meaning, and so forth. At these times, a person appears to be making both conscious and unconscious choices to change, or at least to look for something different. The impetus for these changes is not logical, as hierarchical stage theories would predict, but appears non-rational, often discontinuous. The new condition sought is often not a 'new equilibrium' but in fact a disequilibrium and stimulation of novelty. Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1988) described that a person out of the 'flow' experience will seek the stimulation of being in it—not the comfort of being in it. Hall and Mirvis' (1996) concept of protean careers, Arthur and Rousseau's (1996) concept of the 'boundaryless career', and Nicholson's (1990) work on transitions and transition cycles assume and Nicholson's (1990) work on transitions and transition cycles assume career changes are discontinuous and people seek stimulation when seeking career changes.

Historically, models, or theories, of career development were hierarchical stage models. The imbedded hierarchy might have been based on time or age, as in Miller and Form's (1951) and Super's (1957) models. They may have been based on a sequential hierarchy, such as maturity within a career, but not necessarily age related, as in Dalton and Thompson's (1986) model or Schein's (1978) concept of progressive movement toward integration. Other models, including Driver's (1982) career concepts and Schein's (1978) career anchors, provide non-hierarchical, individual difference models (Dalton 1989).

Not all life-developmental theories are hierarchical, as Alexander, Druker and Langer (1990) reviewed. Levinson *et al.* (1978, 1996) and Sheehy (1995) conceptualized a life-cycle concept for adulthood, in which the person proceeds through a number of stages or phases. Although these are considered non-hierarchical because they do not conform to the Piagetian criteria they usually describe a sequence through which a person passes. This non-recursive characteristic of 'sequential' developmental theories, such as Levinson *et al.*'s (1978, 1996), Sheehy's (1995), Kolberg's (Colby and Kohlberg 1987), or Loevinger's (Loevinger and Wessler 1983), imposes a type of value based hierarchy: it is more mature (and therefore better) to be at the late stage or phases. This conceptualization would label re-entry into a former stage/phase as regression, and not as a natural evolution through one's life or careers.

These developmental theories typically offer a positive image of the idea (that is, the good) and a negative image belittling to many individuals (that is, the bad). The difficulties arising from attempts to apply or use these theories emerge as conflicts between the empirically driven aspects of the theories and the ideologically driven aspects. This often occurs when the theorists depart from their descriptive efforts and move into prescription based upon justifications of the ideal stage they offer.

It appears, therefore, that, to understand the dynamics of lifelong career development in today's world, we must entertain a non-hierarchical theo-

in which a specific stage or set of value-based conditions does not dictate the 'best' or most mature place to be. We must entertain a recursive theory that allows for people to enter new careers with the enthusiasm, excitement, and the 'wide-eyed naivety' that was characteristic of our entrance into our first career of interest (to differentiate this experience from entering a career or job for survival reasons and without excitement). Hall and Mirvis (1996: 34) described a cycle of change in today's protean careers: 'people's careers increasingly will become a succession of "ministages" (or short-cycle learning stages) of exploration-trial-mastery-exit, as they move in and out of various products areas, technologies, functions, organizations, and other work environments'. We must entertain a non-linear theory to accommodate the pace and timing differences of individuals making jobs and career shifts at various ages (like people entering a doctoral program at 45, facing an eight-year growth process, or rite of passage before entering a new career).

The career transitions literature often incorporates a recursive model in the process of change described. Nicholson's (1984) earlier work on work role transitions postulated a cycle of Replication-Absorption-Determination-Exploration, which he later (1990) simplified into Replication-Gradation-Mutation when expanding the application of transition cycles beyond individuals to organizations. His recent Motivation-Selection-Connection model from evolutionary psychology (Chapter 3) may also be a recursive model. These models appear similar to Hall and Mirvis' (1996) conceptualization of the 'mastery to learning to mastery to learning and so forth' cycle evident in people's careers today. Transition theories of adult development tend to be process models and cite life events as markers of key changes (Schlossberg *et al.* 1995). Although the career transition theories such as Hall and Mirvis' (1996) and Nicholson's (1990) focus on the person's experience of the transitions, the adult development transition theories acknowledge the importance of the person's transitions but often stop short of classifying them.

While earlier theorists (e.g. Schein 1978) may have accounted for life and career transitions separately, an increasing number of people in industrialized and post-industrial societies do not experience compartmentalization of their personal life and jobs. The struggle of balancing different roles experienced by women in management and professional jobs may be an expression of the dissatisfaction with attempts at compartmentalization. The integration and balance sought in one's life among all of our competing interests, responsibilities, and pressures seem to be an increasing part of our lives (Latack 1984; Bailyn 1993; Marshall 1995; see also Chapter 9) and precludes compartmentalization. Once we acknowledge and view our lives and careers in terms of our relationships, the mental game of separating one's work and family or personal life seems an elusive pursuit with little utility. A relational approach to our careers leads us into a more holistic view of our lives (Kram 1996). Therefore, career and life developmental theories should address these arenas of our life in an integrated, or at least contextual, manner. This does not obviate the need for clarification of the syn-

drome of 'overwork' or 'workaholics'. As pointed out by Peiperl and Jon (1998) and Brett, Medvec, and Stroh (1998), balance in life and the definite of 'working a lot or too much' have different meanings to various people.

### Elements of the Theory

The proposed theory (Boyatzis and Kolb 1991, 1994, 1995) has three modes of adaptation and growth: (1) the Performance Mode as the quest for mastery (2) the Learning Mode as the quest for novelty; and (3) the Developmental Mode as the quest for meaning. The purpose of the theory is to elaborate and reconstruct experiential learning theory explained by Kolb (1984) as it applied to lifelong adaptation and integrate the competency acquisition and development process explained by Boyatzis (1982). Exploration of the three modes in the context of each other has been difficult, because the validation research within each of these modes is found predominantly in different bodies of literature.

### The Performance Mode

A person's growth and adaptation in the Performance Mode is understood through a focus on effective job performance, as shown in Table 4.1. The person in this mode is preoccupied with success and his or her intent mastery of a job or arena of his or her life. This mode represents an attempt to establish self-validation—proving yourself worthy (Hall and Mirvis 1991). The key abilities, or capabilities, are situationally specific, behavioral skills. These are related to job and organizational demands, and in this sense are specific to a context of performance—that is, the context to which the person aspires to attain mastery. Since the focus of validation research in this mode has been effective job performance, the typical methods of measurement competencies in the literature concerning this mode are methods of behavioral observation, such as critical incident interviews (Flanagan 1950; Boyatzis 1982; Spencer and Spencer 1993), simulations, assessment centres (Thornton and Eyham 1982), and so forth.

A person often has some desire to change the condition of his or her job, life, or some degree of engagement with work. Routine acts performed with the intent of coping or in the pursuit of survival are in this mode. While this mode, people may be in one of several sub-modes. In one sub-mode they are coping. In another sub-mode, they are attempting to change or improve within the current job or career, or a major aspect of their life. Another sub-mode—attempting to change or improve with regard to a future job, career, or life aspiration—may be characteristic of a person on the cusp between the Performance and Learning modes. Throughout the time spe-



purpose, but such 'divergences' are viewed as distractions from their direction.

### The Learning Mode

Growth and adaptation in the Learning Mode is understood through a focus on learning, as shown in Table 4.1. The person in this mode is preoccupied with novelty, variety, and generalizability. The emphasis is on self-improvement, but appears different than the self-improvement in the Performance Mode, which is focused on improvement toward some standard of excellence or goal. The key abilities, or competencies, are learning skills, self-image, and contingent values (that is, those values adopted from reference groups). Since the focus of validation research on this mode has been learning, the typical methods of measurement of competencies in the literature concerning this mode are self-report methods (such as the Myers-sort Learning Skills Profile (Boyatzis and Kolb 1991, 1995) and the Myers-Briggs Indicators (Myers and McCauley 1985)). People do not appear ready or eager to enter this mode until they have achieved, attained, and recognized a degree of success, or validation.

While in this mode, a person may be in the sub-mode of exploring other settings for application of skills already being used in a particular setting. Another sub-mode is discovering underlying constructs to explain learning. The person in this mode often looks for generalizing, extending, and extrapolating from the current and present situations into new, different, and possibly future ones. This mode is similar to Hall and Mirvis' (1996) 'learning mini-stage'. Although it appears similar to Nicholson's (1984) 'exploration phase, his theory requires high discretion and high novelty at work to enact this phase of transition. In contrast, we suggest that people in routine jobs may enter the Learning Mode and find their adaptation, growth, and excitement outside work.

Examples of people predominantly in the Learning Mode are Frank and Giovanni. Frank is in his early 50s. He is Controller of a billion-dollar-a-year division of a Fortune 500 US company, and is considered a vital member of the executive staff of the division and corporation. The workshops he has selected to attend during the past several years have all involved extending his skills and perspective into new settings. For example, he has become interested in cross-functional teams and cross-functional staffing. As Frank discusses his excitement about these activities, he describes the potential for applying skills and perspective from one type of function (for example, manufacturing) to another function (for example, marketing). In addition, the vague restlessness he reports with merely continuing to do the current job, which he does exceedingly well, hints at his desire for a different type of challenge. He has even wondered about the possibility of becoming the President of a division or company as a next career step. He then moves to

become the Chief Financial Officer of a European corporation, relocating to Brussels. This represents less of a 'promotion' and more of a 'different' type of organization and setting in which to work—he has the novelty of living in Brussels and the excitement of generalizing his capability in working for a European company with global operations.

Giovanni is in his mid-30s. He is in public relations at a major chemical manufacturer in Italy. His former jobs had been as Executive Director of two professional and industrial associations. Describing his current challenges, Giovanni gets excited at the examples of incidents in which he has been able to apply skills, experience, methods, and networks developed in his former career into the new setting. His choices of growth activities include projects to experiment with new methods of performing the public-relations function by defining the company as an industry leader in its field, and conducting events typically characteristic of a trade association.

In both examples, Frank and Giovanni appear to be predominantly in the Learning Mode. Their excitement and growth activities are directed at transferring skills, expertise, and knowledge from one setting into another setting. They want to experiment with new methods or new jobs. They are fascinated by the potential for generalization. They are both committed to their organizations and want to be effective, but neither is choosing growth activities that would maximize success or job mastery in his current job, or career path, such as attending courses directed at improving his 'job performance. They are stretching into new areas, taking risks that may endanger the certainty of success. In these ways, they appear to be primarily in the Learning Mode. It is important to note that each will, at times, return briefly to the Performance Mode for growth activities related to a specific task or project, but the excitement and interest is not sustained, and they return to the Learning Mode.

### The Development Mode

Growth and adaptation in the Development Mode is understood through focus on adult development, as shown in Table 4.1. A person in this mode preoccupied with perpetual human and social dilemmas, typically in the form of a 'calling'. The person's intent is focused on fulfillment of his or her purpose, or calling, in terms of a specific agenda. The heart of the Development Mode is the articulation of current meaning in one's life and attempt behavioral consistency with this meaning. The person's awareness of being in this mode may have a fuzzy, or emergent quality.

So far in our understanding, there appear to be four basic types of human and social dilemmas characteristic of this mode, called challenges by Kolb (1991). One dilemma is developing a holistic sense of self. In this quest, a person is seeking integration of the emotional, intellectual, behavioral, spiritual, and physical aspects of oneself. This may emerge as seeking

balance in life, but within this mode the desired distribution of time and attention will be dramatically different from other modes. For someone in the Performance Mode, 'overwork' generates appropriate rewards of evidence of progress toward mastery, despite occasional lip service to the need for balance in one's life. Individuals in the Development Mode would not care about the rewards of 'overwork' and are less likely to appear as workaholics (Brett *et al.* 1998; Peiperl and Jones 1998).

A second dilemma is seeking understanding in the context of values and/or a vision of the future (that is, wisdom). The person is attempting to understand how the world works for the sake of insight or because it is believed to help on the path toward an ideal vision of the future. This does not necessarily involve, and is certainly not driven by, social activism, which could be characteristic of the Performance Mode.

A third dilemma is seeking connectedness in a global context. This may emerge as wanting to re-establish contact with 'long-lost' friends or relatives, a search for 'roots', or a desire to get to know others. Given the relational world of women, this dilemma may emerge as seeking autonomy for women in the Development Mode.

A fourth dilemma is finding the courage to make selfless contributions (that is to be generative). The person may seek to make a personal contribution of time or effort, but the selfless aspect of the desire is critical. This should not be confused with mentoring or wanting to help others, which may be a concern of a person in any of the modes. Someone in the Performance Mode might mentor someone to stimulate better performance. Someone in the Learning Mode might do it to provoke innovation. Someone in the Development Mode and pursuing selfless contribution would view mentoring as a desirable objective, without further instrumentality. A person in any of these modes could be self-centered, and be providing mentoring or coaching in pursuit of other objectives.

The pursuit of one's calling in the Development Mode is embedded in the pursuit of one's own agenda, and in this sense self-fulfillment is the primary orientation, rather than a responsiveness to the expectations of others. The key abilities related to this mode are mostly unconscious (that is, below our daily awareness) dispositions or capabilities, such as motives, traits, and core values. Since the focus of validation research in this mode has been adult development, the typical methods of measurement of competencies in the literature that seem most fruitful concerning this mode are interactive and interpretive, such as the Thematic Apperception Test (McClelland 1985), the Career Appreciation Interview (Stamp 1981, 1989), or the use of narrative life histories (see Chapter 10).

While in this mode, a person experiences time elongation, almost a sense of time slowing. Urgency and expediency lose importance. Although not always associated with advanced age, an example of the shift in time and perspective characteristic of this mode is found in a quote from Nancy Astor, on her eightieth birthday in 1959. She said, 'I used to dread getting older,

because I thought I would not be able to do all the things I wanted to do. But now that I am older, I find I do not want to do them.' Time elongation occurs when a person adopts a perspective dramatically opposite to a 'just-in-time' orientation based on the proposition that saving the precious commodity of time is an important goal.

The prerequisite to entry into this mode is typically an event in life that provokes the search for purpose or calling. An event that precipitates a questioning of the meaning of life may develop into the discovery of one's purpose or calling. Too often, denial, repression, and avoidance replace the reflection and introspection needed for this discovery.

There are various sub-modes within the Development Mode. One is the search for personal integration. Another is probably the search for social integration, although the latter is questioned by women, who contend that their lives have been spent within the Performance Mode focused on the success and mastery of social responsibilities and expectations of others (that is, they were immersed in social connectedness). For them, the quest for autonomy (not merely rebellion or reaction formation to earlier roles and demands) may represent a sub-mode. It is possible, therefore, that sub-modes within the Development Mode may reflect different ways of being and knowing.

There are many examples of people in the Development Mode making choices about their careers that do not make sense to others. For example, when a successful executive decides to 'step off the ladder' of success and follow a different path, the media, people in the organization, and others often attribute the move to being removed from office or a terminal illness. Peter Lynch, formerly head of the Fidelity Magellan Fund, moved into philanthropic activities (Fierman 1990). Bill Phillips, former CEO of Ogilvy & Mather, moved on to pursue personal physical fitness and other hobbies. John Macomber, former CEO of Celanese, moved on to take a government position as head of the Export-Import bank; Andrall Pearson and Ralph Sorenson, former heads of Pepsico and Barry Wright respectively, moved on to teach at the Harvard Business School (Fromson 1990). The concept of executive 'sabbaticals' is becoming increasingly acceptable in some corporate circles as a vehicle for people to take a 'moratorium' from their current activities (Erikson 1985) and find or pursue a calling (Hong 1990). These people appear to have been in the Development Mode, and chosen to follow their 'calling, or purpose' in a way that clearly was not aimed at job mastery or success (the primary intent in the Performance Mode). The changes appear more dramatic than extending their abilities into new arenas to explore generalizability (the primary intent in the Learning Mode) (Knecht 1995; Stevens 1995).

Two examples of people in the Development Mode are Paolo and Sandy. Paolo is in his late 40s and is head of the research unit at an Italian biomedical engineering company. Although he has several advanced degrees (an MD and a Ph.D.), Paolo talks about his growth activities readily. He has

been reading philosophy. He began with the philosophy of science because he was intrigued with how scientists and engineers create meaning, and has expanded his quest into philosophy of knowledge, and even general philosophy. Paolo is a dedicated professional and executive, who reads and attends meetings to keep abreast of developments in his technical field and management, but his heart follows a different path. His pursuit of wisdom through the study of philosophy does not preclude his effectiveness in his current job. But his growth activities appear to be primarily in the Development Mode.

Sandy is in her early 50s and has retired from a career in teaching. She has devoted a great deal of time to learning about and understanding the aging process and the elderly. What began as an attempt to understand what was occurring to her parents, and herself (the emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual changes in herself), led to broader areas such as quality of life. She has chosen to attend a few seminars and has read several books, but mostly she has sought growth in these areas through volunteering in various 'elderly housing' and other related projects. When asked, Sandy will explain that it seems the best way for her to learn about the phenomena of aging, seek preparation for changes within herself and in her future, and contribute to addressing some social needs. The selection of activities has no connection to job mastery, or event-career transfer (Sandy having turned down the opportunity to study gerontology at the graduate level). It is a personal journey filled with the desire for self-insight, caring for others close to her (her parents), and others less fortunate (those without close family). She appears to be operating in the Development Mode.

### Postulates and questions

There are four major aspects of this theory that offer a different structure to growth and adaptation throughout life and careers from other theories. We can, at this time, offer two as postulates and the other two as questions, which we will propose as postulates still in the formative stage.

*Postulate 1. There are three modes describing a person's growth or adaptation in his or her career and life, as explained earlier.*

*Postulate 2. This is a recursive theory. People may enter the Performance Mode after having been in the Development Mode. This may be associated with a major life change, career change, new opportunity, or some other event. The Development Mode is not the 'most advanced' or 'best' mode. It does not represent the highest state of being, nor the most complex. Each mode is a different orientation to growth and adaptation. A person is expected to revisit, recycle, or 'loop' through these modes throughout life.*

*Question 1. We believe at any one point in a person's life or career, he or she will be predominantly in one mode. This mode will function as an umbrella. Once through the cycle, a person may have momentary, or episodic, excursions*

into the other modes for specific tasks or goals. For example, a person in the Learning Mode may want to develop skills in making oral presentations. She may place herself in the Performance Mode in seeking growth activities, feedback, and change specifically to improve her oral presentation skills (seeking job mastery or success), but then revert to her predominant mode, in this case the Learning Mode, to continue in her life and career. This also means that the preoccupation, focus, and motivating forces of one mode divert a person from the benefits of the forces and focus of the other modes. In this way, the limitations of each mode can be found in the description of the other two modes. A person in transition between two modes will demonstrate a mixture of the characteristics of both modes.

*Question 2. We believe that a person's dominant mode will affect his or her adaptation, growth, and excitement in both personal life and career. Similar to the umbrella notion described above, people will be approaching adaptation and growth in their lives with the same preoccupation, concerns, and perspectives as their careers, or vice versa. A person may function in multiple modes, but not seek adaptation, growth, or excitement in multiple modes at the same time. For example, a person may be in a job demanding the Performance Mode, but be in the Development Mode in other aspects of life. The job will either be refined and redesigned to suit his or her interests or he or she will decrease the amount of energy and discretionary effort utilized; work; such a person will not engage in adaptive or growth activities to see mastery!*

People will seek those reference groups, communities (Chapter 5), social architecture (Chapter 11) that value the same incentives and focus in life and/or work as they do in their current mode. People in transition to another mode will find their reference groups, communities, or the social architecture of their organizations decreasingly exciting. Conscious recognition of this change will probably follow a prolonged period of emotional, unconscious arousal of the conflicted feelings.

People's dominant mode is independent of their personal level of initiative or efficacy. People may take action to engage in activities, even grow activities in any of the modes. The basic question that allows insight in the mode is not the choice of activity but what people are doing with the experience. What does the experience and activity mean to them? The intensity and source of excitement about the experience will reveal that an activity could be used by people in each of the three modes.

Identification of a person's 'dominant mode' relies upon understanding the person's focus of attention. It involves investment of energy into activity with an intention characteristic of predominantly one mode. The dominant mode is *not* reflected in the time a person spends in one activity or another. For example, a person may spend most of his or her working hours in the Performance Mode, but find energy, excitement, and growth in pursuit of novelty and experimentation (that is, in the Learning Mode). Although believe a person is 'in' one, dominant mode, the anomalies or aberrations



from what is expected in that mode may shed light on an emerging mode (a new focus of attention). Of course, it could also reveal a dissatisfaction or psychic disruption with the person's current job or activities in life.

### Applications and Implications for Lifelong Growth

There are many levels of implications for this theory. Each has its own applications for education and human resource development. One level concerns ideas for helping individuals grow and adapt throughout their careers and life. Another level addresses the potential conflicts between an individual in each of these modes and the organization in which he or she is currently studying or working (or the organizations through which he or she is pursuing a 'boundaryless career'). The third level of implication concerns human resource management (HRM) and development systems, and their design and use in organizations.

#### Helping individuals grow and adapt

Individuals' desire to continue their growth and adaptation emerges for several reasons. Some people may not be using competencies they possess, and, therefore, are not using their full resources or talent. Some people may be losing interest, vitality, productivity, commitment, or innovativeness, and there is a desire to stimulate or provoke them into regaining the excitement they once showed. Some people may not have certain competencies important for their current job, and there is the desire to help them find a path for the development of these competencies.

The ultimate reason may be conceptual or philosophical—that is, a belief that people *must* continue to grow throughout life or they atrophy. Like unused muscles losing strength, elasticity, and eventually tissue, unused capability eventually extinguishes itself. Unused or lost emotional, intellectual, or spiritual excitement eventually leads to boredom, apathy, or disconnectedness—anomie. Stimulation of lifelong growth does not assume that people should be 'moving into the next mode'. Such thinking reveals an underlying hierarchical concept (some modes are seen as better than other modes) and will nullify the benefits of using this theory.

If a person is in the Performance Mode, the appeal to stimulate growth and adaptation activities would be to his or her desire for success or mastery, as shown in Table 4.2. Publicly, the appeal would be made in terms of increased personal, job, or organizational performance and success. The best developmental opportunities would be those projects or jobs where there was a maximum 'fit' or harmony between the skills needed to maximize success in the job and the individual's skills.

Table 4.2. Growth activities appropriate for each mode

Themes	Performance Mode	Learning Mode	Development Mode
Effective appeal	Success or mastery	Experimentation	Listen to your inner voice; back to basics
Legitimate public appeal	Improve personal, job, or organizational performance	Personal or organizational innovation	Contribute to and arouse nobility of human spirit; appeal to greatness
Assessment feedback	With normative standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where am I with regard to others?</li> <li>• Where should I be?</li> <li>• How do superior performers act?</li> </ul>	Self-referent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where are my flat sides?</li> <li>• What do I do often?</li> <li>• What do I do seldom?</li> </ul>	Stimulation to awareness
Outcome orientation	Provides goals	Provides benchmarks	Not applicable
Major frustrations with activities in a different mode	Lack of relevance	Boring	Trivial pursuit
Best change activities	Practice through iteration	Experimentation with new ideas, acts, and styles	Legitimizing exploration of personal agenda
Setting of change activities	a) Place to practice b) Place to apply it on the job	Place to explore and experiment	a) Begin out of usual context b) Continue in context
Best developmental opportunities	Job/person 'fit' with regard to skills needed to maximize success	Job with some 'fit' but sufficient lack of 'fit' to provide opportunity for expansion	Job with 'fit' in terms of calling, purpose, values, and traits

An outcome orientation to the activities helps by providing goals for the effort. The best type of activities involve practice through iteration. Whenever possible, assessment feedback should be provided with normative standards. That is, the person receiving the feedback will want to know: Where am I with regard to others? Where should I be? Where do I stand with regard to superior performers or excellent companies? It is the comparison to normative information that provides some of the energy and drive to pursue the growth activities. The best settings for these change activities should first be a place to practice outside the consequences to his or her job and organization. Then, the person should be encouraged to practice the activities on the job, or within the organization.

The major frustration voiced by people in the Performance Mode when engaged in activities presented from the Learning or Development mode perspective (that is, appealing to people in the Learning or Development Modes) is the 'lack of relevance'. For example, senior faculty in a graduate management program in a university often get into disputes with students, who are typically in their twenties and have interrupted their early career to return to school. When students claim the material or perspective is not relevant, they want the faculty member to work on concepts and use materials more relevant to their potential job and organizational setting. They ask faculty, 'How will this help me get a job or do it well once obtained?' The faculty member's response might be a condemnation of their class, pragmatic, utilitarian orientation. The faculty might be heard to say, 'How can you be so preoccupied with jobs and success when you have the opportunity to explore, learn, and question the philosophical roots of our society?' In such a situation, it is likely that the faculty member is in the Learning or Development Mode, and is presenting material and using teaching methods appropriate to that mode. Meanwhile, the students' comments suggest that they are in the Performance Mode. The issue of lack of relevance is true—but not in the way either is saying or hearing it. The students and faculty are missing each other's mode and, therefore, *the experience is not relevant*.

If a person is in the Learning Mode, the appeal to stimulate growth and adaptation activities would be to his or her desire for experimentation and novelty, as shown in Table 4.2. Publicly, the appeal would be made in terms of increased personal, job, or organizational innovation or change. The best developmental opportunities would be those projects or jobs where there is some 'fit' or harmony between the knowledge, skills, and experience needed for effectiveness in the job and the individual. But there should be sufficient 'lack of fit' or lack of harmony to provide opportunity for expansion into new arenas and what the person would view as their 'flat sides'.

An outcome orientation to the activities helps by providing benchmarks against which to mark movement or change. The best types of activities include: (a) experimentation with new ideas, behaviors, and styles; and (b) transfer of skills to new settings. Whenever possible, assessment feedback should be provided in a self-referent format. That is, the person receiving the

feedback will want to know: Where are my strengths and weaknesses relative to each other? What do I do most often? What do I do seldom? Does it matter to me? It is the comparison within the self that provides some of the energy and drive to pursue the growth activities. The best setting for these change activities should be a place to explore and experiment.

The major frustration voiced by people in the Learning Mode when engaged in activities presented from the Performance or Development mode perspective is, 'This is boring!' For example, people who do not demonstrate certain specific job-related skills, such as planning, are often sent on a training program. The objective is to help them improve their performance by using the target skill more frequently once back on the job. The most common criticism of management training workshops is that the targeted behaviors or skills are seldom applied once the participant returns to work. The response to this observation has been to develop even more training programs, often called reinforcement sessions, to help the person remember the skill and support its use. But if the participant is in the Learning Mode, and he has used his planning skill throughout his career, the excitement and commitment to use this skill are absent. The training program, emphasizing improved efficiency and effectiveness in the job, is playing a song to someone who is listening to a different rhythm. Such people will not demonstrate more planning at work because they are bored with planning and its consequences. Additional training, performance feedback about lack of its use, and reinforcement sessions become nagging reminders of why they are not feeling excited about their current job.

If a person is in the Development Mode, the appeal to stimulate growth and adaptation activities would be to ask a person to listen to his or her inner voice, a form of personal 'back to basics', as shown in Table 4.2. Publicly, the appeal could be made in terms of a contribution to and arousal of the nobility of the human spirit, an appeal to greatness. The best developmental opportunities would be those projects or jobs where there is a maximum 'fit' or harmony between the person's calling, sense of purpose, values, and traits (not necessarily skills) and the needs and opportunities of the project or job. An outcome orientation to the activities is not useful or even appropriate.

The best types of activities include: (a) activities legitimizing exploration of personal agendas; and (b) activities that provide time, space, and catalysts for reflection. Whenever possible, assessment feedback should be used as a stimulation to awareness, and not as a source of information to shape change goals oriented at reducing the real-ideal discrepancy. It is the comparison of current thoughts, behavior, feelings, and so forth to the inner voice, purpose, and calling that provides some of the energy and drive to pursue the growth activities. These change activities should best begin out of the context of usual cues (that is, away from work and home), and then move into the work and home setting to continue the growth in a holistic manner.

The major frustration voiced by people in the Development Mode when engaged in activities presented from the Performance or Learning mode

perspective is, "This is a trivial pursuit!" The previous example of a manager sent to a management training program and not applying the material back on the job is even more dramatic when the participant is in the Development Mode and the training is delivered in the Performance Mode, with behavioral objectives, performance-oriented feedback, and the like.

### Addressing individual and organization conflict

Conflicts may arise when the organization has developed a culture (a belief system, norms, and values) predominantly characteristic of one mode and a person is in another mode. In such a situation, the people around this individual expect and need him or her to be functioning in another mode than the one that is natural. For example, a professional may be in the Learning Mode, but the organization is in the Performance Mode, and wants her to be in the Performance Mode as well. In this situation, she can keep her excitement to herself, following the separation of internal sensations and thoughts and those revealed to others characteristic of the Japanese concept of public thoughts and private thoughts. In time, she will seek opportunities for growth and adaptation outside the work organization. When a person is shifting modes, and his or her organization has not changed its culture and climate, the person's evolving change may be relatively unnoticeable to others in the organization. As the person's interests are changing, he or she will often attempt to change jobs or priorities, redesign the job, or shift the use of his or her talent to more satisfying opportunities outside the work organization. This may result in a shift in reference groups and communities of interest (Chapter 5). This is similar to a change in the type of community, or social architecture, which would be desired by the person as described by Goffee and Jones (Chapter 11). Using their terms, a person may have been excited and a high performer while in the Performance Mode in a *mercenary* organization. As the person shifts into a Learning Mode, he or she may seek the flexibility of a *fragmented* or *networked* organization to allow the freedom of experimentation. If the primary work organization does not shift, which it often does not, then the person devotes increasing energy and attention to another organization offering the appropriate social architecture (which may be a work organization or not).

A method to avoid such a waste of human resources would be for organizations, including educational institutions, to create opportunities for people to discover their current mode. Then the organization can structure or provide a variety of choices to the individual from which he or she can choose appropriate growth activities.

This may be complicated by the observation that even within organizations, the culture or atmosphere of specific functions may have a bias toward particular modes. For example, in many organizations the sales and marketing function may have a bias toward the Performance Mode; the information

systems and technology function may have a bias toward the Learning Mode; and the HRM function may have a bias toward the Development Mode.

### Implications for education and human resource development

The major implication of this theory for education and human resource development is a challenge to drop simplistic notions of 'a competency', and build a complex map of types of competencies or abilities. The different types of competencies that are of most interest to a person in each of the growth modes are related to stimulation, growth, and adaptation, as well as to the mode itself. The conceptual maps, guides, or desired outcomes provided by competency models must, therefore, incorporate all of these types of characteristics.

Another challenge to education and human resource development is to drop the job mastery and Performance Mode as the universal goal. If we accept people, knowing the diversity within the workforce, we will undertake to stimulate growth activities for people in whatever mode they currently find themselves.

In designing education or training programs, analysis of the dominant mode of the students or participants will assist in the construction of courses. Often, with mixed mode groups, universities and organizations will be forced to drop universal behavioral objectives and 'single' structure courses. New designs with variation in appeal, methods, and expectations should emerge. Graduate education and lifelong learning programs can be designed with this desired pluralism, addressing the structure and process of the learning experiences to suit the needs and interests of people in each mode (Boyatzis *et al.* 1995; Boyatzis and Kram, in press).

Lastly, hierarchical, or even time-based models of development do not appear to be as valuable guides as they may have been in the past for understanding and stimulating growth in careers. Organizations and managers must develop perspectives and theories of lifelong growth and adaptation reflecting different notions of development.

### Concluding Comment

Growth and adaptation begin within the person. He or she must choose to grow. Therefore, efforts to 'help' people grow and adapt must begin with recognition, appreciation, and acceptance of their individuality. The mode of growth is but one of many aspects of a person's uniqueness. Integration of this perspective and related methods will allow people to grow in their own way, and not oppress the human spirit with one 'best' or prescribed path.

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## 5

## Careers, Organizing, and Community

Polly Parker and Michael B. Arthur

In Fritjof Capra's book *The Web of Life* (1996) there is an illustration. On the left-hand side of the illustration are several circles, meant to represent life's phenomena as we usually understand them. The phenomena may be any commonly recognized units: parts of the human anatomy, collectives of people, members of other biological species, rivers, forests, oceans, and so on. From each circle, and connecting it to other circles, flow multiple lines. The representation concurs with how we usually think in social science, in viewing the world as relationships among similar phenomena or units of analysis. For instance, individuals, groups, social classes, institutions, governments, countries, and—not least—private or public companies, are popular units of analysis in psychology, social psychology, sociology, political science, economics, and organizational and management science.

On the right side of the illustration the circles are shown more faintly, and their boundaries are crossed by the connecting lines. The lines join together at common points, or nodes, within each circle, so that the new representation appears as a network of internal nodes rather than a network of larger units. The emphasis is now on what Capra (1996: 37) calls the underlying 'web of relationships' through which more traditional units or levels of analysis may appear or reappear. The second side of the illustration, entitled 'figure-ground shift', challenges much of what we have customarily assumed about social science.

Works like Capra's reflect the shift from 'old' to 'new' frameworks being adopted in the natural sciences. Moreover, such new-science approaches (Wheatley 1992) are being increasingly found in the management and

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