

LOOKING AT AND LOOKING AS THE CLIENT

The Quadrants as a Type Structure Lens

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ABSTRACT This article provides a more complete examination of one of the six AQAL lenses used by Integral Coaching Canada. The four-quadrants model is advanced in its usage as a type structure lens that enables a deeper understanding of the perceptual maps of coaching clients. The type structure goes beyond giving Integral Coaches™ obvious access to the competencies of a client using the four quadrants (Looking AT a client) to enabling understanding of the internal orientation and translation structure of each client (Looking AS a client). Using the four quadrants as a type structure lens provides powerful translation language for each of us. You will find yourself and your “orienting quadrant” in this article, and, if you also hold a significant other in your awareness as you read, you will locate sources for some of the differences and similarities that you have experienced in relation to one another.

Key words: AQAL; four quadrants; integral coaching; perspectives; typologies

Joanne Hunt’s “Introduction to Integral Coaching®” article (pp. 1-20 in this issue) provided an overview of Integral Coaching Canada’s developmental approach. This approach works with individuals so that their current way of holding self, others, and things expands to transcend and include into a new way of being. In addition, this approach is successful in developing the competencies necessary for clients to have the skillful means to effectively manifest and live from and through this expanded self. This article examines one of the lenses that we use in our client work while also providing a foundation for understanding how we have adapted integral models for coaching. We delve more fully into the Integral Coaching® process in the “Transformational Conversations” article (pp. 69-92 in this issue).

Further illuminated in this article are relevant coach development skills, which are examined through one of the six lenses that Integral Coaching Canada uses in understanding a client’s AQAL Constellation™: the four quadrants. Although we work with the four-quadrants lens in multiple ways, this article focuses on what Joanne Hunt and I have discovered about its subtler contributions. As we deeply utilized the four quadrants with our clients and students over time, we realized that it had face validity as a type structure lens (i.e., in the same way we use the gender or the Enneagram as type structure lenses). Furthermore, this discovery is a unique contribution to integral theory, emerging out of our work with coaching students and clients using the AQAL model.

As will be more deeply examined in subsequent articles in this issue, Integral Coaches™ need to perceive clients in two ways simultaneously. The first is to Look AT the client in the context of their coaching topic to discern what skill sets are needed based upon what is present and lacking. The second is to Look AS the

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client, which involves being able to look through their eyes, from their body-mind-soul in order to get a sense of their unique way of seeing and relating to their topic. This process of Looking AS is a powerful practice of embodied perspective taking. Being able to Look AT and Look AS clients, to see, understand, and appreciate them in their topic from different perspectives and to help them broaden their seeing, is only the starting point in our approach. The coach then needs to work skillfully with a client to develop and embody the competencies needed to actually inhabit and manifest this expanded view of self, others, and the world. It is our opinion that nothing has fundamentally changed until clients not only see and relate in an expanded way, but are also able to capably move through their day-to-day world in ways that express and manifest the intentions and perspectives of their new expanded self.

Conversely, if a coaching approach only focused on developing new competencies without enabling clients to awaken to their way of seeing and relating to their coaching topic, the new competencies would sit in their longstanding and (generally) unconscious interpretive lens. As described by Ken Wilber in *Integral Spirituality* (2006), “A person will interpret a particular state or experience according to the entire AQAL matrix operative at that time. As always, interpretation is an AQAL affair” (p. 94). Hence, even though the ability to Look AS and Look AT clients is one of many skills Integral Coaches™ must embody in order to understand how their clients bring about and sustain change, it is also essential and sets the context for the other elements of our Integral Coaching® approach.

One of the powerful contributions of the integral model is that it provides a map that challenges us to see beyond our own unconscious maps that are likely partial. This AQAL map also gives us a way to hold, appreciate, and understand, as it facilitates Looking AT the territory as well as being able to step into and actually travel in the territory (Looking AS). Our Integral Coaching® approach situates the integral model in the context of working with individuals in an integrative (horizontal) developmental (vertical) capacity (Wilber, 2000, p. 152). The backbone to our approach is working with a client’s AQAL Constellation™, a unique profile that gives rise to a client’s own way of interpreting and living day to day. In Integral Coaching Canada’s method, this AQAL Constellation™ consists of using the following lenses: four quadrants, levels of consciousness, lines of development, states of consciousness, and types (Enneagram and gender). While this article focuses on the four quadrants, the other lenses are discussed in “A Unique View Into You” (pp. 41-67 in this issue).

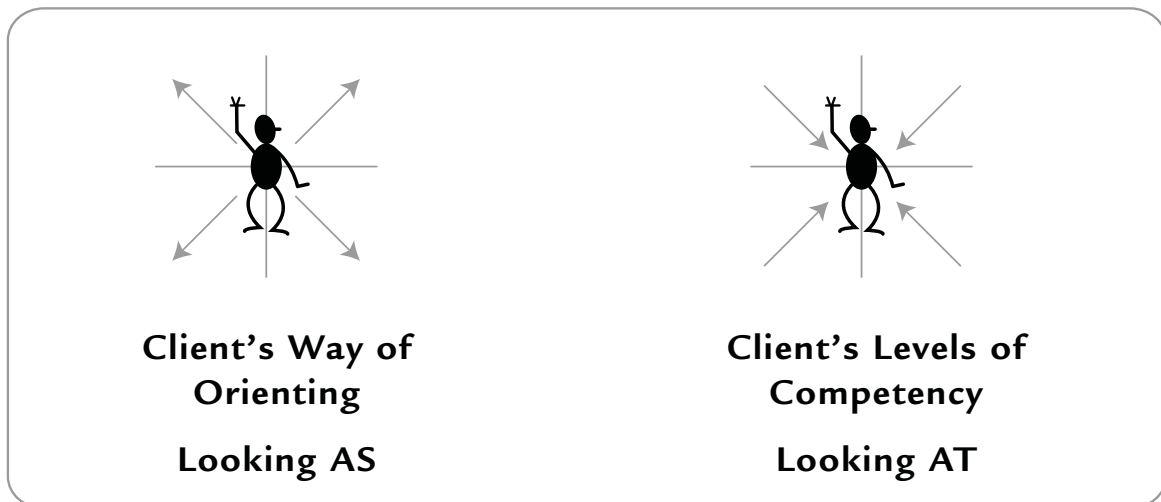


Figure 1. Looking AS and Looking AT.

By using these lenses to Look AT the client and Look AS the client, the coach can be guided by an integral map that goes far beyond the unique AQAL Constellation™ of the coach. Thus, Integral Coaches™ are able to truly serve their clients—meeting them directly in their world, their landscape, their joy and pain, their skillful and unskillful domains—in support of what they so deeply desire to change or realize.

Discussed in this article is the evolution of our learning as we worked with the quadrants lens. Initially, Joanne and I utilized the way of Looking AT clients to understand their competency levels in each quadrant, as well as the quadrants they tended to emphasize or privilege (Fig. 1). Eventually, we incorporated the way of Looking AS the client, endeavoring, as best as an “other” can, to deeply understand the view from which the client sees, acts, speaks, and looks for results or consequences.

Working directly with individuals in a transformative context for over a decade enabled us to contextualize this lens to include Looking AS, as we discerned that people have a distinct quadrant from which their “view” originates or orients. In addition, their ability to view the other quadrants is translated through this orienting quadrant or perspective. In other words, people seem to have an orienting quadrant through which the other quadrants are seen and assessed, and this orienting quadrant remains consistently present regardless of their horizontal or vertical development. Moreover, four different people who share the same altitude (e.g., orange) can have four different quadrants from which they orient and through which they translate the other three. This particular way of using the four quadrants lens most strongly resembles a type lens, as it identifies “different types of orientations possible at each of the various levels” (Wilber, 2000, p. 53). Furthermore, the same Enneagram type may have different quadrant orientations. Hence, the quadrant orientations cannot be reduced to an aspect of another lens.¹

Following is a brief introduction to the quadrants lens and then a walk-through of its evolution in our work. I start with Looking AT competencies, both what is needed in the coaching topic and the client’s current levels, then move to Looking AT a client’s preferred quadrants, and then finally to using the quadrants lens as a type

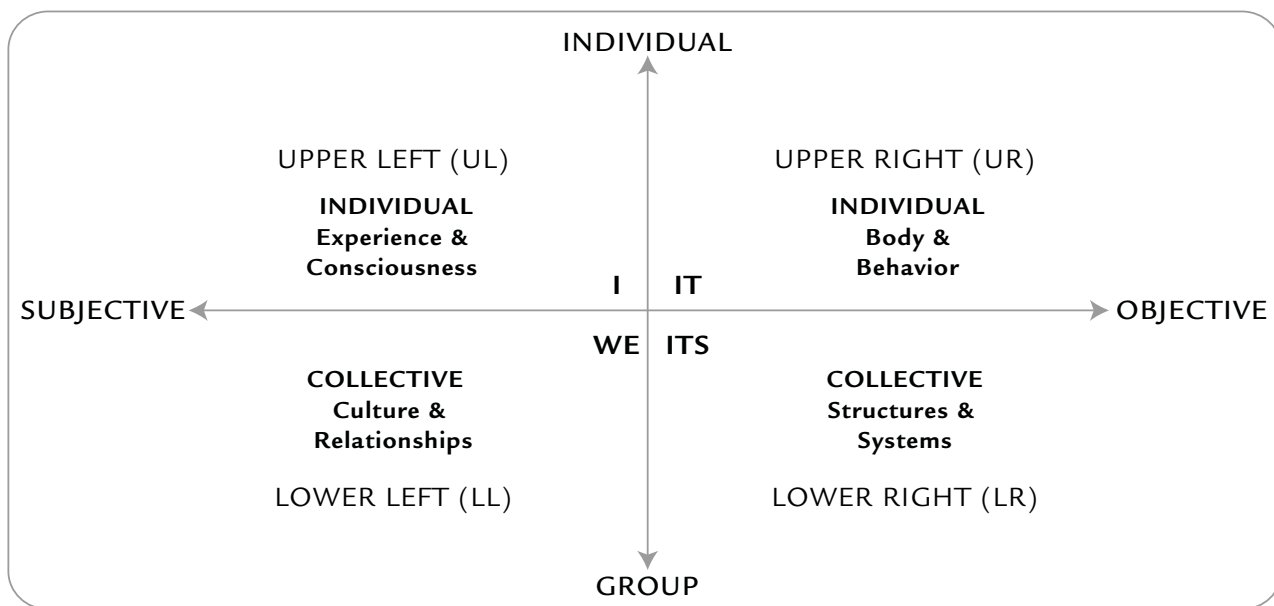


Figure 2. The four quadrants.

structure when Looking AS the client, their way of orienting, and their way of translating other quadrants through their orienting one. Client and coach examples, along with a scenario where four people attend their first meeting as a newly formed project team, help illuminate this evolution. The article then discusses the linkages between quadrants and quadrivia (see Wilber, 2006, pp. 253-255), our use of Looking AT and Looking AS, and concludes with a discussion of what is required in an Integral Coach™ to be able to skillfully use the quadrants lens in their work with their clients.

Four Quadrants Lens

Simply stated, the four quadrants lens depicts the perspectives of first-person, second-person, and third-person realities. As described in *A Theory of Everything*, “the Upper-Left quadrant involves ‘I-language’ (or first-person accounts); the Lower-Left quadrant involves ‘we-language’ (for second-person accounts); and both Right-Hand quadrants, since they are objective patterns, involve ‘it-language’ (or third-person accounts)” (Wilber, 2000, p. 52). Figure 2 provides a simplistic or rudimentary view of the four quadrants.

The four quadrants show the “**I**” (the *inside of the individual*), the “**it**” (the *outside of the individual*), the “**we**” (the *inside of the collective*), and “**its**” (the *outside of the collective*). In other words, the four quadrants—which are the four fundamental perspectives on any occasion—turn out to be fairly simple: they are the **inside** and the **outside** of the **individual** and the **collective**. [emphasis in original] (Wilber, 1999, pp. 129-131)

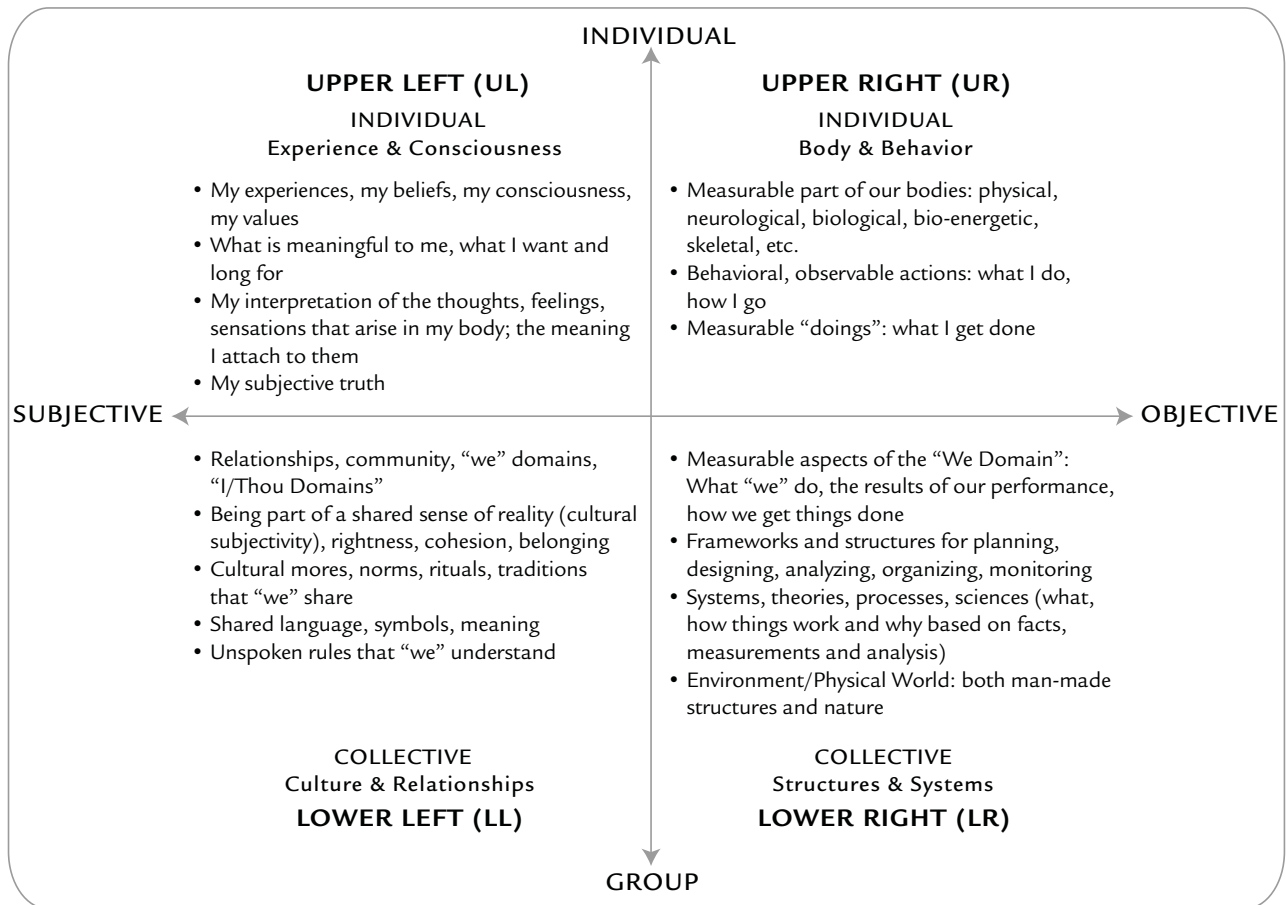


Figure 3. Descriptions of each quadrant.

Figure 3 provides a further detail of the distinct aspects of each quadrant, which we introduce to coaches as they begin learning about integral theory. The Upper-Left quadrant (UL) focuses on an individual’s interior experience and consciousness: what is meaningful to me, my beliefs, my experience and interpretation of sensations, my intentions, and my subjective truth. The Upper-Right quadrant (UR) focuses on the individual’s body and behavior: what is observable or measurable phenomena, my actions and words, as well as the quantities of energy available. The Lower-Left quadrant (LL) focuses on group culture and relationships: the meaning and resonance shared between us and the cultural norms that we share, including explicit and implicit rules. Finally, the Lower-Right quadrant (LR) focuses on the structures and systems of the collective: systems, processes, and structures that enable such things as measurement, analysis, explanation, information, and performance.

The Evolution of Our Use of the Quadrants Lens

Looking AT—Competencies

We began using the four quadrants in the way that it is most commonly employed in coaching—primarily as a Looking AT functionality. Specifically, we Looked AT a client’s coaching topic to discern what types of competencies the client needed in specific quadrants to become more effective in that topic. We also Looked AT the client to assess current skill levels in those competencies. This understanding revealed where clients needed further development such that they could realize topics that deeply mattered to them at that moment. While Looking AT the quadrants is helpful in discerning what is here, what is missing, and what needs to be addressed, it does not afford coaches access to the client’s way of orienting, seeing, and relating to, and thereby acting on, the topic at hand. Therefore, Looking AT is a great tool to assess what clients can and cannot do in the context of what will help them to move forward, including what they will need to build to support a new future.

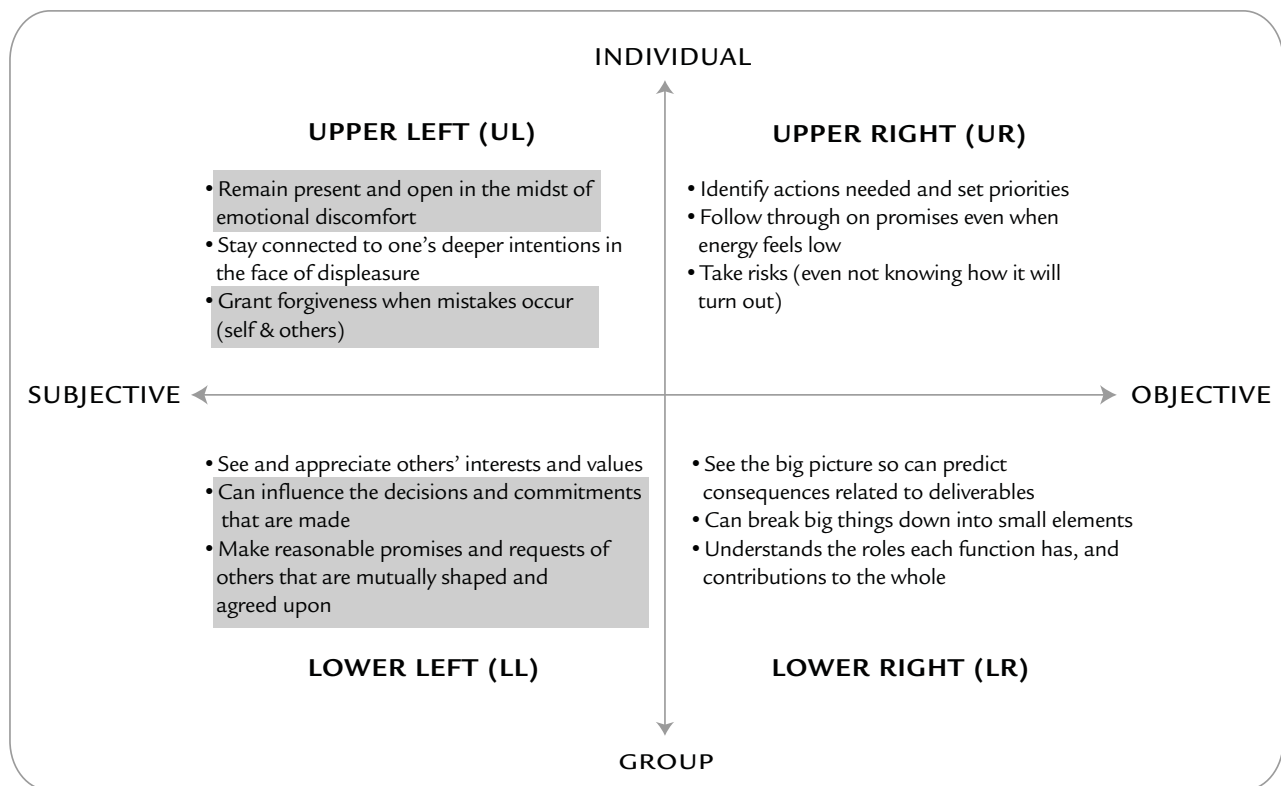


Figure 4. Assessment of competencies.

Above is a brief illustration of this way of working with the quadrants. In this example, a client wanted to be able to meet time commitments rather than procrastinate because he felt “allergic to administrative stuff.” This “allergy” led him to wait to the last minute to complete tasks at hand. Figure 4 maps the key competencies needed to be effective in this coaching topic across the quadrants. The competencies shaded in grey are the ones where the client’s competency level was low and needed to be addressed through coaching.

The use of the quadrants lens in this way provides a map and guidance for the client’s need to address the subjective quadrants in his development focus. Using the four quadrants in this way (i.e., Looking AT) ensures that balanced development is achieved in all four quadrants. Balanced growth positively impacts the client’s ability to more reliably deliver on the commitments he makes. It also leverages what is already strong and develops what is missing so that the client is able to meet a given situation and respond in a way that skillfully draws upon the capabilities representing all four quadrants (see Wilber, 1999, pp. 129-131).

Looking AT—Preferred Quadrants

Over time we also noticed that something more was at play. In addition to perceiving clients as having developed certain skills over others and performing more effectively in certain quadrants but not others, we observed an intriguing pattern. Clients seemed to privilege particular quadrants in their actions and attention. When asked how they historically approached the challenges of their coaching topic, they used language that indicated they acted and behaved within one or two quadrants, while efforts and actions in the other quadrants were noticeably absent or minimal. Thus, their patterned way of acting to resolve something indicated a quadrant preference. If we take the example above, this client most privileged the LR quadrant. In his view, the solution to his challenge was to change the system, particularly to change administrative processes and requirements. Hence, he spent his time trying to figure out how the system needed to be modified. While continuing to Look AT clients, we added this dimension to help us appreciate the biases clients have and to guide us in developing the means to help them change. Our work definitely provided a great deal of “on the street” evidence that sustained change was indeed challenging if one or two quadrants were “hemorrhaging.”

This particular way of Looking AT clients informed how we worked with them, especially as they explored their non-preferred quadrants. It also enabled us to anticipate where resistance would arise. Having preferred quadrants is not new news—we all have them. However, we observed something different taking place.

Looking AS—Way of Orienting

As we worked with Looking AT the client to understand their preferred quadrants, we began exploring what happens when we took on the view or perspective that the client prefers. We wanted to see the topic from their perspective, what the landscape looked like from inside the client. By asking, “what is available to the client’s view from this perspective, and what is not?” we endeavored to Look AS the client. The more we worked with Looking AS to better discern clients’ preferred perspectives, we noticed that people tended to speak from the position or perspective of a particular quadrant, regardless of the specific quadrant domain we were exploring. The clients’ language and focus corresponded with their framing of or relating to their topic in a particular way. We saw patterns of behavior and language that reflected this dominant quadrant perspective and focus as if it were “home base,” a place from which clients would venture out to engage with the realities associated with the other quadrants.

In other words, we found that people have a particular perspective (UL, UR, LL, or LR) from which they orient or situate themselves. Each perspective (quadrant) has a distinct view, and that distinct way of seeing and perceiving is based upon the parameters or characteristics of that quadrant. This orienting quadrant guides a

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person’s way of relating, behaving, and checking to know how things are going. It is the first perspective a person instinctively takes, goes to, or looks through to get situated, make sense of circumstances, or experience and guide conclusions as well as actions. Figure 5 provides the orienting views of each quadrant, including how a person who orients from a particular quadrant would see and relate to reality.

Figure 5 demonstrates that clients orienting primarily from the UL get situated by accessing their inner sense of meaning and value. Their core compass is their inner knowing, experience, and criteria for meaning. Similarly, the core compass of clients who primarily orient from the UR also involves self-referencing. However, an UR orientation is more objective and tangible. It involves tuning into and being led by action, movement, energy, and task completion. Persons who primarily orient from the LL situate themselves by accessing the shared meaning and values held by a group or collective. This shared resonance and understanding is their core compass. The person who orients from the LR also has a way of orienting from the perspective of the collective/group rather than that of the individual. Nonetheless, as with an UR orientation, the LR compass is more objective than those found in the more subjective UL and LL quadrants. The core compass for a person orienting from the LR is being able to see the system as a whole and how things are situated or fit together.

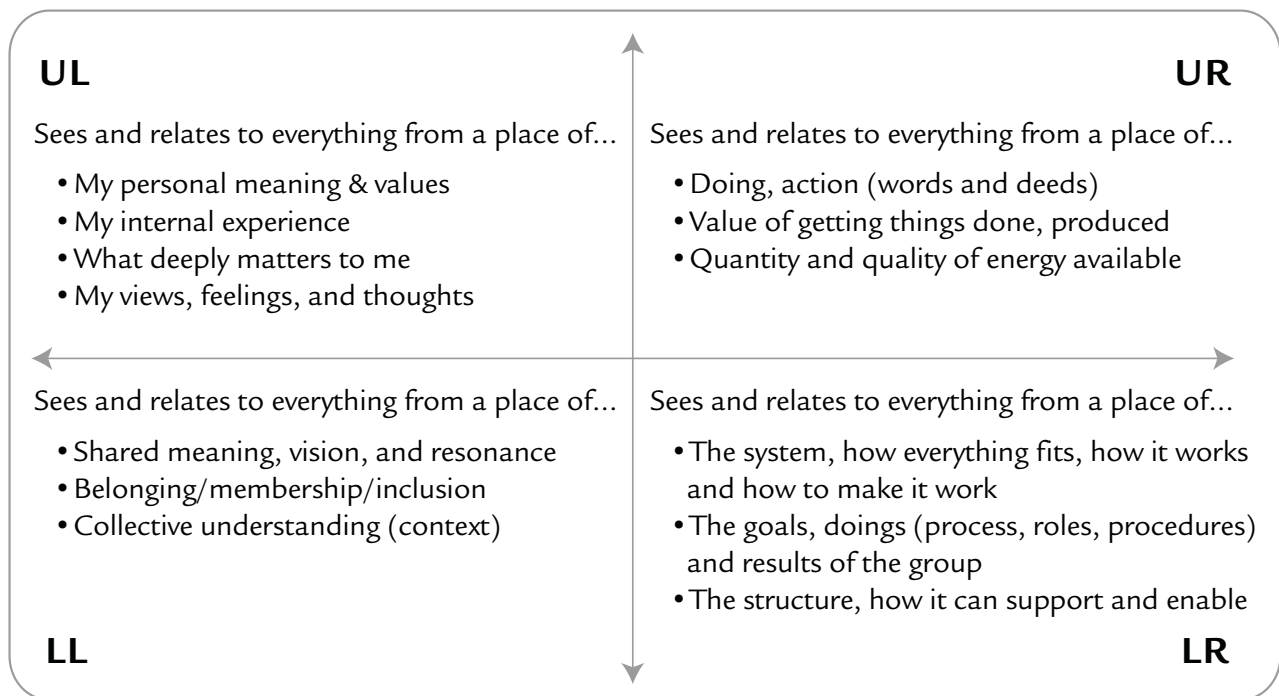


Figure 5. Ways of orienting—the view from each quadrant.

The language a person uses gives clues as to the quadrant from which a person orients. Language is a reflection of the way a person sees and relates to self, others, and the world. Thus, coaches can discern a client’s quadrant orientation by listening to the focus, perspective, and emphasis of the language they use. The examples below further illustrate this point.

In the following scenario, a group of four people have been asked to work together on a project, and it is their first team meeting. Each starts by saying a few words about being a member of the team and working on their shared project. Here are their opening comments:

Person orienting from the UL

“I am very excited to be working on this project, as there is an opportunity to create something of real value. What matters most to me in working on this, and any other project for that matter, is that what gets created is both elegant and functional.”

Person orienting from the UR

“I am really energized to be part of such a challenging project. So much to do and so little time! I say let’s jump right in and figure out what needs to get done, and then get going. I’m willing to create our list of actions.”

Person orienting from the LL

“We all come from such diverse backgrounds and talents, and I can see why the four of us were selected for this project. It will be really important for us to be sure that we have a shared understanding of our mandate up front so that we are all on the same page going forward.”

Person orienting from the LR

“While the timeframe we have to complete this project is tight, what we will be producing could radically impact our core business infrastructure for the better. It all depends upon how well we understand the strengths and weakness of our current system before we create something new.”

These could be typical opening comments of four people in a meeting. Each is a valid and distinct expression with an attention and attenuation that reflects the quadrant from which each member orients. This orienting quadrant is the lens or filter through which each of these people sees. When they opened the meeting by saying a few words, each person went to the first place they typically go to get situated and discern what to say. The person who orients from the LR tunes into and relates to the meeting from the perspective of objective systems, structures, and processes. The person who orients from the UR also has a tone of tangibility and concreteness. The difference is that the person who orients from the UR is more tuned into the specific actions that need to be taken rather than to the overall system and how everything fits. Both the people orienting from the LR and LL get situated by tuning into the group rather than to the individual. The person orienting from the LL, however, is tuned more to the intersubjective, shared meaning aspects of the group rather than to the objective systems, structures, and process aspects of the LR. As with the person orienting from the LL, the person orienting from the UL is also tuned into meaning and values, yet it is his or her own meaning and values that take precedence. While this example demonstrates what four people with different quadrant orientations would say in a meeting, the quadrant from which a person orients is the view they rest in and see from day to day, moment to moment. It is how they relate to self, others, and things—indeed, to everything.

Looking AS—Ways of Translating

Not only did we find that individuals have a quadrant through which they primarily orient, we also found that their way of orienting serves as a lens or filter through which they relate to the content or perspectives of the other three quadrants, thereby turning the quadrants lens, for this application, into a type lens. In other words, the perspective of the quadrant *from which* individuals orient becomes the translating quadrant *through which* they make meaning (see Wilber, 1981, pp. 77-78). A person who primarily orients from the UL is going to see and relate to the other three quadrants through the perspective of the UL. A person who primarily orients from the LR is going to see and relate to the UL, UR, and LL through the perspective of the LR. The degree

to which a situation or experience evokes resonance with a person’s orienting quadrant’s perspectives directly influences their perception of the experience, conclusions that are drawn, and actions that are taken.

In the example of the four people in a meeting, as each person spoke, the other three listened through the filter of their orienting quadrant. The person orienting from the UL heard what the person orienting from the UR said through an UL lens of meaning and purpose. If the person orienting from the UL cannot find any personal meaning in the words “. . . jump right in, and figure out what needs to get done,” he or she may be significantly less interested in what the person orienting from the UR is saying. If the person orienting from the LL cannot find shared meaning and resonance in what the person orienting from the UR is saying, then he or she, too, is not interested. The person orienting from the LR would probably not go along with the words of the person orienting from the UR because he or she cannot detect signs of a systematic approach when jumping straight into action. The team is already set to face some interesting challenges!

Four Ways of Orienting and Translating

This section further clarifies the scenario of the four people in a meeting and shows how each person translates the other three quadrants. Included are four figures that provide a general description of each orienting quadrant’s way of translating. Although we can all take the perspectives of others quadrants, we see, act, and check through our own orienting quadrant. This orienting function significantly colors how each person takes the perspective of the other quadrants. For each of the orienting quadrants (UL, UR, LL, and LR) below, we have provided two items, a figure and a related table. The figure is a four-quadrants diagram providing the view from one meeting member’s specific orienting quadrant and the questions or comments you might hear as he or she journeys into the other quadrants. Notice how each orienting filter translates the language and focus of the member’s questions and comments. The table that follows each figure consists of this same member’s internal assessments or observations as he or she listened to the others speak from their own orienting-quadrant

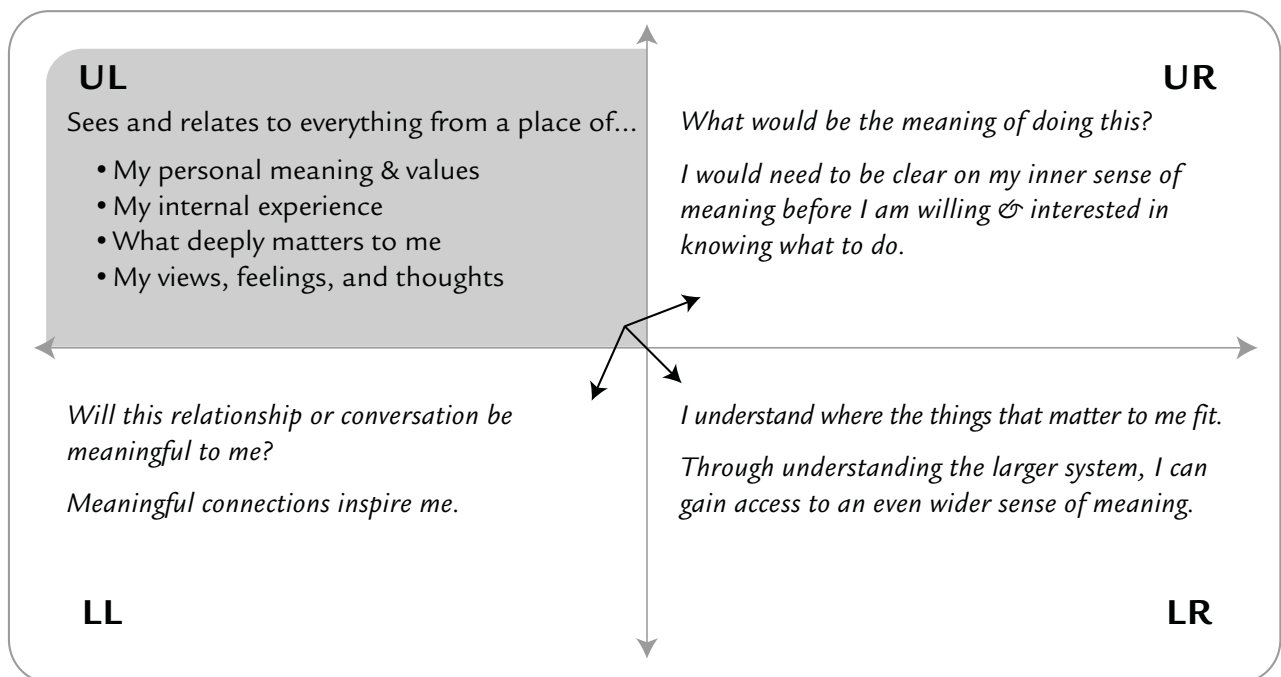


Figure 6. The view and translations from the Upper Left.

perspective. These internal (and usually very private) voices are presented with some humor, but truth may be found in them as well.

As depicted in the shaded box (Fig. 6), a person orienting from the UL listens for language that would resonate with the perspectives inherent in his or her orienting quadrant: personal meaning and values, what deeply matters, and the value and guidance of one’s own thoughts, feelings, and experiences. When the other members voice their perspectives from the other three quadrants, this UL-orienting person actually relates to these expressions through his or her UL perspective. A key criterion of the UL translation is that the person can find relevant personal meaning in what is being expressed. If that is not found, a person orienting from the UL may not be interested and will disengage or disregard what is said. It is when this resonance occurs that a person orienting from the UL experiences value and is most probably drawn to engage. His or her questions differ in each quadrant from those that might be posed by the members who orient from the UR, LL, and LR, respectively. Not only do this member’s observations and comments differ, but so do his or her assessments of perceived value.

Referring to the meeting example, Table 1 indicates how a person orienting from the UL may react internally (or verbally, depending on how the meeting goes) to the other three members’ introductions. The left-hand column provides the actual words said by each of the other three team members. The right-hand column provides the internal translation that can occur for someone orienting from the UL as he or she listened to each of the others attending the meeting.

The three other meeting attendees were genuinely speaking from their orienting quadrants; hence, a gap exists between what each person said, including 1) how the UL-orienting person heard it and 2) what this same person needs to hear to experience value such that he or she becomes interested in engaging. The UL-orienting

What the Other Three People Said	Translation from the UL Orientation
<p>Person orienting from the UR:</p> <p><i>I am really energized to be part of such a challenging project. So much to do and so little time! I say let's jump right in and figure out what needs to get done and then get going.</i></p>	<p>UR:</p> <p><i>There is nothing energizing to me about doing something solely for the sake of doing it.</i></p>
<p>Person orienting from the LL:</p> <p><i>We all come from such diverse backgrounds and talents, and I can see why the four of us were selected. It will be really important for us to be sure that we have a shared understanding of our mandate up front so that we are all on the same page going forward.</i></p>	<p>LL:</p> <p><i>Spending more time talking about what is already obvious to me is boring.</i></p>
<p>Person orienting from the LR:</p> <p><i>While the timeframe we have to complete this project is tight, what we will be producing could radically impact our core business infrastructure for the better. It all depends upon how well we understand the strengths and weaknesses of our current system before we create something new.</i></p>	<p>LR:</p> <p><i>Analyzing our current systems could really get complicated and blur our clarity of focus and intentions.</i></p>

Table 1. Upper-Left translation of the other group members.

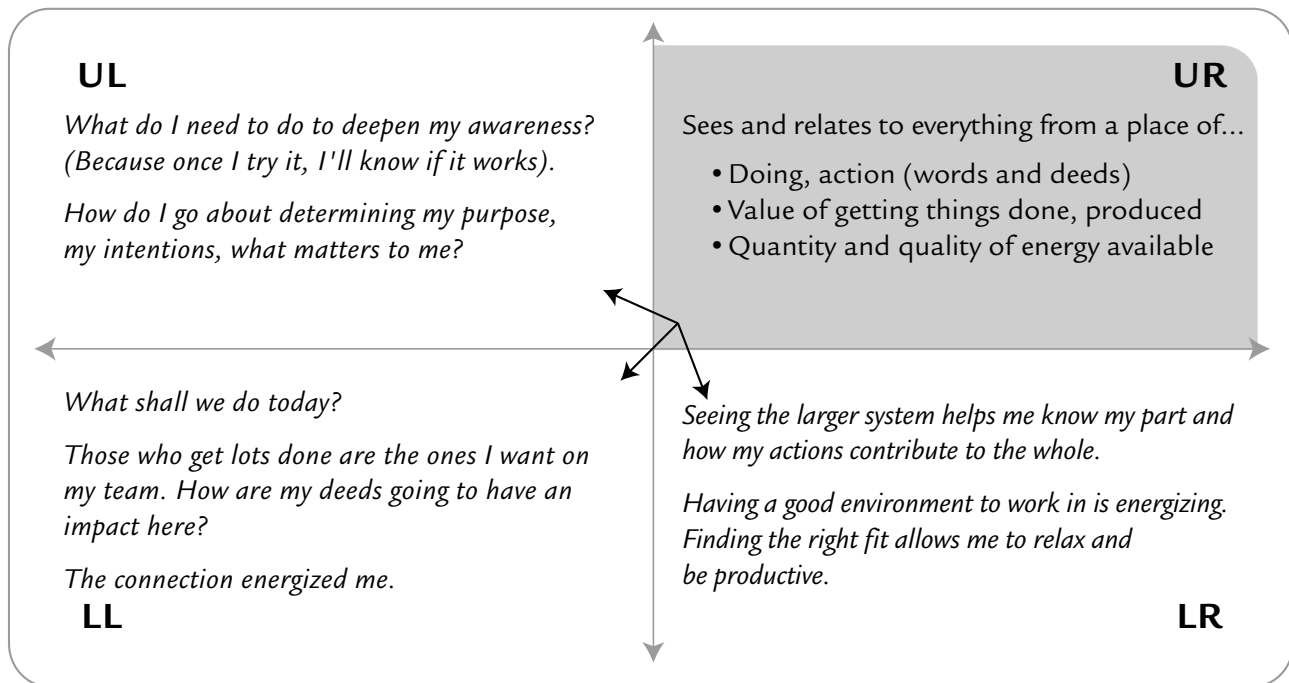


Figure 7. Translation from the Upper Right.

person translates the other three comments with an empty or flat expression because, from the UL perspective, they lack language that conveys what is deeply meaningful to them personally. Inherent in this translation (and in the other three, as well) is the assumption that meaningful expressions have to take a particular form in order for them to be recognizable as such. When the person orienting from the UL hears the UR-orienting voice, he or she misses the fact that the source of *meaning* for a person with an UR orientation is action.

Let us have a look at the person who orients from the UR. How does he or she hear, question, or assess the other quadrants based on their unique orientation? Figure 7 provides this member's UR orientation and the types of questions or comments he or she might pose. Notice that this member finds meaning through doing, or being in the midst of action, and not before.

While also having a similar individual (self-referencing) view as the person orienting from the UL, the person orienting from the UR is more concerned with objective and tangible dimensions rather than with the subjective aspects that concern the UL. A key criterion of the UR translation is that the person can see and directly experience tangible actions, tasks, and results. If that is not evident, a person orienting from the UR will lose energy and interest because nothing is happening. The more opportunities for clear and tangible things on which to take action, the more energized a person orienting from the UR becomes.

Table 2 illuminates how the UR-orienting person at the meeting may react (internally or externally) to what each of the three other people said in their introduction. The reactions and conclusions drawn by the person orienting from the UR are based upon the degree to which these three expressions show any indications of action, movement, and getting things done. Notice the absence of attention to the coherence of these actions in a broader system (LR). Also, meaning is not discussed from the UR translation; meaning arises during action and through knowing what to do next. Hence, you can readily feel into the type of responses this person had to

What the Other Three People Said	Translation from the UR Orientation
<p>Person orienting from the UL:</p> <p><i>I am very excited to be working on this project, as there is an opportunity to create something of real value. What matters most to me in working on this, and any other project for that matter, is that what gets created is both elegant and functional.</i></p>	<p>UL:</p> <p><i>Lots of lofty talk. I'm not sure how that translates into actually doing something.</i></p>
<p>Person orienting from the LL:</p> <p><i>We all come from such diverse backgrounds and talents, and I can see why the four of us were selected. It will be really important for us to be sure that we have a shared understanding of our mandate up front so that we are all on the same page going forward.</i></p>	<p>LL:</p> <p><i>I hope this person isn't suggesting that we have lengthy group discussions that go nowhere.</i></p>
<p>Person orienting from the LR:</p> <p><i>While the timeframe we have to complete this project is tight, what we will be producing could radically impact our core business infrastructure for the better. It all depends upon how well we understand the strengths and weaknesses of our current system before we create something new.</i></p>	<p>LR:</p> <p><i>Looking at the whole system first, that could really bog us down from getting to what we each need to do to fulfill this mandate.</i></p>

Table 2. Upper-Right translation of the other group members.

the voices of the UL and LL orientations. If the meeting goes on and on without getting to tasks and actions, the person orienting from the UR will withdraw his or her interest. Conversely, if the conversations move swiftly and focus on the tasks at hand, this person will energetically engage and contribute in significant ways.

As evidenced in the language of the UL and UR ways of orienting and translating, both are perspectives of the individual. Group meaning and systems are not key criteria in their translations. A person orienting from the UL attunes to and gets oriented by accessing and being guided his or her *intra*-subjective sense of meaning. The degree to which this person experiences his or her *own* inner sense of meaning being activated in these meetings is the degree to which this same person will engage in the meeting. The person orienting from the UR attunes to his or her *own* level of energy, direct relationship with action, and getting things done. This person's level of engagement in the meeting is dependent upon the degree to which these factors are met.

To continue, notice in Figure 8 that, like the person orienting from the UL, a person orienting from the LL also attunes to a sense of meaning. The distinct difference is that the LL orientation attunes to the meaning of a collective, group, or community rather than to that of an individual. Orienting from the LL perspective means that a person is guided by and attuned to the presence of collective understanding. With his or her core compass situated in the intersubjective field, a person orienting from the LL will be disoriented until access to this knowing is achieved. Thus, a key criterion of the LL translation is an attenuation to intersubjective resonance. Figure 8 illustrates questions and comments that a LL-orienting person might bring forward.

Table 3 provides insight into the internal filter through which the person orienting from the LL translates when listening to the other three people in the meeting. The person orienting from the LL listens for the degree to which resonance, or shared understanding, exists among those who need to work together. The voice of the

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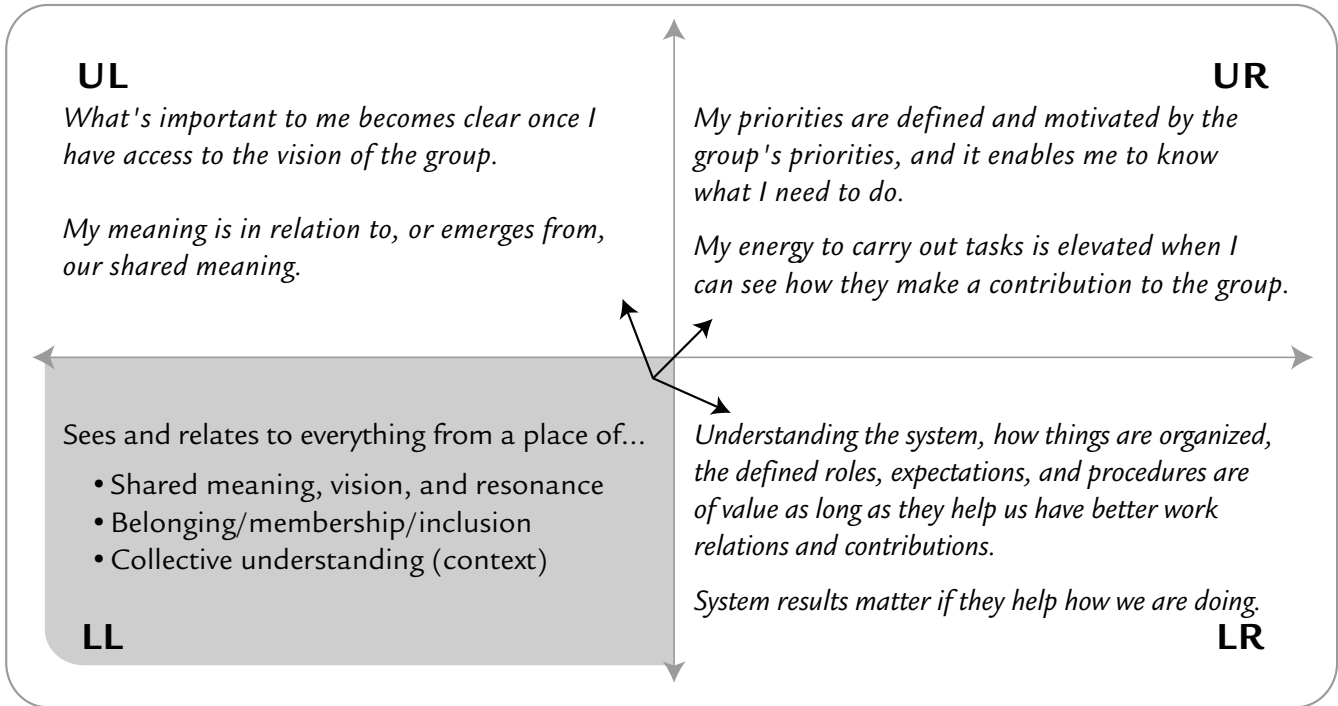


Figure 8. Translation from the Lower Left.

What the Other Three People Said	Translation from the LL Orientation
<p>Person orienting from the UL:</p> <p><i>I am very excited to be working on this project, as there is an opportunity to create something of real value. What matters most to me in working on this, and any other project for that matter, is that what gets created is both elegant and functional.</i></p>	<p>UL:</p> <p><i>Very self referencing. I wonder if this person is a very good team player.</i></p>
<p>Person orienting from the UR:</p> <p><i>I am really energized to be part of such a challenging project. So much to do and so little time! I say let's jump right in and figure out what needs to get done, and then get going.</i></p>	<p>UR:</p> <p><i>This person seems so keen to get going, but we don't even have a shared understanding of the purpose and intentions of the mandate; without that we won't have the context we need to guide our actions.</i></p>
<p>Person orienting from the LR:</p> <p><i>While the timeframe we have to complete this project is tight, what we will be producing could radically impact our core business infrastructure for the better. It all depends upon how well we understand the strengths and weakness of our current system before we create something new.</i></p>	<p>LR:</p> <p><i>But what about the people in the systems? If we aren't about what matters to them, then what we build won't matter.</i></p>

Table 3. Lower-Left translation of the other group members.

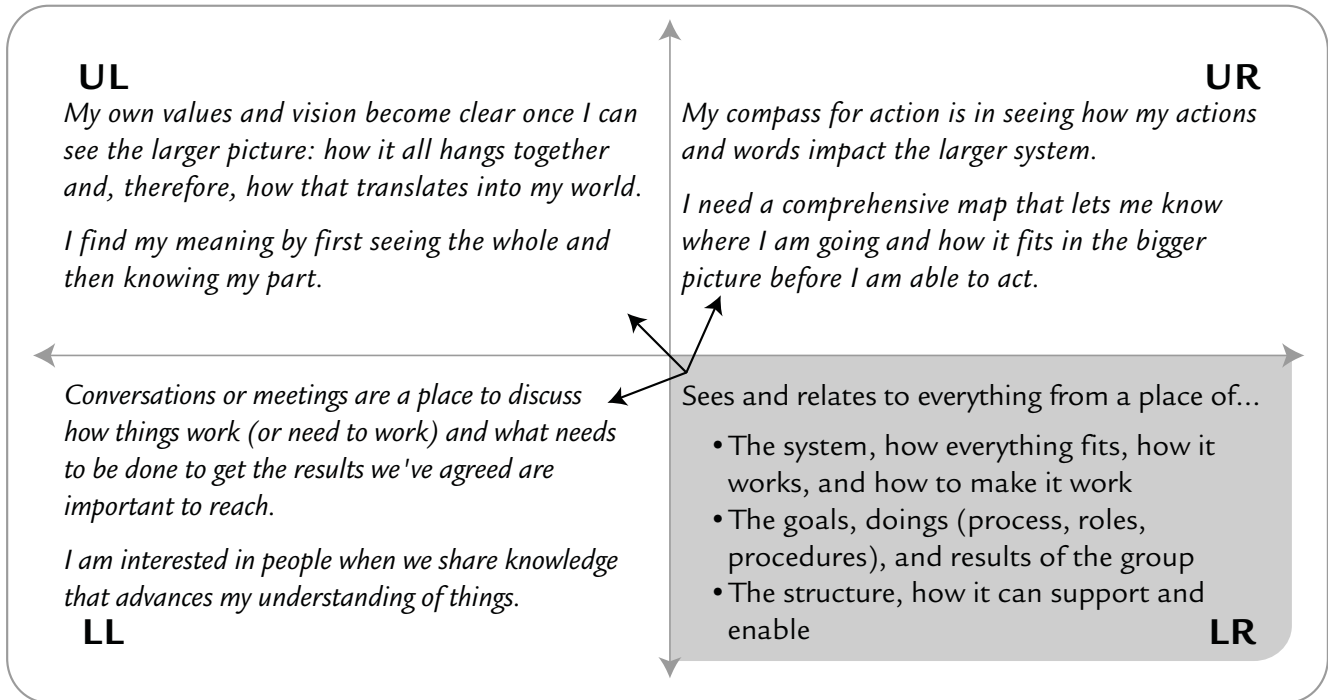


Figure 9. Translation from the Lower Right.

person orienting from the UL would sound overly individualistic, and the voices of the UR and LR would sound like they lacked context. All three of these voices would elicit dissonance and concern in the person orienting from the LL, which might prompt this person to engage the other members in conversation so as to cultivate a more coherent context that all four team members could embrace. By responding in this way, the LL-orienting person would derive what he or she needed to be able to contribute to the team's mandate; however ironic, this course of action is probably not one that the other three people would be interested in taking.

Lastly, Figure 9 provides a depiction of the orientation from the LR. A person who orients from the LR is attuned to systems, processes, and structures. They need to be able to see the whole, how the parts fit in the whole, and what that whole enables or is going to enable. This attention to results is both similar to and distinct from the UR translation. The LR translation is interested in the impacts results have on the overall system rather than on the result itself. Meaning emanates from this tangible sense of coherence, hence, the LR translation sees no value in talking about meaning, which, from this vantage point, offers little to no relevant contribution. Having access to and being grounded in this sense of coherence gives a LR-orienting person the context he or she needs to make sense (UL), take action (UR), and form collective meaning (LL).

In the team meeting, the person orienting from the LR is listening with his or her unique translation filter. A key criterion of this translation is the degree to which the conversation is advancing the comprehension of the system and its parts, as well as determining a coherent plan forward. Table 4 provides greater access to this perspective and also illustrates that the person orienting from the LR listens for the degree to which the focus of discussion is in alignment with the key criteria of that translation. The more the conversation focuses on the mandate from the perspective of the system and associated processes, structures, and roles, the more the LR-orienting person will experience the meeting as valuable and worth his or her time and energy. According to the translation of the LR orientation, meetings become unproductive when they become more subjective in

QUADRANTS AS TYPE STRUCTURE LENS

What the Other Three People Said	Translation from the LR Orientation
<p>Person orienting from the UL:</p> <p><i>I am very excited to be working on this project, as there is an opportunity to create something of real value. What matters most to me in working on this, and any other project for that matter, is that what gets created is both elegant and functional.</i></p>	<p>UL:</p> <p><i>Sounds like the criteria for success is if it fits this person's personal vision, which may have nothing to do with what's needed to improve the functioning of our systems.</i></p>
<p>Person orienting from the UR:</p> <p><i>I am really energized to be part of such a challenging project. So much to do and so little time! I say let's jump right in and figure out what needs to get done, and then get going.</i></p>	<p>UR:</p> <p><i>Unless we figure out what needs to get done by first taking a look at the overall system that we are going to impact, it's just a bunch of actions that aren't horizontally and vertically linked.</i></p>
<p>Person orienting from the LL:</p> <p><i>We all come from such diverse backgrounds and talents, and I can see why the four of us were selected. It will be really important for us to be sure that we have a shared understanding of our mandate up front so that we are all on the same page going forward.</i></p>	<p>LL:</p> <p><i>The written material we got prior to this meeting specifies our mandate and includes our personal bios. I don't see what more there is to discuss about this.</i></p>

Table 4. Lower-Right translation of the other group members.

focus (UL or LL), i.e., when they feel softer and less concrete. Further, while the person orienting from the LR is interested in attaining concrete results, he or she will experience frustration if a meeting becomes circumscribed by discussions about task lists and action items without first identifying their interdependencies; the LR translation believes that maps should inform which action to take.

Clearly, the interaction of four people, each with a different orienting quadrant, makes for an interesting meeting to say the least—and this case illustrates only one aspect of one of the *six* integral lenses used with great precision in the Integral Coaching® methodology! Inevitably, we have all experienced similar types of meetings, which generated substantial frustration, periodic resonance with different people at different times, and a love-hate relationship with attending meetings altogether. It is no wonder that many perceive meetings to be of marginal value or effectiveness. The level of value increases the more a person experiences a greater resonance with what is being said by others. This resonance is based upon the degree to which what is being said falls inside or outside one’s translation criteria. Imagine how much a meeting’s value and effectiveness could increase for each member and the group if these four people were aware of their own orienting quadrants, as well as those of their colleagues. When people are aware of the quadrant from which they orient and the associated translations of that particular type structure, they can begin to see that it is just that, a translation, and that other perspectives have their own unique translations. In this awareness lies the potential for individuals to realize a quantum shift in their capacity to engage every aspect of life with skillful means, in each moment.

While we had never seen the quadrants used as a translating type structure in this way, we found that it was invaluable in helping us “see through the eyes of the client.” It helped answer the question that we always ask, “How does this person see and relate to the world such that they say what they say, do what they do, and check what they check?” This nuanced use of the four quadrants lens as a type structure enhanced the power of our coaching. Not surprisingly, our clients felt even more understood and seen. The more we explored this usage,

the more we began to see evidence of its face validity over time with our clients, ourselves, and our coaching students. Our Integral Coaches™ intimately work with their own orienting quadrants to ensure that they mitigate bias as much as possible when working with clients. It remains a potent lens in the set that comprises our AQAL Constellation™.

Quadrants and Quadrivia

After a number of years of using the four quadrants lens both to Look AT and Look AS the client, we read the following passage in Ken Wilber’s recent book, *Integral Spirituality* (2006), that powerfully confirmed the validity of our intuitive move towards “inside out” and “outside in” ways of working to understand our clients:

The quadrants are the inside and the outside view (or perspective) of the individual and the collective. More technically, with reference to these perspectives, we differentiate between the “view through” and the “view from.” All individual (or sentient) holons HAVE or POSSESS four perspectives through which or with which they view or touch the world, and those are the quadrants (the view through). But anything can be *looked at* FROM those four perspectives—or there is a view of anything from those perspectives—and that is technically called *quadrivia*. [emphasis in original] (p. 34)

Our understanding of this quote in the context of coaching is that the inside view, the “view through,” describes the coach trying to Look AS the client. Here the coach tries to get into the client’s body and see the world as it is seen through the view (or perspective) of the client. We call this Looking AS, which Wilber describes as the “view through” the quadrants. The outside view, or the “view from,” is when the coach uses the perspectives of the four quadrants to Look AT the client. This is technically called *quadrivium* when looking from one of the four perspectives (singular) and *quadrivia* when looking from more than one perspective (plural). In our coaching approach, we Look AT the client from all four perspectives, and so the appropriate term to describe this use of the four quadrants lens is *quadrivia* (Fig. 10).

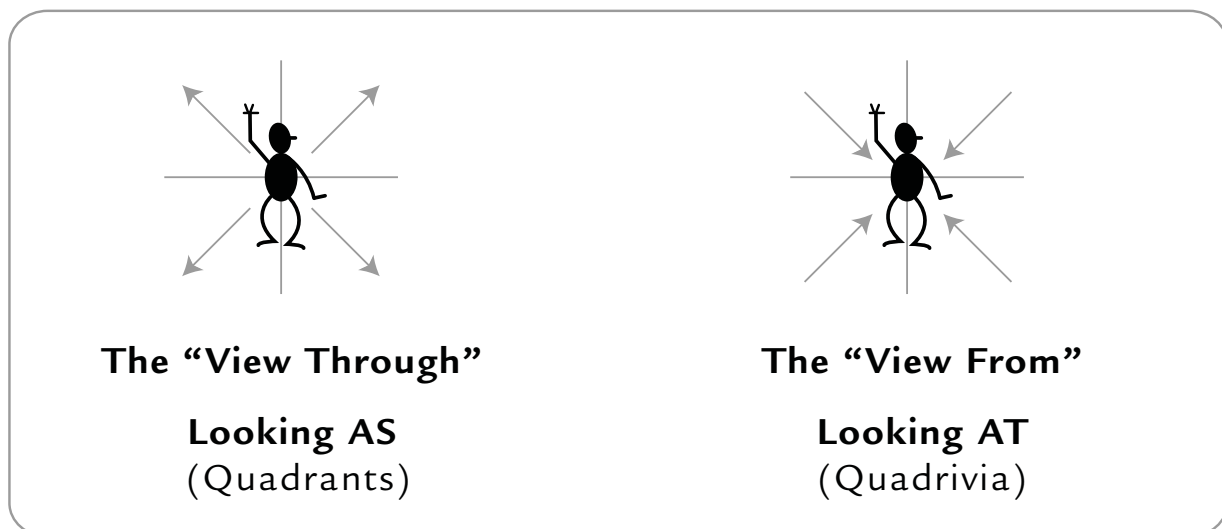


Figure 10. Quadrants and quadrivia.

Seeing the differentiation between the “view through” (quadrants) and the “view from” (quadrivia) was highly validating for our discoveries in the application of this lens in the field of coaching. Using the four quadrants model as a type lens and identifying the quadrant a client primarily orients from, views through, and translates the other three quadrants certainly helps the coach endeavoring to Look AS, or “view through,” the eyes of the client. At the same time, there is also value in being able to take an outside or objective view by using the perspective of each quadrant to Look AT the client to learn more about them and their capacities in the context of their topic.

By having the ways in which we take perspectives be more clearly distinguished as the “view through” (Looking AS) and the “view from” (Looking AT), this enables us, as Integral Coaches™, to know the place, position, or perspective from which we are viewing—an inside view or an outside view, a view through or from, quadrants or quadrivia. Wilber’s discussion of “viewing through” (quadrants) and “viewing from” (quadrivia) reinforces that this combination of Looking AT and Looking AS the client is effective because it includes both the “view from” and the “view through,” thereby enabling our coaches’ manifold ways of understanding, supporting, and serving their clients (see Wilber, 2006, pp. 253-255).

Client’s vs. Coach’s Orienting Quadrants

Discerning the quadrant through which a client orients and translates the other three quadrants helps coaches to Look AS the client. The prerequisite for being able to skilfully see in this way is to first understand one’s own orienting quadrant and inherent translations. As with any other type structure, as long as we are still living at a level of consciousness where the structures we inhabit and embody shape what we perceive as real and true, we have a quadrant from which we primarily orient. Given that a person’s quadrant orientation forms the translation structure for the way in which he or she relates to the other three quadrants, coaches will unconsciously bring their orientations to how they see and relate to their client’s world, as well as to how they will approach the focus and design of the client’s developmental practices. Knowing one’s self, as the instrument through which Integral Coaching® flows, is a critical element of a coach’s training journey.

A coach with an UR orientation is going to have a bias towards taking action. Odds are that the way these coaches ask questions, offer perspectives, and design developmental practices will be rooted in this translation. For example, being asked to do something without having any meaningful context is a recipe for disenchantment and disengagement for an UL-orienting client. While the coach is focused on figuring out the right thing to do (UR), the client is searching for relevant meaning (UL). The coach will need to tap into and elucidate this client’s personal meaning to capture and sustain the client’s interest in not only working with this coach, but also committing to doing developmental work over time.

Alternatively, if the coach has an UL orientation and the client has an UR orientation, the coach is likely to focus unconsciously on accessing the client’s personal intentions, giving voice to personal values, and reflecting on what deeply matters. The client orienting from the UR will tend to feel uncomfortable with this focus because what he or she is being asked to do does not sound very tangible. The client will no doubt try suggested practices, as “doing” is an integral part of their native orientation. However, after doing a round or two of subjective, “looking and reflecting” practices, they will most likely conclude that doing them further would be irrelevant.

In being aware of their own quadrant orientation, coaches will be sensitive to their own biases and also know how they need to adjust their focus and language to meet their clients’. For example, coaches with an UL-

orienting client would need to talk about and make linkages between the practices recommended and the positive impact or contribution they would have to the client's topic, given what is personally important and meaningful to that specific client.

Coaches with a LL orientation would realize their bias in thinking that all coaching topics call for improvements in interconnection and cultivation of shared meaning. They would also be more consciously guided by the client's quadrant translation in both word and deed. Hence, LL-orienting coaches need to be able to talk about actions (UR) without lengthy context setting and acknowledge what is personally meaningful to the client (UL) without trying to have it become shared. They would also need to be able to provide a concrete and tangible map that lets clients know where they are currently situated, what is ahead, and how it is going to work (LR).

A coach who orients from the LR is going to have a bias that concludes "what the client needs is to be able to see the fuller picture and how everything needs to fit in order for everything to work." Although this offer is sincere, it is not Looking AS; it is Looking AT. Of course, Looking AT clients through a LR orienting translation and seeing clients and their topic as a system and what is needed for there to be greater coherence and success is important. Nonetheless, Looking AT is necessary but not sufficient for working integrally with a client. Conversely, if a client orients from the LR, he or she will relate to whatever is offered through this quadrant orientation and related translation. If LR resonance is lacking, then this client will experience dissonance with what is offered and have difficulty seeing how it fits for them. Coaches will serve LR-orienting clients well if they attenuate their language and framing of practices in light of this LR predisposition, even if the practices are not technically designed to develop LR capacities.

The Development of the Coach to Look AS the Client

As we have stated, our Integral Coaching® approach requires the coach to develop the capabilities to both Look AT and Look AS the client. In developing Integral Coaches™ over time, we have found that it is much easier for them to learn how to Look AT than it is to Look AS. The perspective one needs to take to Look AT the client, the third-person perspective, is one with which people are readily familiar. While the coach may care deeply for the client and have a strong relationship with him or her, the ability to Look AT the client primarily calls for a cognitive line of development able to access wider and wider perspectives.

Being able to Look AS the client calls for a whole different level of capacities in the coach. It is not enough to just know the orienting views and the associated translations for all four quadrants. The coach needs to be able to have a grounded felt sense of the other person's world within the coach's own body-mind. This requires not only being open, curious, and receptive to a client in body, heart, mind, and spirit, but also calls for having the same level of awareness about the coach's own way of seeing and operating in the world—to be able to let go of one's biases and perspectives and yet not lose ground, to be connected to another and the shared field and yet also be distinct. This embodied capacity calls upon developing all six developmental lines (cognitive, emotional, somatic, interpersonal, spiritual, and moral) rather than just an act of cognitive reframing.

Using the four quadrants to both Look AT the client's competency levels as well as to Look AS the client through their orienting quadrant fosters this vital development. At a fundamental level, therefore, our coaches truly develop the ability to "see the world through another person's eyes" and from this space of compassionate appreciation, bring the skillful means of an Integral Coach™ forward in service.

Conclusion

This use of the four quadrants as a type structure lens provides a powerful way to see and appreciate the interpretive and complex views of the client. The four quadrants, the four perspectives, and associated translations provide a map of the territory. It helps the coach locate the client on that map and also helps the coach learn how to travel in the territory itself with skillful means.

While this article primarily focuses on the power of the orienting and translating functions of the four quadrants, it is important to note that Integral Coaching Canada's methodology also draws upon the traditional uses of the quadrants lens. In our Integral Coaching® method, the four quadrants lens sits in relation to five other integral lenses that comprise a client's AQAL Constellation™. This effective approach is a means to more fully honor the complexity of working with human beings in the context of integral development.

Use of the orienting quadrants has proven to be extremely powerful and is readily grasped by people with little to no in-depth knowledge of integral theory, by coaches and non-coaches alike. The “first meeting” example rings profoundly true for those who have been in meetings in which they detected dissonance, or for anyone who has walked out of a meeting thinking it was “a waste of time” while another person at that same meeting described it as “simply wonderful.” The orienting translation map of this territory has immediate resonance. Given its clarity, suffering is alleviated, as people can better understand what is actually happening within and between them. It engenders an expanded appreciation for other perspectives and translations, which means that an expanded capacity exists to hold multiple views and skillfully navigate in and through them in support of ourselves and each other.

NOTES

¹When students first learn these lenses, they tend to want to see if there is a way that they can be collapsed or consolidated. This often occurs between the orienting quadrant and Enneagram types. They want to draw correlations such as Enneagram types 9 and 2 orient from the Lower-Left quadrant, type 4 and 6 orient from the Upper-Left quadrant, types 3 and 8 orient from the Upper-Right quadrant, and types 1, 5, and 7 orient from the Lower-Right quadrant. We ask people in our classes who have the same Enneagram type to show which quadrant they primarily orient from. Inevitably they point to different quadrants. Thus, each of the quadrant orientations can be found within each Enneagram type. After this is demonstrated in class, students often enjoy exploring the subtleties of how an orienting quadrant has a distinct effect on a person's AQAL Constellation™.

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