

LivingBeyondComplexity-March-Call 1

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Speakers

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Marc Welcome, everyone. It's delightful to be here. This is the first call in our course, our journey, our exploration: Living Beyond Complexity, which originally began as Second Simplicity. Let me begin with just saying hello, a brief introduction of myself and my colleagues, and then really enter into this very exciting, very profound we hope, and really leading-edge exploration of what the next steps might be in our great understanding of all that is, because that's really what this is going to be about. It's going to be about an attempt to get the best vision we can of the patterns that connect in all of us.

Rebecca West wrote once that there's a desperate yearning to feel the patterns that connect, to get a sense of the whole. That's the context that we're going to be looking at, and that's the vision that we're going to be moving towards. Because, of course, as I'll unpack a little bit later, the sense of the whole affects everything; what my vision of the whole is affects how I act in every part of my life. So that's just kind of a word to begin.

Second introduction. I think I know a lot of you or most of you from previous courses or live encounters. I'm sure there's people that I don't know, and I look forward to meeting you. My name is Marc Gafni, and I am the father of Zion—who's my new son who's about six months old, partnered with Mariana—and the father of three other grown children. I'm also privileged to be the Director of Integral Spiritual Experience, the Founder and Director of the Centre for World Spirituality, and a scholar-in-residence at the Integral Institute, which are kind of just the lower-right roles if you will, which I'm delighted to play.

In my life, because I couldn't really get another job, I function as a spiritual teacher, which is actually a great honor and privilege—perhaps more of a spiritual artist, trying to paint the canvas—and a reluctant meta-theorist; meta-theory being the attempt to get a sense of what the broad picture is, how to connect the dots, but from the perspective of a spiritual teacher, or a spiritual human being, or a human being having a spiritual experience. So I'm looking for the broad pattern, because that affects the fullness, the depth, the Eros, and the ethos; the goodness, the truth, and the beauty of how I live my life, and how I try and teach my son how to live his life, and how I interact and how we all engage this world.

I have three delightful colleagues on the phone. Nicole Fegley—Ladies First is still true even in a post-patriarchal world—who is the curator of the Integral Spiritual Experience and a partner in Core Integral. Nicole I think is with us on the call, and will be of course leading in the second week, one of the breakout calls.

Together with her is Clint Fuhs, and Clint is a young Integral philosopher. He's the founder with Nicole of Core Integral, which is doing this awesome job of really formulating Integral Theory in the best way possible, and disseminating it. Of course, whenever you formulate, you engage also in its evolution, which is part of the process of formulation. Clint is a young colleague and friend. Zak Stein, who also is a young colleague and friend.

Zak works out on the East Coast, so we're going to try and get him to the West Coast as soon as we can. He is a young philosopher, engaged both in a social action of trying to create better metrics in the world, and unpacking meta-theory visions of thought, with Integral and non-Integral frameworks, as is Clint.

Zak and Clint will be on both the first, second, and third calls; they'll be leading breakout calls in week two, and will be on the first and third calls. They'll be functioning sometimes as witnesses and sometimes in a meta-theory Bill Moyers kind of role and bringing commentary, after the core Dharma presentation, kind of weaving to general vision we're going to try and unfold within the particular context of Integral Theory and beyond.

I just want to say before we get going—or perhaps we've already gotten going, but just in the beginning, just as the way of setting context—my lineage master Abraham Kook says it, that all of this generation is about setting the right context. So in terms of setting context, we're doing something here very unusual and very exciting. For us, it's the beginning, it's the first step; we're calibrating as we go, this has never been done before. But instead of doing a straight theory course, or a kind of spiritual teaching transmission course—emerging from the great traditions, and the best emergent post great traditions understandings of spirit—we've brought together both the best of theory with Clint and Zak, the best of Integral coaching with Nicole, and I'm going to try and embody somewhat of theory and somewhat of spiritual teaching and somewhat of meta-theorist great picture.

So we're going to try and unfold together what we might call next steps in the great picture, or next steps in Integral Theory; we're going to emerge out of Integral Theory. Of course, Ken Wilber, who's our good friend, will energetically be with us on all the calls, and at some point, will actually participate in one of our live encounters. But we're going to try and really go deep, not get lost in jargon, but be very precise; go as deep as we possibly can, open our hearts as wide as we can, and bring our hearts, minds, and bodies together as we engage in the great evolutionary act of dharma.

Dharma is knowing; Dharma is theory. Theory is not a kind of male brainiac engagement, when really there's nothing better to do and men just get lost in their theories. Theory is actually a form of loving. Theory is the best picture we have of reality that enables us to live the highest lives of love, of compassion, of recognition, of union, of embrace. It's the best theory that offers a place at the table for the most possible understandings, and seeks their higher integration. From that integration and from that vision comes a world of greater depth, of greater goodness, of greater truth, and of greater beauty. So the engagement here is not a kind of dry, arid, intellectual engagement; it's not an engagement from the neck up.

I remember when I was writing my doctorate at Oxford, I would sit in the Bodleian Library, and a kind of desiccated picture of Western thought appeared there, which was five men from the neck up sculptured at the entrance to the Bodleian Library. That's not

our goal. Our goal is a fully integrated enlightenment of fullness, an integrated masculine-feminine encounter, as the masculine and feminine dances in us in our ways of knowing. There are not just women's ways of knowing or masculine ways of knowing, there's a whole way of knowing that integrates the masculine and the feminine, the heart, the body, the mind, and the spirit. So that's what we're looking for.

As I said, our encounter, our engagement, our pursuit is passionate; we're passionately concerned with these ultimate issues, which affect the very fabric of our individual lives, the very fabric of the lives of the larger collectives in which we live, and the very fabric of the Kosmos. Not only the cosmos: the flatland physical world, but Kosmos, borrowing from Plotinus: the larger system of life, on all levels, that exists. Its future depends on our ability to sink into the future.

Hope is a memory of the future. To unfold, to discern the future vision of what is and what might be, based on the highest integration of all the fields, the disciplines of knowing, that generally are in exile from each other, but to actually redeem them, liberate them from their exile, and begin to bring them together in a higher integration, in a higher mutual recognition, in a higher embrace. That's our engagement, that's our framework, that's our context, in this attempt to live beyond complexity and touch a Second Simplicity.

Let's really begin here, part two. So one of the ways that I've been teaching for the last 10–15 years—based on some writing I did about a decade ago that was published in a book called *The Mystery of Love*, and audio version calls on Eros and Holiness—was that I called a series of levels. I'm not going to use the word levels because that'll get complex in terms of Integral Theory, and we're trying to live beyond the complexity, because the word levels has a very particular meaning in Integral Theory. So I'll use the word, just for the sake of it, a spectrum of stations; a spectrum of unfolding, a spectrum of phases. Holy Trinities, always one, two, three; station one, station two, station three.

I found that these stations are unbelievably helpful in unpacking our lives, and actually seeing the patterns of our lives. Of course, we'll talk either at the end of this call or in next week's call about the relationship of these stations to the classical stages and the classical structure stages that are so key to Integral Theory. But for now, I just want to point out that there are these Holy Trinities, or these three stations. For those of you who might have been at the Integral Spiritual Experience 2 a few weeks back, we based it on what I call the Three Stations of Love.

Let me talk just for a few minutes about just what these three stations are in a very broad sense, and then look as is set out in our curriculum, which we're going to try and follow with some degree of rigor to really be an integrity, to really give you what we promised to the best of our ability, even as we allow for the spontaneous unfolding of spirit in action in the moment. Let me try and offer a broad overview for just a few minutes of what this set of Holy Trinities, if you will, is. Let me begin with simplicity, complexity, and Second Simplicity.

Simplicity. Simplicity is the simple-minded one for whom everything is clear, everything is obvious; there are no questions. Extremists are often simple. Simple doesn't mean not smart. You can have a very high IQ, be very "smart," but be simple. So an extremist is simple, because for an extremist, there's a very simple view of the world. An extremist chooses one value and says that value trumps all values, and that value organizes all of

reality. Of course, extremists feel better when they wake up in the morning because life is simple and clear. So when life is simple and clear, it seems sometimes easier.

There was a great scene, and I think it was a Robert Redford movie, called *Three Days of the Condor*. The head of the CIA was the villain in the movie, and had woven just an enormously web of treachery and treason. So when Redford uncovers the web at the very end and accost this corrupt head of the CIA, somehow they engage in the conversation, in which the head of the CIA says, I miss the war days—by the war days, he means World War II—and the Redford character says, why, because it was more exciting then? He said, “No, because it was more clear, it was more simple then.” That’s simplicity. Simplicity is, you’re not willing to engage with the complexity, so everything is simple. That’s Level One, or if you will, Station One. So at that station, you have lots of clarity, you have simplicity, and you have the power of that simplicity.

Fundamentalism is a phenomenon of consciousness which operates often at this level of simplicity, at this Station One of simplicity. A fundamentalist has a very clear vision of the world, his/her set of values are very clear, and there’s very clear trumping values around which all else organizes. For example, let’s say that you have an extremist fundamentalist position which is extremely anti-abortion; it’s a radical pro-life position. So in that vision, life is simplicity, life is the First Station of Simplicity. Because life becomes the organizing value, and everything is organized around the value of life.

So for example, if a young 17-year-old girl is impregnated through incest by her father, and there’s some nascent life which exists when the young woman realizes three weeks later that she’s pregnant, for the extremist fundamentalist position, what you do in that situation is very simple: you have the woman bear the child, and if possible, raise the child, but certainly, abortion is not a possibility. Because life is the guiding value, it is the overarching value, and it trumps all other values, we don’t require it to hold complexity; meaning we don’t require it to be in dialectical relationship or in dialectical tension with other values. So everything’s very simple.

That’s the first level. That’s simplicity expressed in the fundamentalist position, expressed in any position that engages life through an extremist lens. An extremist lens means that you engage one value and you simply let that value trump the other values, and you liberate that value from the need to engage complexity.

Now, lest you liberals on the phone are showing too good, understand that this First Station of Simplicity exists across the political spiritual spectrum. For example, in the pro-life example, on the other side of the spectrum, you might have an extremist pro-choice position. In the extremist pro-choice position, a young woman who is 26 is six months pregnant, but it’s coming towards summer. She wanted the baby, but as she saw the new line of bikinis, the image of herself in a bikini in the upcoming summer was so attractive, and the egoic gratification was so strong, that despite the fact that she willfully engaged pregnancy and wanted the baby, the overwhelming egoic desire made her choose an abortion.

Now the extremist pro-choice position says, the woman owns her body, the woman has full proprietary rights over her body; therefore, it’s appropriate, and even moral in the extremist position, as long as the baby is not born, for the woman to make that choice. That choice is completely appropriate, and there’s nothing we could or should do to legislate against it, for sure. Because it’s very clear, we’re pro-choice in an extremist sense. So choice becomes the clear value which is freed from its obligation to compete or

to engage the complexity of other seemingly contradictory values. Therefore, again, the choice becomes simple, the choice is an extremist position of pro-choice; everything's clear, and everything's good. So these are first-level simplicity positions.

Now, let's go to the Second Level, or the Second Station. The Second Station would be complexity, and complexity means when I begin to understand and to engage the complexity. The competition between values is one example of complexity. The enormous amount of factors we need in order to conjure up an intelligent position on any particular issue is another example of complexity.

As I've been talking to my friends in the last couple of weeks, people have very clear knee-jerk simple positions on whether what happens in Egypt is good. This incredible outpouring of energy, coming from diverse sources; from Islamic fundamentalism and the Muslim Brotherhood on the one side, and some liberal democratic currents of energy on the other side. People have knee-jerk understandings whether what happened in Egypt is basically good and promising, or basically bad and dangerous. I've talked to probably four people in the last two weeks, and two were very clear that this is a fantastic thing, and the other two were really clear that this is a terrible thing with potentially improbable disastrous consequences. Both are simple positions, but both, of course, ignore complexity.

In order to engage complexity, you need to engage an enormous amount of information. You need to understand, in all four quadrants—to use an Integral phrase—an enormous amount of variables: in the upper-left, the interior understanding of the individuals involved; in the lower-left, the interior streams and qualities of consciousness within the cultural context; in the upper-right, just the physical facts on the ground; and in the lower-right, in the governing systems of the collective which exists in the exterior world; and how they play with each other; all of that needs to be taken into account at the level of complexity, to begin to understand how we might evaluate any particular situation. So beyond simplicity is complexity.

But that's not the end of the story, because what emerges from complexity is a Second Simplicity. We're going to talk about Second Simplicity in many different ways over the coming weeks, and there are many different ways to unpack this idea. The particular term emerged in a sentence I was speaking in mid-sentence with Clint at a teaching session we did some months ago, in May, in Boulder, at one of the iEvolve teaching weekends. But the idea of Second Simplicity is already in the great traditions very clear, and indeed, we'll bring some of those sources to bear from all of the great traditions that talk using slightly different language in every tradition about the basic goal of spiritual living, is to live beyond complexity and to engage the Second Simplicity.

By Second Simplicity, what we mean is this ability to constellate—to correlate, to integrate, to weave together—all of the different factors at play, and understand not that there's a simple solution. So the Second Simplicity is different than the first simplicity. The First Station of Simplicity has always a clear course of action available to it. Complexity is, looking at all the complex issues that are at play in so many ways, and often complexity paralyzes us. But complexity leads us to a Second Simplicity. Although the Second Simplicity might allow for more than one possible course of action, but it has a clarity of understanding about what's at play.

But more than the clarity of understanding, it has an internal clarity; it comes from internal place of calm, an internal sense of being rooted, an internal coherence, an internal

integration. That allows a person who's living at the consciousness of Second Simplicity, to sort through the variables with an elegance, with a grace, and to be able to deploy into the world into action, and to access in their own interior face, a sense of a depth, which is characterized by—and I'm going to use a term here that Maezumi Roshi, who's from a particular Soto Zen line of Zen transmission, used—the free-functioning human being.

The free-functioning human being lives from what we're calling Second Simplicity. They're able to actually step into the flow, to have a free-functioning integration—to kind of flex flow understanding, an intuitive grasp of a kind of big picture—and to make the best decision, to take the best course of action, and to engage in the deepest interior unfolding emergent from the complexity. They're not lost in the complexity, the complexity yields a higher station of consciousness, which we're calling Second Simplicity.

Second Simplicity is the goal of spiritual life, or of life itself. It's the very impetus, it's that which we're looking towards. To just give you an image, imagine the Randori Master or the Tai Chi Master, who operates and moves in enormously complex patterns with a deep and profound simplicity, but it's not the simplicity of the one who hasn't engaged the complexity. One who hasn't engaged the complexity, to borrow a technical term from the martial arts, doesn't know the kata. The kata is complex, filled with an enormous amount of skilled and precise machinations movements, complex unfoldings. But when all that complexity is integrated into the person, and it emerges at a higher level or at a deeper station of consciousness, what emerges is a Second Simplicity.

If we can borrow a term from one of the great visual arts myths of the modern era, the Jedi myth—which emerged from George Lucas's Skywalker Ranch, in that kind of Arche myth of 20 years ago, Star Wars—the Jedi Knight lives at this level of Second Simplicity. The spiritual hero, the hero of what [indistinct 25:12] would call “the hero of spirit,” lives at this level of Second Simplicity.

So the fundamentalist lives at first simplicity. Often the skeptic, sometimes the agnostic, and the secularist says, all of the knowings that I might have had, I can't really hold them because things are too complex. So the skeptic lives right at this level of complexity, and is often unable to discern the strands. It might have an enormous amount of information, but can't quite get to wisdom, because wisdom emerges at that level of spiritual consciousness which we're calling Second Simplicity. So that's by way of introduction; simplicity, complexity, living beyond complexity, Second Simplicity.

Now, what I want to do for the next period of time, is at least to begin. This is call one, then there's going to be breakout calls with Zak, Nicole, and Clint, in week two. Then week three, I'm going to finish and deepen this Dharma sharing, together with a question-and-answer session. Just to give you the overview, or the overarching meta-picture. So I'm just going to begin this now for the next period of time, and then invite, if they have, Zak and Clint to offer some commentary or weaving, which they may decide to do or they may decide to do it on next week's breakout call, we'll see. But for now, I'm going to now move to the next part three. So we did introduction, part one; part two, we set up the meta-frame of Second Simplicity in the first unfolding of one of these Holy Trinities; now part three, I want to try and apply it to a particular play in our lives that's unbelievably important.

I want to apply it to what we might call knowing, not knowing, and knowing. Of course, as you can see, this is very directly related to simplicity, complexity, and Second

Simplicity; knowing, not knowing, and knowing. Let me say it a different way, I'm going to say it a third way: story, no story, and story. Let me say it another way: clarity, no clarity, confusion, muddled confusion, and clarity. So you begin to see how this plays, and I'm going to unpack this with the grace of God; God in first-person, second-person, and third-person.

Let me begin, perhaps with confusion. Because confusion has, in so many ways, been the core characteristic of so much of the modern period. In some sense, someone wrote that whoever isn't confused today doesn't know what's going on. There's this sense in modernity that if you're actually in, if you will—if you actually understand what's going on—then you must be confused, and if you're not confused, there's something fundamentally wrong with you. So I want to challenge that. But before we challenge it, I want to try and understand where it's coming from.

I think it was Simone Weil who said, anyone who isn't confused today simply isn't thinking straight. Now, that's not true, that's a partial truth; when parts become wholes, we pathologize. But I want to understand with you where did that partial truth come from? Why could someone as intelligent as Simone Weil suggest that anyone who isn't confused today simply isn't thinking straight? Of course, what Simone is suggesting to us is that the Second Station, the station in which there's no story, in which, as postmodernism says, there's no grand narrative, or there's no storyline.

If you remember Kafka's great work *The Trial*, the core issue in *The Trial* was you couldn't follow the story, you get exhausted trying to follow the story. So what Kafka was saying is that we've lost, in any real sense, the thread of the story, and we have no real way of reclaiming it. So what we want to try and understand is, what's that about? Why is it that we would lose the thread of the story, and what might we do to reclaim the thread of the story?

I'm looking in Kafka right now for a quote, because it's an important quote. *The Trial* is about someone who's arrested for a particular crime, but he's not quite sure what the crime is; he can never quite figure it out. I think his name is K. The plot of the novel is intentionally an impossible thread of story that you can't follow. So what happens is the thread of meaning frays, and it points when the storyline seems in reach, it slips out of grasp again; it's like a lure drawing the reader along. So frustration, anger, and a radical hopelessness gradually builds in the reader, as Kafka subjects us to the very feeling that his protagonist K. undergoes as he's arrested, for what and by whom he doesn't know. Every time he detects a glimmer of sense in the proceedings, it vanishes into non-sense. So K. is overwhelmed, incapable of making sense or telling his story. He's tortured by a nonsensical system of bureaucracy and human inanity.

Here's the passage, and it's an all too apt passage. Kafka captures how we all feel on occasion about life, when we're lost and mired in the complexity, which Simone Weil tells us is the inescapable framework of modernity; Simone Weil suggests that the inescapable framework of modernity is that there is no framework. Here's the quote from Kafka. "He was too tired to survey all the conclusions arising from the story, the simple story had lost its clear outline; he wanted to put it out of his mind." So Kafka is describing the unique torture of modernity, which is this sense of being disassociated; you can't follow the natural associations in the story. The sense of being what I call de-storied, to be displaced. That's why K. has no name, because name is part of a plot, it's part of a story. K. has no Unique Self. He's essentially nameless, devoid of framework,

devoid of his story; he has no history, he has no his-story. Through pain, the torture always aims to force the victim to betray or abandon his story.

So that's the predicament of complexity, in the sense of no story. Now, what we mean by no story is that we've forgotten the story. Let me be really clear, and let's go really step at a time. In the postmodern understanding, there is no story; we've forgotten the story because we should have forgotten that, we've forgotten the story because it deserves to be forgotten. Because the old story is a story that wasn't true; the old story was a fundamentalist story. The old story was a story which was dogmatic and based on false premises, based on wrong information. It wasn't a wise story. It wasn't an intelligent story. So that's the core position of postmodernism, and it's very deep. But the religionist, or the mystic, says something else entirely. The mystic says that we've forgotten the story, and that if we would remember the story, it would be a completely different reality.

Now, what's the difference between the two? What's the relationship of Station One: story, Station Two: no story, no grand narrative, and Station Three: a kind of reclaiming of the story? So in Station one, we're dealing with the story or the knowing of premodernity. Premodernity believed that it was able to know directly and have a full picture of the nature of what was; it was able to take a direct and clear snapshot camera picture of reality and was able to know the story.

The strengths of premodernity were great and deep and profound. C. S. Lewis in a wonderful book called *The Discarded Image*, gives the experience and transmits the experience of what does it mean to live in a context of meaning when you know the story. You know the storyline, and if you know the storyline, you know what you're supposed to do in the story; your life has meaning. It has purpose, it has direction. It has a ground of Telos which guides you. You understand what your role is. You understand who the other people in the cast are, and what your relationship is. You understand what the goal of your life is. Your life is directional, it's Teleological. It's incredibly exciting to live in that context. That context was the deep abiding context of premodernity.

The problem was that premodernity overreached. So what happened was the different storytellers of the different traditions, all of which shared some common language, ultimately, though, were unable to distinguish between the parts of their story that actually reflected something real and true about the Kosmos, and the parts of their story that were just based on their historical context or their cultural context. They failed to distinguish between what Frithjof Schuon calls in a great book called *Transcendent Unity of Religion*], depth structures and surface structures. Surface structures are the cultural passing transient beliefs, or the dogmas, that the different religions held. The depth structure are the clear, deep, and true understandings, that the great traditions held.

But because they were unable to make that distinction, the great traditions, each thought that their vision of reality—including all of the rituals, including a sense of their own superiority, including their right to oppress, or attack, or disenfranchise, or even take the lives of other people who didn't share their vision of reality—they believed that that was the nature of things. They believed in the divine right of kings. They believed that because they had true perception about some deep understandings and the depth structures of the Kosmos, that also gave them understanding in terms of science. They were able to tell Galileo what he should see through a telescope. They were able to say that Galen's medicine, which gave a particular understanding of the physiognomy of the body, was church dogma.

But of course, as the world unfolded, we began to realize that the story had overreached its authority, and the authors of the story had claimed authority where they had none. We began to dissect bodies in the Middle Ages, and we realized that Galen's medicine was flat wrong. Cultures began to meet each other, and the claims of superiority, arrogated by one culture over the other, began to seem inappropriate. Guiding principles that united rather than divided, seemed to trump the parochial separations instituted by competing dogmas. Science began to emerge powerfully, to offer a vision of reality which was different than the dogmas of the churches.

So for those reasons, and many more that are beyond our time purview now, the great story of premodernity collapsed. It's not that it was completely wrong, it was actually right about a lot. It was right about understandings of meaning. It was right in many of its value insights. It was right in much of its understanding about the true nature of who we are, much of its insight into what it means to be enlightened, and much of its insight into ethics and Eros. But because it had dramatically overextended its authority into governments and into politics and into science, because it had claimed exclusive vision—each one of the strains of premodern tradition had claimed an aggregated exclusive authority to itself—for this and other reasons, the great story of premodernity collapsed.

So we forgot the story, and we entered into a world of complexity. In this world of complexity, the assumption was, which grew over a period of 200–300 years, that ultimately there's nothing we can truly know. There is no ultimate knowledge; ultimate knowledge, by definition, isn't available. That position was expressed by many different thinkers, in many different ways. The basic assumption was that the only thing that we really know is that which is known through scientific method, which is knowledge of what Hannah Arendt called the physical sensual world, and any knowledge that isn't subject to a controlled experiment isn't true knowing, isn't true knowledge.

The great philosopher Willard Quine, probably the most influential American philosopher between 1950–1980—let me quote a characterization of Quine's worldview, which is the basic modernist scientific worldview—he says, “There's fundamentally only one kind of entity in the world, and there's one kind of study in the world, and that's the kind studied by natural sciences: physical objects. Second, there's only one kind of knowing in the world, and it's the kind that natural scientists have.”

Essentially, what happened is this scientific outlook, because it was so successful, because it was so effective—it was a kind of effective knowledge that produced incredible leaps in the Industrial Revolution, and then incredible leaps in further unfoldings of technology, and then it leaped again forward 80–100 years ago with quantum mechanics, which produced leaps beyond imagination in medicine and physics and astrophysics and space travel—the incredible leaps that were produced by science, in essence, in Carl Becker's phrase, ravished the modern mind, and basically, all other forms of knowing were disallowed.

So all other grand narratives were thought to be context-bound, limited, and culturally relative. The assumption was that there's nothing we could really know because all knowing is based on language and culture, and language and culture are relative. Therefore, there is no genuine knowing other than the knowing of classical science; that was the classical assumption, which is a very powerful assumption.

The problem, of course, is—and I think it was maybe said best by a sociologist Manfred Stanley at Syracuse University, who wrote—“It’s by now a Sunday-supplement commonplace that the modernization of the world is accompanied by a spiritual malaise that has come to be called alienation. At its most fundamental level, the diagnosis of alienation is based on the view that modernization forces upon us a world, that, although baptized as real by science, is denuded of all humanly recognizable qualities; beauty and ugliness, love and hate, passion and fulfillment, salvation and damnation.”

“It is not, of course, being claimed that such matters are not part of the existential realities of human life. It’s rather that the scientific worldview overreaches. Just like religion overreached and told a false story, the scientific worldview overreaches and makes the claim that the complexity actually supplants any possibility of a story. The scientific worldview makes it illegitimate to speak of all these essential realities—of values, meaning, love, passion, fulfillment, loyalty, beauty, and truth—as being in any way, ‘objectively’ part of the world, and forcing us instead to define such evaluation and such internal experience as ‘merely subjective’ projections of people’s inner lives.”

That’s the great tragedy of a de-storied modernity. That’s Level Two. Level Two is we begin to realize the incredible complexity. We reject story of Station One at Station Two, at the station of complexity. We challenge the story for many good reasons, and the modern and postmodern critiques of the great traditions incorporate those reasons. But we’re left with no story.

So our goal is to go the next step and to reclaim story at a higher level of reality, at a higher level of consciousness. Now when I say a higher level of reality, I’m very careful, in that I mean reality as in the word ‘real.’ There’s a higher level and a deeper understanding of what’s real that expands the realm of the real beyond, as Manfred Stanley said, merely scientific knowing, and actually expands reality to include arenas of the real that are powerful and true and good, that tell a story which is the story of Second Simplicity.

It doesn’t undermine complexity; it takes complexity into account. But it transcends complexity, meaning it ends the trance of complexity and allows us to reweave a higher story. A story at Station Three of consciousness, which allows us to reclaim a sense of a worldview, to reclaim a context of meaning in which we live, to reclaim a big picture, and to begin to rethink in terms of great meta-theories. Not meta theories of dogma of the kind that existed at Station One, but meta-theories that are constantly evolving, that begin to make sense out of everything, that move us beyond the nonsense or the dissociation of a lost storyline of complexity. That’s where we’re going.

Because in the end, it’s only when we begin to have a sense of everything that we can get a sense of anything. If you don’t have a sense of a history, a storyline of everything, even if it’s of the most general kind, which allows you to move with the grace of the master in Second Simplicity, living beyond complexity, transcending complexity, you’re paralyzed; you’re unable to form a worldview that’s suffused with Eros and ethos. So we’re looking for the story beyond the no-story. We’re looking for the emergent great universe story which actually envisions a uni-verse; a great vision of unfolding complexity, which is a Second Simplicity; an evolutionary story which reclaims the broader vision and the higher vision. That’s where we’re going, that’s what we’re moving towards.

Maybe just to finish a vision of this, William Sheldon, at Columbia University, made the correct point, which I think is just desperately in need of being noticed, that the loss of

worldview, the loss of a big picture, is really the loss of an orienting framework. You don't need to know a lot of psychopathology to know that when you lose a sense of orienting framework, you begin to pathologize. I would make the suggestion that much of the alienation and the unweave—George Steiner's phrase of our time—is the source of much of the pathology of our time, of the mental illness of our time, of the breakdown of self of our time, of the fragmentation of our time; it's the loss of story, it's the loss of a worldview.

So what we want to do is begin to engage, and hope again; hope that emerges from Second Simplicity, hope that's a memory of the evolutionary future, which here in the context of this shared study, we're beginning to unpack together. That's the beginning of a view. Let me turn to Clint and Zak to offer any kind of commentary, observation, whatever context you like to come.

Clint I'll jump in, this is Clint. Since we're nearing our hour here, I'll say a few things. Some reflections on the beautiful offerings that you've put forth in the last little bit here, and then also mention a few things about where we'll go in my breakout next week, and then invite Zak and Nicole to also do the same. Zak, you could go next, if you will, and offer whatever other comments you want.

It reminds me, for some reason, the funny story where we have a teacher, friend, great master teacher, who has definitely been around the block, who emailed Marc and I saying, "What were you guys thinking when you named this course "Living Beyond Complexity? It has got to be the absolute worst title in the world." You know what, I don't disagree, from a marketing perspective. I just can't get over how that phrase—how that simple injunction, if you will—how deeply it seeks to me, and how much of an evolutionary trajectory it holds and it carries. For me, it drives us toward, like what you started to say at the beginning, the patterns that connect, or return to a better and more complete sense of the whole. These are all phrases and concepts that really if you hear them and you let them sit in your heart, they feel really good. But then if you pull back for a second, you recognize, I think my life is like that most of the time. I'm saying that about myself, and I suspect it's true for a lot of folks who are on the call with us. That rather, our lives are oftentimes mired in complexity.

So what then does it mean to live beyond complexity, or like Marc said, how do we end the trance of complexity? The few points that continue to resound and resonate for me is that first off, Second Simplicity is not easy. Because if it was easy, it would fall back, and it would slip silently into that first simplicity, which itself is simplistic. So the Second Simplicity is not easy, and second point, it requires us to actually move through complexity. It requires us to be able to end the trance, it requires us to transcend and include to move through it.

So as you all know, like Marc said earlier, one of my big things is helping folks in the world to use Integral Theory and Ken's AQAL (All Quadrant, All Level) framework to discover ways to move beyond complexity. But we all have to admit to ourselves that oftentimes it feels like we're just mired in complexity. Because AQAL is really dense and it's really confusing, and we don't have that much time to become radical scholars in it. So the focus of my breakout, and the focus of most of what I hope I can offer as a gift throughout this entire course, will be learning from the trenches, if you will, in doing that work of utilizing the Integral framework; to actually—and you guys have all heard this statement before—use that map to help you understand and navigate the complex territory of your life.

Again, what does that mean? How do we actually do that? Do we have the skills and capacities? I think the answer, generally speaking, is not really. Because this is still evolving, and we're evolving and removing. That's what's so beautiful about doing this work with Marc, Zak, Nicole, and with all of you, that we're moving toward the Second Simplicity.

So what I'd like to offer is some principles, some concepts, and some practices that will help us do just that; help us use this map to actually understand and navigate the complex territory of our lives. Next week, we'll focus on this whole issue by looking through what Marc and I came to call in one conversation we had a while back, the grandmother issue. It's how do we understand the growth and development and so-called enlightenment of our deeply realized grandmother, who just happens to be living in a radically traditional culture. Now, what many of you probably intuit already is that at a minimum, we need to look towards structure stages, like Marc mentioned before, and towards state stages. So through the lens of looking at this grandmother issue, if you will, we'll go into structure stages and state stages next week, and further flesh out practices and capacities for recognizing where we are, and where you are as individuals on this path of evolution and development: from simplicity, to complexity, to Second, Simplicity.

Zak Hey, everybody. It's just beautiful to be on the call and to hear Marc and Clint. It's exciting, because this kind of stuff gives me energy. I was telling my wife it's like going to a church group or something. After putting in a long day at work, it's like you're in the basement of the Unitarian Church, and you're all kind of vibing. Of course, it's all techno and digital these days.

So I'll just say a couple things and then touch base about what I want to do in my sessions. The first thing is basically, I see this problem of finding the Second Simplicity has been one of the great problems of our historical epoch, both on the macro and the micro. On the macro, there's this problem of we are totally incoherent. I sometimes say that we're facing a specie-wide identity crisis, which is to say that for the first time that we are globally interconnected—through communications media, and transnational commerce, etc.; the kind of infrastructure of global capitalism that unites us—so we're all speaking through the same channels, but we're more confused about the meaning of our humanity than we've ever been. So the task of weaving a social meta-narrative that could unite humanity, I think, is a task.

Then on the micro level, when you're talking about individual socialization processes, at least in the post-industrial West, it's never been harder to weave a coherent narrative about your own life. One cause for the rapid rise in divorce rates in post-war America is because of this age of fracture, this age of increasing fragmentation socio-culturally. I'm a philosopher, but I'm also an educationist. So this, for me, is an educational problem about how do we weave a coherent, action-orienting self-understanding, when we are inundated by information like never before? I just want to put that context out there and say this is an important problem for the species now.

But I would also say, it's particularly an important problem for us Integral folk, if I can kind of use that label there. Because as Clint said, this Integral meta-theory—which for many of us, lifted us to the Second Simplicity, or at least allowed us to glimpse it—when you start talking this stuff to everyday people, they just think you're mired in complexity, and maybe you are. So one of the things I do is work with educational reformers who've never heard of Wilber, and one of the things I have to do is find ways to use this

complicated meta-theory in simple ways, using simple language that people on Main Street can understand.

One of the things I want to do in my sessions is what's termed radical scholarship. I want to get down to the historical roots of some of Wilber's main ideas, and actually run these stations on some of Wilber's key terminology. So that basically means like, you first read Wilber, you get it, you love it, it's so simple. This is it, you tell everybody about it. But then, of course, you need to move to the second stage, which is that, "Oh my God, this Wilber guy's full of crap. He's borrowing the stuff from people, and yada, yada. Actually, development is not that simple. Actually, there's competing views on the neural substrates for emotion." So there's all this complexity, where some people then dismiss him.

But then my point is, well, there's actually a way to reengage with these kinds of meta-theorists, put them on the table, and then find a new simpler language that allows you to articulate it, both to others and yourself, and allows you to integrate it into your action-orienting self-understanding in a way that's actually tractable, and doesn't leave you mired in confusion. So that's kind of where I want to go, I actually want to give you texts; some of the primary sources that Wilber worked from, some of the contemporaneous sources that there are actually simpler ways of saying the same thing that we'd all like to say.

That's kind of where I'm going, much more to the academic footnotes and getting in touch with the broader cultural Zeitgeist, and try to move beyond this Integral parochialism that I think sometimes we end up shooting ourselves in the foot in the real world. So that's my two cents there.

Nicole Hello, everyone. Firstly, I just want to echo Zak and just huge props to the passion and sizzle that I'm feeling already in an hour's time listening to this call. It's just been so enlivening and exciting to me I also just want to thank everybody that's listening in for being with us tonight and on the journey going forward. I'm also just really honored and humbled to be working amongst these three veritable geniuses. My Unique Gift and contribution to you in this course structure as a Certified Integral Life Coach, is to really bring what we're learning about in these calls right off the call and right on to the playing field of your life, as it were.

So how do these enlightening words and concepts show up? Or how do I find the Second Simplicity in my life in the moments that really matter? Because as we've heard throughout this call, Second Simplicity is not just a learned thing really, it's a lived thing. So how do I access and exercise this knowing and being, such that I continue to grow into a kinder and more loving and compassionate and maybe even happier with the life that I'm leading? That's where practice comes into play, and that's what my breakout is going to be all about.

I just want to take a step back. For those of you who may not know the definition of practice as we're using it in this context, it's just really anything that you're regularly engaging in your life, in order to grow as a human being and to increase your health and wellbeing. Then if you take it one step deeper, it's really not merely for your own personal benefit, though it certainly can fulfil personally. Rather, it just really starts there, and then extends outward to your friends, your family, your colleagues, who you interact with every day. Then beyond that, even into service of all beings.

So with that deepest of motivations and potentialities, and even I would call it a responsibility for practice, I want to invite you to join me on my breakout calls, to just really deepen your full-bodied understanding, and just the daily engagement with the beautiful Dharma that we began to hear tonight. Next week, we'll take more of a meta-view of your practice in your life, to kick things off, just to see what's happening with it now, and really how targeted is it to working on what's really most pressing in your life; kind of getting the larger container of your practice on a track that's more in alignment with those specific needs and goals. Really, that's there by finding the Second Simplicity, and even just an exhale of the precision that holds and honors the complexity of your whole being.

So I want to invite you to come on, and we'll have some fun; we'll play with practices on the calls, and I'll give you practices to engage in between calls. There'll also be time for Q&A on my calls around your specific questions and challenges. All you really need is your full self and journaling pen. I hope you'll join me. That's really it. Thank you, everyone.

Marc Thank you, Nicole. Thank you, Clint. And thank you, Zak. So we're going to finish now everyone, because we're about four minutes over time. Let me just finish with an image, and invite you to these fantastic breakout sessions next week. Then the third week, we'll come back together in a call that's somewhat like today, but with a section for Q&A, and some more weeding. So let's just try and finish understanding where we are.

There's a beautiful old text in the sacred traditions, which talks about the divine; the deep meta-meshwork of meaning of all that is, the Love-Intelligence of all that is, the understanding of the broader vision and story, that the divine is hidden. The text reads, *weanoki has-ter astir pa-nay*: "I will surely hide, I will hide my face." The word "I will hide" is repeated twice. So the mystical masters, my lineage teachers, read it by saying the hiddenness is hidden. Taking a step deeper, if we forget the story, we can always remember it. The great tragedy of post-postmodernity is not only have we forgotten the story, but we've forgotten that we've forgotten, and when we've forgotten that we've forgotten, we don't even remember what it might mean to live in a context of meaning, to live in the greater story.

As Nicole said very beautifully and very correctly, we're engaging in this process in order to deepen our personal life, in order to become more whole, more healthy. We're engaging in order to be better lovers, better parents, better friends, better colleagues, better human beings. But we're also engaging it as an evolutionary act, for the sake of the be all. We're engaging in this evolution of consciousness because every generation is responsible for its evolution of consciousness.

Sat-Chit-Ananda: being, consciousness, and love. So the inner understanding and the inner fabric of Chit: consciousness, is Ananda: love. The evolution of consciousness is the evolution of love, which we're engaged in for the sake of all beings, because we can. Because we have, thank God, the minds, the hearts, and the ability to engage in this. We're actually entering into the leading edge—humbly, audaciously, radically—seeking to evolve consciousness for our own sakes, for the sake of all future generations, and for the sake of all sentient beings. Because that is the core act of a Bodhisattva, and we all need to be Bodhisattvas; emerging from a Kosmocentric consciousness to take responsibility for the being and becoming for the next unfolding.

So thank you, everyone. We'll try and be more precise in terms of finishing on time next week. Thank you to everyone, have fantastic breakout calls next week.

LivingBeyondComplexity-March-Call 2-Clint

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Speakers

Clint Fuhs

Clint Everyone, this is Clint. Just making sure that you're on the right breakout call, the one that you've selected. If not, feel free to jump off the line and jump on to either Zak or Nicole's, and you'll get download access for all three calls. It's an honor to be here joining you guys today in our second set of calls for the Living Beyond Complexity series.

My series of breakout calls, we'll see how they unfold over time, but generally speaking, we could say that they'll focus on how we may go about using the theoretical distinctions provided by the Integral map to help us walk along this path towards Second Simplicity. So how can we use these maps to help us navigate more authentically, with greater integrity, with greater effectiveness and ease, if you will, toward this notion of a Second Simplicity, which we'll press into through several different facets and theoretical distinctions today, unpacking it from several different angles.

But to start, let me just tell you where we're going to head today. So we have an hour for the call. I'm going to begin by making just a series of five, what I think are critical meta-points. I think these meta-points are actually likely going to resurface in my breakout calls, probably throughout the whole series. So we'll touch in with each, maybe even every time, just deepening them as we go, or looking at them in relation to the other topics next month: ethics, and beyond that, perspective-taking, laughter, tears. Generally, in order of the concepts of the topics, but we'll look at each through the lens of these five meta-points.

After that, we'll head into looking at three theoretical distinctions: structure stages, state stages, and what we're going to call stations. So we'll look at each of those three and how they view this general Second Simplicity spectrum, which we started off discussing last week. Now when I say Second Simplicity spectrum, what we're basically talking about is that pattern of three; the move from simplicity, to complexity, to simplicity again, we'll call that our Second Simplicity spectrum. In the second part of the call, we'll look at that spectrum through the lenses of structures, states, and stations. Then my hope is to leave 15–20 minutes at the end for just questions or dialogue; check in with you guys, see where things are at, and go from there.

I'm going to jump right into these meta-points, and I'm going to start by heading back to where we were last week. One really critical and key line is, Marc in his beautiful opening made a critical point in regards to this breakout call, and he said that theory is love, or theory is a form of loving. That's the meta-point of all meta-points that can actually hold what we're going to do together in this series of breakout calls. Let's push into that a little bit. Because it sounds like two theory heads—me and Marc, and you

could probably get Zak on board here as well—just trying to dress up our third-person abstract love of the maps by adding a little love into the mix.

I hope you can feel that most of us who dedicate as much energy and effort as we do into theory—and I think most of you probably relate to this, or otherwise, you wouldn't be on this call—that you do it out of a love and out of a passion. But when we say theory as love, we're not really referencing that, and we're not so much speaking about your desires or motivations. Rather, just to cut right to the heart of it, we're talking about a third-person honoring and a third-person-oriented participation in the evolution of spirit. It's a third-person way of getting in there with the erotic or the erotic unfolding of the Kosmos.

You could liken it to say—a distinction that you're all probably familiar with—the third-person face of God. So when we say third-person, obviously, what we have behind there is a second-person face of God, a first-person face of God, and the second and first-person ways of communing and participating with or being one with spirit. Theory happens to focus or fall more in that third-person realm.

So it's not the best. It may be what some of us choose to do and spend more of our time doing, I should say, and that's perfectly fine, as long as we don't fall into any reductionism or absolutisms. It's certainly the path that I've chosen, or that's chosen me; we could argue that it's the path that Ken chose, or that chose him. Again, you wouldn't be on this call if you don't have some overlap or resonance with that perspective.

So theory as love is an active process of engaging that one really important and beautiful third-person face of God. We can look at that just briefly through this lens of a Second Simplicity spectrum. So let's start with something that you all have heard. Integral maps, this set of five elements: quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types. They make up the AQAL framework or the Integral framework. You've heard this just repeated over and over in most of the books, in eight years of working with Ken in this field, in all the audios and all the videos, that the map is not the territory; the one core teaching. I'm going to position that teaching in the Second Simplicity spectrum.

Starting at the beginning. First, there's no map; we don't have a map, we don't need a map, we can't see a map. In a certain range of development, technically before a third-person perspective-taking capacity comes online—which comes online, generally speaking, about the Orange altitude; the modern, rational, early systems thinking sort of altitude or range of development—prior to that, first and second-person perspectives dominate, and you really can't fully grasp the heart of what a third-person map like Integral is actually about. So we start with no map.

Then we move, step two, to map. It's at this realm of map—which correlates with complexity, not surprisingly—that we find this core teaching that the map is not the territory. Here's the big question. Typically, it just stops there. Typically, we just continue to repeat ourselves about let's learn the map, but always remember that the map is not the territory. But what if we were to speculate, what if we were to hypothesize, what if we were to touch in with those moments in our experience where that didn't seem one hundred percent true?

I don't mean in a reductionistic or confused way. Think about it in a paradoxical beautiful way. Have you ever experienced a time where the map was the territory, where there was no difference between the map and the territory it was describing? Because the AQAL

distinctions were rising in your awareness, helping you navigate your life as it was unfolding moment to moment; map or territory, it's hard to tell what the distinction is. So I postulate that that is our third move. That's the Second Simplicity in regards to this theoretical third-person participation with the unfolding of spirit.

So again, we start with no map, we go to map, and then back to another, a second, no map. Again, as you know, we don't want to confuse Level One and Two. Yeah, pre-trance fallacy, we've heard about that stuff before at Level One and Three confusion. But even more to the point, from an awareness perspective, as a practice, over this course of these breakout calls, we want to cultivate our ability to discern when we're moving toward Level One, towards the first no map, the first simplicity; or when we're moving towards the Second Simplicity, the second no map; and also being able to experientially experience what the difference is. That's the first meta-point, and as you can sense, we'll return to that as we go forward.

Next, like I said last week, the Second Simplicity—I don't care how you want to slice it; I don't care if you're going to hear it from Marc's perspective, Zak, Nicole, or mine—it's not easy. Reaching the Second Simplicity, however we conceive of it, does not mean easy. It doesn't mean simply graspable. It's not simplistic, in the sense of simplicity. So as we make these moves toward the Second Simplicity, we're going to experience difficulty and confusion.

The third meta-point flows right out of that, which is that all of us, generally speaking, both as individuals and particularly as a collective as a culture—both as an Integral community, an enlightenment community, a world spirituality community, but also just as a Western community around the globe—we are not at the place of experiencing or living the Second Simplicity. So what that then suggests as a third meta-point is that we're all moving there together—our fourth sort of meta-point—and that's what this discourse, that we're hoping to generate in this series of Living Beyond Complexity calls, that's what it aims to help us move towards.

Starting as individuals, joining together in this really small and elite collective, and then hopefully extending out to larger and larger collectives. This doesn't mean that everybody has to learn the Integral map, that's not how we extend this out to larger collectives. It's about learning the skills and capacities and practices that actually help us live beyond complexity, moving through complexity to something after it, and spreading that out in the work that we do, in the way that we love, in the way that we parent.

So our fourth meta-point is, this is the growing tip. It's a multi-year, multi-decade sort of investment, and you all are invited to participate in that discourse. That's really at the core of what we're doing here, and that's at the core of why Marc and I decided to do it in this way; this kind of seemingly complex way, where there's four of us involved, and we do a call with Marc, and then we do these breakout calls, and then a call with Marc, and all of us are sort of thrown in there together with all these various different perspectives. If you think you're confused now, wait until you download the three calls that are happening right now. So we're all participating in this growing edge, this sophistication of the discourse.

In regards to that point, that we're all not there, we're not living at a place of Second Simplicity, I think one possible way to alleviate that, to change that, to shift that, is to be really serious about this discourse; first, to just have it, to start it. This goes back to the point that Second Simplicity is not easy. This is not the telecourse: The Three Steps

Towards Enlightenment. No, it's not at all. We continue with the 2,700 steps towards enlightenment, and they're really confusing and complex most of the time. But that's the discourse, that's the nature of this discourse, until we together move towards discovering what the Second Simplicity is. When I say discovering, it's not just marketing lingo, it really is a process of discovering this together.

Finally, as we move towards this bit on how we understand Second Simplicity through these theoretical perspectives, our fifth and final meta-point is that we're going to work to understand this notion of Second Simplicity as a metaphor; we could go on for 20–40 minutes about the need to nature of the notion of metaphor. I was checking in last night with Lakoff and Johnson's books on metaphors. It's just totally amazing stuff penetrating the deep archetypical, cultural, and historical role that metaphors have played in social cultural unfolding; we can touch in on that at some other point. But when I say metaphor, I'm saying it in the deepest sort of sense, not just in the sense of like, let's just compare this to that so we don't have to be precise. No, really.

Understanding Second Simplicity as a metaphor will allow us to do this. It'll allow us to hold how we can possibly understand Second Simplicity through the lens of structure stages, through the lens of state stages, and through the lens of stations. As a metaphor, it allows us to hold all of those three together in one metaphorical beautiful paradox. I'd like to argue, and we can check in on this later as we go, that if we can cultivate the ability to do that, and if we can cultivate the capacity to recognize when we're doing that and when we're not. So when we're not would be when we're just trying to hang on to every single word that's coming out of Clint's mouth or Marc's mouth, because we have to; we just have to understand and make sense of every single thing. That's not holding it as a metaphor, that is being mired—we can say, even though it gets a little unhealthy—in that second level of complexity.

But one way to work with this is a simple shift beyond that perverse fascination with complexity and making sense of everything; that's a tagline you've heard. We shift beyond that, and we just hold all these notions as a metaphor, to cultivate the ability to see that. It's like we can start witnessing life; your life, my life. As its arising, we can start witnessing it as sort of like a vibrant painting, like an improvisational painting. As it unfolds, as I go over here, we've got some states stuff arising; and over here, we have this structure stuff arising; and over here, we have the station stuff arising; and that's you orienting yourself, navigating, making sense live in real-time, using the Integral map and these distinctions to help you. But as you're doing all that, you're just holding it; you're kind of smiling at it, you're kind of laughing at it even. That's one way we can just slip right into Second Simplicity, really, at any point in time.

So those are our five meta-points to frame this up, to start it out. Again, we're going to touch on those as we go forward. In the next 20 minutes or so, I'm going to be pushing into these three theoretical distinctions, and we'll do this through the lens of a touching in with what I was calling last week, the sort of grandma koan. I don't know if that'll work, but we'll have fun with it together and see where it ends up. This grandma koan—I don't want to call it a problem because I don't like calling grandma's problems; that's just sort of rude—but this grandma koan is a discussion that Marc and I had started about eight or nine months ago, and like I said last week, it never actually finished. That's another example of here we go right now, working with this discourse at the growing edge, figuring this out as we go forward.

I don't remember the exact details, maybe Marc will tell us next week. But the grandma koan was he was talking about when he lived in Israel, and there was this woman, I think she was a neighbor. She was someone's grandma; she wasn't Marc's grandmother. Let's say she was 90 years old; she was totally old and totally beautiful. She lived down the hall from Marc, and he would go over and visit her and spend time with her once a week, and he did this for like years. So he just developed this massively beautiful, this massively deep love affair with this woman; just everything about her being. She was just captivating, she was fascinating, she was so deep, so present, so loving, so compassionate; everything we can say that all of us want to be, want to embody, in some sense.

The question then becomes, or the koan then emerges, that when we look at who that person was through the lens of the Integral map, we might start to say, if she's not enlightened, I don't know what enlightenment is. Of course, that brings up the notion of what do we mean by enlightenment? That itself is another series of like 20 calls. But as you know from the Integral community, from Ken's writing, particularly in [Integral Spirituality], in short, Ken has defined Integral enlightenment as having two components. There's a component of vertical or structure stage development, which we'll get to more of in a moment, and there's a horizontal component of state stage development.

Here's the koan. Our beautiful deep being of the grandma has never intentionally cultivated development in either of those spectrums. So what gives? How does she come off as showing up as so enlightened, but she's not even aware of Kohlberg's work in moral development or Keegan's work in orders of consciousness or anything with Integral? While she might be aware of states in some sense, we're not talking about some devout monastic with 30 years in the zendo, sort of cultivating state stage movement kind of person. Yet, we see this profundity view of beingness. So how do we make sense of it?

Like all koans, they're basically designed to be unsolvable, and what they require typically to break free or to break through is a shift in consciousness, or a shift in state of awareness. So what we have here is just a koanic, if that's even a word, framing, that holds this discussion about state stages and structure stages.

So we could say from the structure stage perspective that our grandmother here is living, let's say for the sake of argument, in a very deeply traditional ethno-centric culture. She's living in Israel, so it's safe enough to say. But we can't say then that she's such a developmental pioneer that she's moved six or seven stages beyond what the social cultural center of gravity is. Now, on the state side, we could possibly say, she's probably had some peak experiences of states beyond the waking realm for sure, and that contributes in a large way to how she shows up as being this deep being.

But let's touch in with structure stages first. So Second Simplicity can be understood as referring to a macro developmental spectrum of levels of consciousness. Now when I say levels, I'm referring to the all-levels component of the Integral map. But in this context, we're going to call them structure stages. Structure refers to their deep patterns, and stages refers to the fact that they unfold sequentially, and that as they unfold sequentially, we can't skip structure stages.

Now, there's any number of developmental lines, several dozen to be precise, all explored by different researchers, and we could look to any of them for an understanding of what this vertical spectrum of structure stages is. So there's altitude, which is sort of an amalgam of many of them. But altitude has quite a few distinctions, which we don't have

time to fully get through in this call. So I'm going to work with just the two simplest ones, to give you an idea.

Egocentric, ethnocentric, worldcentric, and Kosmocentric. You guys have heard those ones before, I imagine. When we say egocentric, we're talking about how far, how big, how developed is your sense of care and concern. When it's egocentric, it's only for yourself. When it's ethnocentric, like our grandma here, it extends to include those who define as in your group; based on race, religion, sex, sports teams, political affiliation, or any number of things. Then, when it moves to worldcentric, your care and compassion expands to include all humans, regardless of those group-based distinctions. Then when it moves to Kosmocentric or the truly transpersonal structures, we see an expansion that includes all beings, rather than just all humans.

So that's just to orient us, that's a spectrum of vertical development that basically covers from birth to the highest places that humans have gotten. But we need a little bit more, something a little more precise. So let's look at this same spectrum through the lens of how thinking operates. Thinking at this first level could be also called egocentric, and it works like this. There's one way to view something, there's one way to make sense of something, and you know what, it's my way; your way doesn't even exist to me. My way of thinking about this, that, or the other thing, is right. So we can all touch in with folks that are developed to that place: children, some adults who are struggling, and ourselves as we slip into our little narcissistic games at times.

A step-up from egocentric thinking, an actual huge developmental move, is absolutistic thinking. Absolutistic says two things: either or, black or white. I see two options, but only one of them is right, only one of them is correct. You accept Jesus as your Savior; that's on one side. Now, I'll acknowledge that on the other side, there's all these people who don't accept Jesus as their savior, but they're wrong; they're going to hell. An absolutistic thinking, kind of stereotyped there, just to make a point. So absolutistic thinking: either or, not both, and black or white.

From there, we move to multiplistic thinking. Multiplistic thinking is the emergent of the Orange altitude; what we were talking before about emergence of rationality and early systems thinking. Multiplistic thinking says, you know what, there's a whole range of potential right views. If we're trying to explain how people get sick, and we think there's these things called bacteria that are involved and we're trying to discover this, there's many different options for what could be right. But the quest of science, and the quest of rationality, is to look at all those options and determine which is best. That brings on the notion of like a meritocracy for best; not just fully right, but which is best. We're going to use science, primarily rationality, thinking, and deductive logic, to figure that out. So multiplistic thinking: many different options, but still one of which that is best.

Then we move to pluralistic thinking, or we could also sometimes call it relativistic. This is associated with postmodernism; this is associated with the Green altitude. It suggests that there are many different ways of possibly viewing any given situation; we can even say an infinite possibly number of ways. Because everybody is grounded or situated in their cultural or historical background. Also, we can't say that one is more right than any other, because to do so would be to marginalize; to do so would be to oppress. All these views are important, and we're going to work to honor them all. Obviously, there's a beautiful partial truth in there, one which led to egalitarianism, which led toward the ending of slavery, which led toward the beginning of civil rights, the beginning of women's rights, the beginning of environmentalism; all that beautiful stuff. But it can go

extreme, and it can get a little crazy, as you also probably are familiar with. It can cause a boomeritis, but we can push into that at some other point.

Beyond that, our last wave of thinking would be Integral thinking, and we'll just use that term broadly to refer to everything beyond relativistic or pluralistic. Integral thinking says, there's many different options, many different possibilities, many different perspectives. But we do have a couple of mechanisms where we can determine how to rank, in a specific context, which one of those options is more right; more whole, a little bit better, than some other options. We're going to use a number of mechanisms to do that, and it's always based on the context that we're in.

So these aren't fully just across the board universals, they're more contextually based. Sometimes we'll use levels of development to aid that ranking. Sometimes we'll work with quadrants. Sometimes we'll just use our intuitive sense. For instance, I can honor your perspective on what we should do in regards to say an ethical violation at a corporation, but I've got to go with my gut here. Given all these variables I'm tracking, my perspective or my route through this ethical issue as containing more wholeness, less partiality. It's not right one hundred percent across the board because it's me; that'd be slipping back down to the lower level. But in this context, I'm going to select it and support it as more right.

So that's just a brief tour of what we mean by structure stages. Second Simplicity—this spectrum of three: from simplicity, to complexity, to the Second Simplicity—understood through the lens of structure stages, that Second Simplicity is somewhere up there, at least at those Integral levels or higher. Now, we say that to get to Second Simplicity, we have to move beyond the complexity. Many of you are correctly probably thinking, "Wait a second, I've been doing Integral for a long time. I'm pretty Integral on a good day as far as my developmental expression. But let me tell you, this is pretty complex. I don't really feel like I'm moving beyond complexity at all." So again, we could push it a little bit higher if we want, and we can say that as far as how we move towards this path of enlightenment, Second Simplicity, as seen through structure standards, is up there towards what we can call third tier; we could call it post-Integral, we could call it transpersonal, but it's up there at the top.

So from just this perspective of understanding Second Simplicity as a structure stage, then it's pointless, in some sense, for us to engage in this discourse for eight months. Because it's like, come on, you guys know just as well as I know that we're not going to be moving our structure stage of development in eight months; research shows that it takes five to seven years. The good news for us is that Second Simplicity is not just about structure stages, and it's not exclusively to be understood through the lens of structure stages. So we have state stages.

Now, let's start with states first, before we add the stages component. Waking, dreaming, deep dreamless sleep. Waking: sometimes called the gross state, dreaming: the subtle state, and deep dreamless sleep: the causal state. You've also heard of two other things that we tack on to the end, and that the traditions tack on to the end, and those states are different because they're ever present. They're called witnessing and non-dual. So sometimes we work with three states: gross, subtle, causal; sometimes we work with four: gross, subtle, causal, non-dual; and sometimes we work with all five: gross, subtle, causal, witnessing, what Ken would call Turiya from the traditions, and non-dual, also called Turiyatita.

Now, why am I saying that? I'm not going to go through all three of those options, but just to point it out, this is complexity here. So we're moving beyond it, we're moving through it. It just highlights that look, at some point, [audio break 31:05] what states, because people use different amounts of states. So anyone can have a peak experience of oneness with the gross, subtle, causal, witnessing, or non-dual state at any point. Many of you have had profound peak experiences of these states; spiritual experiences, mystical experiences, coming one with nature, becoming one with the energetics of a personal interaction or a group interaction.

The subtle state: emotionality, the energetics. The classical Zen Buddhist meditation experience of the causal void or emptiness; a complete cessation of suffering and a cessation of the arising of phenomena. Actually in the direct reports, it has a color; it looks, it feels, it is blue, black. The causal state, from one tradition's lens.

Witnessing is when you step back from that causal, you push through it, and you recognize that there's one consciousness, one subject: the Witness, who witnesses the arising of every phenomena in the manifest realm. That the number of witnesses or true selves in the Kosmos is one. So it's not that there's Charles's witnesses and then Clint's witnesses, there's just the Witness. When we look out through the eyes of the Witness, we're looking out for that one pair of eyes, witnessing entire relative realm, arising as an object of our awareness.

Then the non-dual state is when that final subject-object dualism—that final subject-object split, between the Witness and all that the Witness witnesses—when that dissolves, it literally feels in some traditions and some practices like a dissolution, like there's a tug, like a slight tension. People say it's located behind your solar plexus heart area, or right behind your third eye. I experienced it more, personally, behind my face. That's like the feeling of the Witness. When that dissolves, it pops into non-dual, where the absolute and manifest realms are not one, but they're not two, they're not both; they're not neither. It's an experience of radical non-separation beyond distinctions.

So those are our five states, and we can peak experience those from any structure of development; someone who's egocentric can experience any of them, someone who's Integral can experience any of them. The difference, as we know, is the way that we come to make sense of those experiences, because that sensemaking process is driven by or filtered through our structure of development.

So that's the states piece of it. Then when we add state stages to the end, what we talk about is the spectrum of unfolding of development in that state spectrum. But what's developing is not the states themselves—they've been around for a while; babies have access to deep dreamless sleep—what's developing is your capacity for what we call Wakefulness, your capacity for having stabilized or always on access to the phenomena disclosed in the various states. So that's not a peak experience. So we could all do a meditation right now and many of us could get into causal, and then as soon as the call ended or the meditation ended, it would go away, the peak experience.

Reaching a causal state stage is where we've trained our awareness, through various practices and injunctions from various traditions, to have a stable access to those causal phenomenon. When we do this path of training, in virtually any different tradition, what's the same is not the experiences that they provide, but it's the steps they go through. They generally start with gross, they go to subtle, they go to causal, then to witnessing, and then to non-dual. So those are the state stages.

When we understand Second Simplicity through the lens of states, what we recognize is that any experience of we can say causal, witnessing, or non-dual, oftentimes, will feel like or bring us to what we might otherwise call the Second Simplicity; this living beyond complexity, this experience of some sort of freedom. So we also can understand that Second Simplicity, as either a high state stage, you've developed your wakefulness toward it, or the high peak experience of the state.

To go back to our grandma, we can say, she probably hasn't outpaced her culture by six or seven structures in the vertical spectrum. But she probably does have some sensemaking of this koan. She probably does have pretty stable access to subtle phenomenon, and probably access beyond that. That would account in many ways for a lot of the depths, a lot of the freedom, a lot of the enlightenment, that we were ascribing to her.

I'm going to make one last distinction here, and that's what we've been calling stations. Sorry, they all begin with an S. I know it's kind of confusing, it's hard to say, it's hard to keep track of. But stations—I think Marc will get into them as well, as we go forward—as a reference point, for those of you who've studied Integral for many years, can be likened to what Ken has called fulcrums. They are the developmental transitions between structure stages. There are also developmental transitions between state stages, and Ken happens to call those switch points.

But the point here is that switch points and fulcrums both undergo a three-step or a three-station movement. That's a movement from identification, where—let's work with structures—you're sort of fused with, not necessarily in an unhealthy way, but identified with whatever your perspective happens to be. If you're at Red development, then you're fused with a Red egocentric perspective. If you're at Amber, maybe you're fused with an absolutistic perspective. If you're Integral, you're fused with the Integral perspective, as we described it earlier. It works for you; you're identified with it; you're getting good traction in your life with it.

But then, that starts to break down, for any number of reasons, and you move into a process of disidentification or differentiation. "I see this has worked for me, but it's not really working anymore—this is absolutistic thinking—why is it pissing off all of my friends? It seems to work at home, but when I go to work, and I start spouting out these either or's, my colleagues look at me like I'm sideways, like something's wrong with me." That might be the case if your workplace is more of a worldcentric multiplistic place. So you start to differentiate, and that's a painful process typically. It can go healthy, it can go unhealthy, but generally speaking, it's a birthing process; a birthing into a next new higher wave of development.

So as you make that shift, as you make that move, sometimes over the span of many years, you get to a place of the third phase, third station of integration, where you sort of reorganize, you resolidify this new higher level, you reach down, you include the capacities that you need from the previous level. That's the 'transcend and include' thing you've heard about. Sometimes you transcend, move beyond and negate, or leave behind. Some transitional things you don't need anymore, like an egocentric moral perspective; when you're at worldcentric moral perspective, you don't need the egocentric one, it's actually left behind. That's all navigated in this third phase or third station of integration. If Marc does get into this, you'll hear him call these submission, separation, and sweetness.

This whole notion of stations, this is really where we get to the essence of Second Simplicity as a metaphor. Because what we're talking about here are just Holy Trinities; patterns of three that emerge through different scales of investigation: macro-developmental scale, which looks at development over a lifespan, and a micro-developmental scale that looks at development over minutes and hours. This metaphor of stations also works with states and state stages.

So when we grasp and hold structures next to state, next to stations, what we actually realize is that we have this fractalized view, which, yes, will and should land with you as feeling complex, and feeling like it evokes confusion. But again, back to our practice, our pointing out instruction here—if you're listening to this call, if you're on the call, if you've downloaded it, whatever—don't try overly to understand every aspect of every single thing that I'm saying. We'll get there, you'll get there; you have time, we can work it out. Because all I'm saying in these 20–30 minutes here is a product of years of working with Ken, mostly in office.

Rather, pause for a moment, and in your mind's eye, visualize this as this beautiful fractal. If you don't know what fractal is, Google fractal and you'll see the fractal pictures are gorgeous; snapshots of complexity and chaos. They actually make gorgeous artwork, so print them out, put them on your wall. That's one way to view this. If you can find yourself just sitting there in reverence with all of this complexity, not trying to overly figure it out, what you might do is you might flip your state into a state of Second Simplicity. It'll have a feeling component. Just vision it, you'll feel the freedom. I don't have to understand all this, I'll get there. I have faith, I have trust. But what I'm sitting here in reverence of is that God or Spirit manifests in this relative realm, in this third-person radically complex and simultaneously beautiful way. I'm just here, encountering that beauty.

This is a pretty masculine kind of beauty, not everybody's going to think this is beautiful. You probably wouldn't be listening to this call if you couldn't resonate with this, with what I'm saying. But if you can't at all, if you're like, "God, this guy's nuts! He's talking about beauty of fractals? What about beauty of my partner? What about beauty of a flower?" Then I'll say, you can experience all that through a third-person perspective as well, just one face of God.

When it comes to this map, these Integral distinctions, structure stages, state stages, and stations, if we hold that place of beautiful reverence, and we hold it as a practice—and if we slip out of it, we come back to it—rather than always coming back to this desire to make sense of everything, we'll find that we're moving toward a Second Simplicity, that we're moving toward a living beyond complexity. As we do it, as we repeat it over time, it will have an effect on our capacity, basically, to use this map, to walk through our lives in more loving and compassionate and more authentic ways.

So let's leave it at that for now. I'm going to invite those of you on the call to unmute, and then we can discuss some of these points; ask a question, share a perspective. So I'll stop for now, give you a moment to think of a question and unmute your line.

Listener I wanted to make quite a few comments actually, but I'll just limit it to maybe one or max two. The first one is, I'm so excited about this whole notion of Second simplicity. Sometimes, a concept just hits you and you resonate so deeply with it. I remember I was probably 18 years old way back when I first encountered the American transcendentalists,

I think it was Thoreau at that time. There was a line at that time of my life where that really hit me. He once said, "Our life is frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify, simplify!" That sort of caught me, and that lived with me, maybe at a first simplicity level, I would believe. Because since then, I've become sufficiently screwed up in complexity.

But now, the Second Simplicity is something of a holy ground that I feel. I love the way that you call it beautiful, and the fractal beauty arising and playing itself out. I really liked that, and it reminded me of what I think Ken wrote in *Integral Spirituality* in his little trivial play with the intelligent design people, where he said that creation is as much as beautiful and what have you, it's less of an intelligent design, he called it an artistic allure. I really liked that, because that does not rob the whole aspect of this arising of this dynamic of play; this element of play and surprise and wonder, and all that that entails, which we would lose on if it were some of this engineering type of precision design.

Clint There's actually so much of that buried in so much of Ken and other's writing, particularly with Ken, because it's supposed to be about theory. I mean, we've got so much to learn here. We experience it, those passages when we read them, and then we can drop into that space. It's amazing. Maybe this is just my experience, and that's fine if it is. But then, it's so easy to step out of those, and back to learning the next complex points. I think it's like a treasure hunt, going through a lot of that writing, to see the points where he and others have pointed out, what we've just been calling here Second Simplicity.

For this week, the practice for us for this breakout call session would be just the cultivation of space to just stand or sit or witness that beauty with reverence, and bow to it; pause just 10 seconds longer when you encounter it. It seems simple, but that's a practice. So do it, all of us. See if we can expand and add 10 more seconds to when we encounter something that we feel or resonate as embodying the Second Simplicity.

Someone posted an Oliver Wendell Holmes quote on my Facebook page, yesterday. It goes something like, "I wouldn't give a fig for the simplicity that comes before complexity, but I give my life for the simplicity that lies beyond it." I was like shocked, I'm like, "Oh, no, the state is going to sue us for stealing his marketing." But I've never seen it, I've never encountered it. But what a treasure! I mean, that's like the same language we're using here. I really think these patterns of three, they're like fractals, they're like strange attractors, that they literally are Kosmic patterns, and that we can go on these treasure hunts of sorts, noticing in reverence of where these patterns of three have just popped up throughout the ages.

Listener For me, too, as we talked, things that really have struck me, one of them was this first-person, second person, and the third-person; theory is love, and this unfolding in the spirit; and the third-person, which the fractals I think you're saying is a metaphors for that. This really struck me, I think there's really something about what you're just saying. Cultivation of space, I think is that third-person space you're talking about?

Clint I mean, space is a tricky one to associate; a lot of people will say space is first-person meditation. But I actually view it in more of a third-person way, which I think is where you're heading to it. Then, the fractal, it's the perfect metaphor. The thing is, basically, it's all math-based. It's derived through these massive organic calculations done by both humans, but also produced by the Kosmos in shells and flowers, and all those things that you hear about; the golden ratio and whatnot. But fractals, they were turned into art

because people naturally said, this is gorgeous. Again, Google them and you could look at them for hours.

Listener Another comment I just wanted to ask about was, we're talking a lot about this in terms of our own internal personal movement into Second Simplicity; the identification, disidentification, and integration. So I work a lot with groups, and I imagine a group itself can do that too. Can't it?

Clint Yeah, totally. You nailed it when you brought it to—this is where the map can help—the notion of stations; you said identification, disidentification, and integration. Now, groups don't experience the structure stages and state stages in the way that I described it on this call. At some other point, we likely will get there, and we can talk about how those two distinctions show up with groups: structures and states. But stations, because it already is a sort of metaphor, you totally can see those in groups, and even some of the group process literature of like storming, norming, and conforming—I got those out of order probably, and I'm also not remembering who the theorist was who presented it—but the notion of group dynamics and group process, you can see the parallels.

Listener Because I've been using a lot of Otto Scharmer's Theory U.

Clint Well, Theory U is all about states. So what Otto was doing there is he developed both a theoretical frame and a group process for getting groups into causal spaces. He doesn't describe it like that, but we've talked to him using the Integral language. Like, he's bringing people from gross to subtle into causal to bottom of view, and then back out into subtle and into gross. When you come back out from that ground, which you're experiencing as a shared ground—because it is a shared ground, but you're also doing it in a group—when you come back out, it's where you can come out with deeper intuitions about solutions to problems. That's why the U process is so widely acclaimed, I guess is one way to put it, because it's harnessing the states. I think it could then be understood to be guiding people through these stations, of identifying, disidentifying, and integrating, kind of around a problem or around a shared vision on whatever the group happens to be doing.

This is what I'm pointing at when I say, this isn't easy, this is a metaphor; we're not there individually or collectively, and here's the discourse. So this is for you to take forward into your work, the next time you're with a group. Then you come back and you tell us later how you think this fit. Then that's really how this is co-created, and it's how we're moving this discourse up and forward and beyond. As I mentioned, at some point, we'll have a better answer for a lot of these things. What I mean by that is, it's not really about us, it's about our maps will get more sophisticated and more accurate; we'll grow and we'll expand them.

Listener I want to finally make a comment here. He mentioned the group dynamics, and you mentioned Sherman's work as being focused more on states, all the way down to causal and bringing them back. I think I remember encountering something in Ken's work, the *Integral Spirituality*, where he says that he takes issue with group dynamics; people who study groups and want to make it parallel to development with individuals. He says that it's different from individual dominant monad—I think he quotes Leibniz there a bit—that individuals have dominant monad, and groups have what he calls nexus-agency, I believe.

Clint I mean, we're deep into complexity, but this is another core truth. Let me try to distill it really clearly. But you've nailed it. I mean, that is what he does, that is where he takes the issue, and he does it most in the excerpts to Volume Two. But what you're talking about here is that it's a difference between individual and social holons, the difference between individuals and groups.

To sum it up just as nuggets, if I were to get up right now out of my chair, at my desk, on this call, and walk across the room, my liver would go with me. It doesn't have a choice; it couldn't stay back and hang out at the desk. Because I have a dominant monad—the term is from Leibniz—and that dominant mode exerts control over my parts. My parts, one of them is my liver, so it'd go with me. Now, same metaphor. If I get up, walk from my desk across the room, will I take any one of you with me? We're a social holon right now; we're a group doing a conference call. Even if you're downloading it and listening to it, you're in this shared space.

But if I get up and go across the room, of course you guys aren't walking with me; I don't control you. That's because a group doesn't have what we call a dominant monad or a central agency. Rather, they have a nexus; nexus meaning network, nexus meaning shared agency. So what a group can do is influence its members, not parts. Charles here on the call, you can't liken him to my liver. He's not a part of this social holon, he's a member of it, and he's a member who has his own consciousness. So we can influence each other, and our shared intersections do exert influence on each other.

Think about this from a legal perspective, because that's usually where it lands for people. So let's say we all live in the same city, that city has laws, and we all voted on those laws. One of the laws is, you don't drive 85 miles per hour in a school zone, wherein the speed limit is 25 miles an hour. If you do that, you will face repercussions: jail time, fines, etc. That law is an example of that influence of a nexus-agency, and it actually does influence your behavior, because you will think twice. If you don't do it the first time, after you get put in jail, you'll think twice the next time about speeding when you drive.

That's one example of the influence. Groups have that, but they don't control their members. So where Ken takes issue is anytime any theorist—I don't care if it's philosophy, or if it's group dynamics; he really goes after the Ecology folks—he takes issue when anybody postulates or suggests that groups have more influence or more control than they actually do.

So when we push into, in other calls, how Second Simplicity and these three lenses show up in groups, we can push further into those distinctions between individual and social holons. It's a deep area; it's exciting, it's confusing. But it's also not something we can go into much more, we're five minutes overtime here. Let's bring it back up, for sure. I'm going to honor our time commitment across the board to the best of my ability. I want to thank everybody for taking part in this call. I want to invite you to, again, join us all next week, next Thursday, same time; all of us will be together on the call. I'll also be sending out an email reminder to everybody tonight or tomorrow, that'll have access links for downloading this call and the other breakout calls with Zak and Nicole.

LivingBeyondComplexity-March-Call 2-Nicole

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Speakers

Nicole Fegley

Nicole Hello, again, everyone is Nicole. Let's get this party started. So welcome, everyone, to Second Simplicity Week Two. I just want to take a moment to orient everybody to where we're at. This is our breakout call week, and on this particular breakout call, we're going to be focusing on the Second Simplicity of your personal practice. Concurrently with this call, Zak and Clint are also conducting calls on philosophy and Integral Theory. We're recording all the calls so that you'll be able to download and listen to them at a later date, so you're not missing out on anything.

Because we're recording, to ensure the quality of the recording, I've already muted everyone. So if you're talking into the ethers and no one's answering, that's why. I'd ask that you keep your line muted during the call. I'll be taking some questions at the end, and at that time, if you want to ask a question, you'll want to unmute and speak. Just to keep us moving along and end on time, I'm probably not going to stop for questions until the end. But if you have an issue, like you can't hear me, or if you have something that's really burning for you that absolutely can't wait, then you can unmute again and feel free to ask me. So briefly, again, this call is being recorded, and you're all on mute until we take questions at the end.

That's the frame setting, and let's just jump into what we have planned for today. For those of you who tuned into the call last week, we stayed high level, and Marc really took the lead in explaining the concept of Second Simplicity. He gave us a lot of different examples of how this shows up in our lives, and what moving towards the Second Simplicity, or what moving to living beyond complexity, which is the name of this course, actually means. I'm not going to go into this broadly again on this call, just for time's sake. If you happen to miss the call or would like to learn more, you can always download last week's call if you missed it, or download Zak and Clint's call after tonight. Of course, please join us next week for the third call of the month for an integration, question and answer, and further explanation.

I'm going to stay fairly high level as it relates to practice this week as well. In future sessions with me, we'll talk more about specific concepts in the course like discernment or kindness, and we'll talk specifically about practices that help cultivate those important issues in our lives. But this week, again, I'm going to use a high-level continuum of practice. That's another example of this simplicity, to complexity, to Second Simplicity, Holy Trinity, if you will, or law of threes.

Before I do that, I just want to again offer a brief definition of what we're talking about when we say practice, just to get everybody on the same page. Also, I'm going to offer two different ways to hold practice as we go forward. So as I mentioned last week, practice is really anything we do in our lives that contributes to our wellbeing—that contributes to our health, to our growth as a human being—such that we continue to become kinder, more compassionate, happier, more fulfilled, with our lives, basically. Practice, as I like to say, helps you live your life in high definition and be just more awake and aware of your impact on the world.

Again, if you take it one step deeper, it's not merely for your own personal benefit, though it certainly does fulfil personal and it starts there really, and then it extends

outward into increasing circles of influence to friends, to colleagues, to our lovers, people that we encounter every day, and then again extends out from there in service of all beings.

Broadly, I'm going to talk about two ways to actually practice, at least in context. One is by the practices that we engage in, maybe a couple times a week, maybe every day, where we delineate that this is our practice time—whether it be the first thing in the morning, right after work, before bed—and we hold that sacred container of set aside time to work on a specific aspect(s) of our lives. So this hour that you've set aside to be with me, and to learn and engage tonight, is that kind of practice. The other way to hold practice, which sometimes we call "Practice", because we can become consciously more aware and awake to the actual moments of our lives, and we can observe ourselves and our behaviors while they're happening. This is really in service of just being more present, more skillful, and having choice in the moment as to what we do next. So I want to just stop for one moment and take a quick second and just feel into each of you how you're practicing right now, in this moment.

Now I want to share that I'm practicing trying not to get drawn away into the fact that I'm talking into the phone or into the ethers, and I don't quite have any visual or feeling cues about what those of you who are listening to me are actually experiencing. This is one of the first times I've done this, and it's a little bit scary. So what I'm practicing with in this moment, and throughout moments of the call will be, just to stay on track, and to really just rest in more of a trusting place, that what I'm saying is making sense and that it will be of some benefit. Maybe right now, you all are practicing to stay engaged with what I'm saying, or perhaps you're practicing to ignore your email, or maybe there's sounds coming from the next room, or not getting maybe drawn away into pain or feelings that are arising in your body. There's an infinite amount of ways to practice in this way. Really, all it takes is bringing our awareness to what's happening in the moment, and seeing what's there and what choices we have.

Both ways of practicing are totally necessary and beneficial, and they actually often complement one another, or even lay the groundwork for one another. So when we get up at like 6am and we do our sitting practice, or we do our yoga, we do that maybe to help us be more present in the meeting that we have later on in the day. Or if we cue into the moment of our interaction with our lover or friend, and start to realize by observing what's happening, that we need to do some shadow work later on in our designated practice space. So the two work together, and again, are just both necessary and important aspects of practice.

That's kind of the groundwork, and hopefully, that will put everybody on the same page about what practice is. From here, I want to step into a metaphor that I came up with, that I think actually elucidates the different ways we can relate to our personal practice ongoingly, and that points out another example of a Second Simplicity scale or continuum. So when I was actually thinking about this, in preparing for the call, what came to mind was that infamous Nike ad: Just do it. I'm sure all of you are familiar with this ad, I certainly hope so. If not, you may not have been out of your house for quite some time. I think it started in the 90s, and it was one of the most successful campaign ad campaigns really ever put forth.

The way that I'm relating this to the Second Simplicity is starting out with the first simplicity of Just do it. So it's just that. This happens when we first wake up perhaps, when we first know that we want to start a new practice, or start a practice at all. We find

a new teacher; we find a new community. So we're totally on in those moments; we're lit up. It's like body, mind, spirit, shadow, go! Full speed ahead. For the most part, in these moments or weeks or months or years even, practice is useful; it's really energizing, it's exciting, and we want to engage in it. The reason we want to engage in it is because it just has direct and felt benefits, and it's just what you do; you practice to continue the process of waking and growing up. So we can liken this almost in a relationship to the honeymoon phase, where we're in love, we're infatuated, and it becomes really easy to prioritize your time and basically, again, just do it.

From there, you kind of hang out for a while, and then life happens. Maybe you aren't deriving as much energy or excitement from the practices that you're doing. Maybe you're not seeing the same results, as you once were. Maybe you even feel like that piece that you've been working on has come to fruition, and that you've made some serious growth in that area. So this second phase, or the moving into the complexity piece, can be a result of the stirring of life. Things change health-wise, so maybe you can't do the same practices. Demands and responsibilities shift, so we're faced with brand new challenges. Difficulty happens, possibly even tragedy happens.

So we're seeing things, we're seeing life differently than we once did. In a way, our life demands almost become more important or take precedence over our practice. So we start to question, is this doing anything at all, am I done with it? Basically, practice can completely drop off, it can become stagnant and boring, or it can feel like running an uphill battle. The motivation and attraction that you felt in that first simplicity is harder to find; the honeymoon is over, if you will. So 'just do it' become 'just do what?' How do I just do it? Or how often do I need to do it? Or who's going to support me in doing it? Or why again am I doing it?

Again, this takes on more of a quality of a search, and it becomes complex quickly. Now, this isn't really to particularly ditch this part of the continuum at all, because I'm speaking of a very natural and kind of necessary part of development, and developing an even deeper relationship to your practice. Just like any other relationship, it's going to go through phases. So this is sort of the second, more complex and confusing, phase.

But what can come out of this phase, and what can be really fruitful because we're starting to examine things or look at things more deeply, is we can begin to recalibrate our practices. We seek out the support we need, we can take a step back and actually hone in on what's important, and we also just begin to balance our life with our practice. So we don't keep practice better than life or life better than practice, rather really, we move back and forth between the two.

So moving out of that complexity or finding what we've been calling the Second Simplicity of practice—I even call it a sweetness of practice—we realize and we just come to accept the ebbs and flows that are natural with practice. We're able to hold all the questions that were up for us in that complexity period, but we don't fixate on them, and we don't let them prevent us from engaging in some way, shape, or form. We can hold that already wholeness of ourselves and the partners and the different pieces that we need to work on. We also start to see that practice is a lifelong journey. It doesn't end, it goes through these ebbs and flows. We're also not in the rush to get it done, so we can savor and enjoy it. We realize that sometimes it's going to be awesome, and sometimes it's going to be a complete drag.

So what becomes clear in this Second Simplicity is what we need to do and what we need to focus on is what's really most present for us right now, either in our life, or as I said earlier, in the moments where we're showing up. We begin to feel kind of a trust of our practice; we trust ourselves; we trust that we're on a journey, and we're just willing to try it out for a while and see what happens. Our motivations in this period often become more grounded or realistic. We know that as we go along, we can course correct, we can dynamically steer things, and we can make small tweaks as we go along. At the end of the day, we bring that right back to Just do it, from that higher place of knowing, of being more specific with what we need to be doing, with knowing that there's going to be ebbs and flows, with knowing that some days our practice will be on and some days it will be off.

Then eventually, this whole pattern of practice gets repeated. From the Second Simplicity, we're just doing it, but our consciousness about just doing it maybe slips into the background. Or we get on a great routine, but then it becomes a little bit rote. We might find a new teacher for practice, or have some big insight that really lights us up and inspires us, and then we start out with that fresh new eyes that's similar to that first Just do it moment.

It's actually a constant process, and really a metaphor to help us feel out where we are in relationship to our practice right now, and that can be really helpful. But it's also a continuum that can have a weekly, maybe even daily, or hourly, shelf life. So we might feel completely on it and invigorated in our practice today; tomorrow, we may feel off and confused; then we move into that Second Simplicity of a grounded and deeper motivation on the third day. So we do have some control over this in that way. The Second Simplicity can almost act also like a state experience that we can consciously move ourselves into when we're struggling with our practice.

I want to stop there for just a moment, and I want you to grab your journal and your pen. Just reflect back on what I said and shared with this Second Simplicity practice continuum, and identify where you think you are now. That can be right now in this moment, it can be right now this week, whatever comes up for you. Again, it's not static, it might actually feel different tomorrow, but let's take a stab at it. So I'll give you just about 30 seconds to do that, and then I'll be right back.

So now armed with that handy metaphor, and the notes you took as to wherever you feel like you are on that continuum, I'm going to now move to walk you through an exercise that I think will help aid you in moving into that Second Simplicity of your practice, by really helping you focus up and hone in on what's happening for you right now, what's most present, and what most feels like it needs attention. Because I feel when we can identify and connect with that one piece, with that topic that's most pressing right now in our lives, and then align our practice to it, we can in some ways, let go of the grip on the whole picture and all the questions that come up, and just more easily move beyond the complexity that those questioning moments can create.

No matter where you think you're at on the continuum right now, this exercise can always be done, and is usually pretty beneficial. Because new topics and areas to work on are always available, always presenting themselves. But I wouldn't suggest to necessarily do it every day, because we're going to start with a particular topic and we're going to really hone in to that, and we want to give it some time, and we want to put our energy towards that particular aim. So you can return to this practice, but I'd say, give this one a try and let it go for a couple of weeks and see what happens.

So in the coaching that I normally do, which is typically one-on-one, I use a lot of different Integral lenses to assess where I think the person that I'm coaching is developmentally, and we work together essentially to hone in on a particular topic and a particular coaching programme that's specifically targeted to the topic they want to work on, and also what needs to be built in the coachee to see change or some progress in that area. So we can't obviously do that quite like that in this format on this call. But I thought maybe we'd use one of the more useful lenses to help you delineate what that particular thing you want to work on is.

I want to actually offer the quadrants to be able to take a view of your life and see where the issues are arising and where a practice emphasis might need to be focused. So I'm hoping most of you on the call know that the quadrants are one of the five main components of Integral Theory, and the quadrants really represent four irreducible dimensions of your being. You have the individual interior dimension or the upper-left or I domain; you have the individual exterior dimension, the upper-right or the It domain; you have the collective interior division, which is also called the lower-left or the We domain; then you have the collective exterior dimension, the lower-right or the Its domain.

Now, just to be theoretically sound for a moment, each of these dimensions actually do tetra-arise, or more simply put, they're all happening together at the same time. So issues that are present in one quadrant, and practices maybe aim to help one quadrant, are always going to have correlates in all the other quadrants. That's sort of the theoretical rigor, but if we just put that aside for a second, we can also look at one dimension of our lives at a time, and we can use the quadrants as lenses and focus into the different areas of our world to see perhaps, where the most suffering is currently happening.

As you listen in to this, I'm going to go through each quadrant very briefly, and some of the issues that may present in each one. This is by no means a complete list of issues, but still, I just wanted you to cue into each one. Really, as we're going through, feel in to where the heat is for you right now; feel in to what aspect of your life, as I'm reading this, contains the most suffering.

So we'll start off our little tour in the upper-left or the individual interior, as I said, the I dimension. Some of the particular issues that can arise in that dimension are difficult emotions, or unhealthy emotional patterns like guilt, fear, regret, resentment, sadness. You might find existential issues. You might be experiencing a disconnection to spirit, to God, or to your religion. You might be experiencing problems with your internal motivation or feeling lack of a passion for what's happening in your life. Also, boredom, malaise, or a general lack of happiness, and a lack of self-confidence. So many of us do an overactive internal critic. Or maybe you feel disconnected from an internal compass, or what we call sometimes intuition. That's the upper-left. Again, not a complete list, but a taste.

Moving to the upper-right, staying in the individual exterior, and this is the It dimension. Some of the issues we could find there is: poor nutrition, bad eating habits, lack of energy, maybe too much energy or searing energy. Maybe you're overweight or underweight. You're making excessive lifestyle choices, like too much drinking, and so on. Overwork, that's a big one. Lack of exercise. Some kind of illness or allergy.

Then moving from the upper-right down into the collective, we'll move to the lower left, or the collective interior, or the We dimension. Some of the issues that present themselves in that dimension are relationship issues, basically, including leaving a relationship, maybe breaking up, maybe even getting a divorce. Maybe you're experiencing a stagnancy in your relationship; a lack of intimacy or trust. Maybe you find yourself being pretty judgmental of others, a lot of the time. Maybe you have difficulty expressing yourself in relationship, having clear and clean communication. Parenting and family issues, which is a whole gamut that often presents themselves in the lower-left as well.

Finally, moving along to the lower-right, or the collective exterior, or Its dimension. We can find difficulty prioritizing in our lives. Maybe an inability to make and follow through with plans or projects; a chronically messy environment. Maybe you're navigating a career change or a geographical move. Maybe you're wanting to start a business and want to get into the part of business planning. Time management is another one, and money issues is another big one as well.

So that's a complete tour of the quadrants, and a handful of probably what are an infinite number of issues that can be present in our lives that we can work on through practice. But as we took the tour, I want to ask you, which area or quadrant stood out as the area of your life that you think needed the most work? Then, within that quadrant, what issue stood out? Maybe it was one I read, or maybe as we went through the upper-right territory, something sparked in your mind that is a big one for you to work on. So I'm going to give you a couple of moments to journal about this and to identify this issue in the clearest possible words. So you want to answer what's the issue, how is it showing up in your life, and why is it the most salient thing for you to be working on right now?

Quickly, before we do that, I'll just give you an example from my life, in case anyone's lost. So I'm working in the upper-left, and one of the big things for me is locating my intuition and feelings more in the moment, such that I can communicate and behave in a way that includes that important information or attends to it. Really, this is most important right now in my life because it actually really hurts to walk away from situations and feel like my full self wasn't present, and maybe some important piece of information or something I felt wasn't shared because it wasn't able to be located, which is just a painful thing. So that's one, again, example of the kind of detail that you want to put into this next piece. I will give you about three minutes to grab your journal and pen and write, what's the issue, how is it showing up in your life, what quadrant does it come from, and what makes it most salient to you right now?

Hopefully, you all are finished or close to it, and you can always come back to it later. But let's move along. So now that you've identified this particular issue that you want to work on, I want you to now feel into your deepest reason for wanting to work on this. So dig through the layers a little bit and really feel into that deepest motivation for creating a practice that's going to attend to this area of your life. I'm just going to give you an additional minute or two to write about this, and what I want you to do is I want you to write out just one or two sentences that really nail that motivation. Try to keep it positive. So a sentence stem that you might use is, "I'm working on this topic because if I make progress on it, then..."

To revisit my example, I'm working on this topic because if I make progress on it, then I'll be able to contribute more of my wisdom and feel more of my influence in my experiences and interactions. This, I think, will help me feel more present, more

enlivened, and more like the creator of my life. So again, I'll give you just a minute. Try to nail the motivation just in one or two sentences and keep it positive, with the stem "I'm working on this topic because if I make progress on it, then..."

Hopefully you're done, and you can always come back to this later. So we've taken a tour through the quadrants and some potential issues that show up in the different dimensions of your life. We've identified a particular issue or topic that's really up for you right now in your life. We've talked about why that's important, and really talked about the specific and deepest motivations for working on that particular topic.

So with that, I'm going to offer some next steps for you to engage beyond this call for practice. As you probably already know, the first step to unravelling any unhealthy patterns or issues is to really get to know those issue; really the ins and outs, how you're currently relating to the issue. In developmental terms, we call this to make what's currently a part of your subjective experience an object, to be able to look at it and get some space from it. That's really the first mechanism of development.

The first thing I'm going to offer you to engage along this particular path of practice is actually self-observation. So as you go through your day, and you notice this issue coming up or arising—if you have feelings around it, maybe there's particular behaviors that you're carrying out, or patterns associated with it—what I want you to do is take a moment, and just take a big deep breath down into your belly, and then just get curious about what's going on. Look at things like, what's the situation you're in? Who's involved, or who's around? What did you do in response to the situation? What does your body feel in the moment? Did it contract? Did you get nervous. Did it tense up? What happened in your mind? Or what's happening now in your mind, as you reflect on it? What were you thinking about? How do you feel? Do you feel sad in looking at it? Did you feel scared in the moment? So what's happening in your emotions?

I'm asking you to take both an external view of the situation and the context, and an internal view of what's happening in your body, in your mind, your emotions, etc. Again, I'll offer my example. So what I notice every day, particularly when I happen to be around energetic and powerful people, and particularly when I'm caught off guard and didn't have plans to be around them, I feel my body contract; my heart rate goes up a little bit. I'm thinking that I'm actually pretty pissed off that this person's intruding into my personal space, without warning. Then I lose sight of what I most need to communicate with them, or what I most want to share with them. Then in retrospect, I'm sad when the interaction is done, because I feel like I missed an opportunity to share an authentic space with them. So that's just one example of an observation that you'd make and journal about.

If possible, it's most ideal to actually carry around your practice journal with you. It can be a little practice journal, it can be notes on a couple pieces of paper. Sometimes that's a little unrealistic, but if you can, do that. You want to take just a couple of moments, as close to what you've noticed as possible, to jot down answers to those questions that I posed, both at external and internal view. But as so many of us don't have the space and time to do that, if you don't, then at least try to jot down something that will jog your memory later and just remind you of that experience. Then you want to designate a specific time, whether it be evening or morning, whatever it is, and journal about that experience, again, answering the questions and taking an external and internal view.

How often to do this? So you want to do this during your day basically enough so that you're starting to more readily observe this happening as it comes up in your life. You do want to feel a little bit challenged and stretched. But what you don't want to do is make it an obsession. So just some general guidelines are, don't let more than a full day go by without some kind of observation, and I would say probably don't do it more than twice a day. Depending on the issue and how often it's arising, between twice a day, and on a regular basis, not letting a whole lot of time go by between engaging it.

Also, as a part of this exercise, once a day, I want you to return to what we did earlier, or speak what you wrote down just a few minutes ago, those one or two sentences that really captured your deepest motivation for engaging the practice. So what you wrote down—and you can refine it if you like, if you didn't have enough time, or likely, more layers of it will come off, and you'll find an even deeper motivation—but this is your daily affirmation, and it can also be used more as a beacon of light for when things get really difficult. If you feel off, or if you start to feel down about what you're seeing, you can return to that sentence or two; learn it, speak it, return to your notes, feel into that, and that will help keep you on track.

I want you observe yourself in the patterns around this topic of interest, consciously for about two to three weeks. At the end of each week, you want to go back through your notes that you've taken in your journal, and note any repeating patterns that you're observing more than once. Then after the three weeks are up, or once you felt like you're noticing this really readily in the moment, then I just want you to pick one thing to do differently, or to try out in the moment when this arises. Then engage with that one thing for as long as it takes for that to then become a regular thing that you do in response to this issue arising. Once you reach that threshold, you can add one more layer, one more behavior, one more choice, one more activity, to engage in the moment, and so forth, until the issue is not so much of an issue anymore, essentially.

So again, going back to my example, the first thing I did in those situations, when I would notice this pattern arising, was to breathe all the way down into my belly, when I felt that kind of body contraction and my heart rate rise. That was it, that was the first step. Then once I had that down, I began to identify the particular emotion that I was feeling in the moment, and I would journal about how that emotion showed up in my life in other ways. I got really curious about what is the texture of this emotion that I'm feeling in that moment. Then as I had my breathing enabled, and my ability to cue into the emotion that I was feeling just more readily and more in the moment, I then took one more step. I practiced sharing my emotions, kind of in a raw and somewhat uncensored way, just once a day, in a situation that I felt was appropriate and safe to do so. With my partner, I'd even share, this is what I'm practicing with. So I might off the cuff share just what I'm feeling in the moment, as a practice, to that end, and so on.

So as you're going along, and as you're building the strength in these practices, you want to continue to self-observe and continue to journal about what you're noticing, and the impact of the practices that you're engaging. Really, this will help you to continue to deepen your awareness of this issue in your life, and it will also help you to find the way to build on your practices, once it's time to do so. So you start to cue in on specific little nuances and little things that you can add as you go along, if you're really continuing that self-observation and getting down and dirty in journaling. Then once you feel like that sort of a newer way of being has actualized, and this topic is not as present or as pressing in your life, you can then return back to this call and you can start again with a brand-new issue, that in the meantime has crept up and has become the pressing issue for you.

I think as you engage with this over time, you'll start to feel more of that Just do it kind of continuum of practice that I talked about earlier, unfolding in your life. You'll get in a groove, and then things maybe fall apart a bit, so you don't do it for a couple days, and you can come back to the exercise and work through the confusion and the complexity. Then again, moving to Just do it, trusting that you're solid on the path, that you are moving ahead, and that you have really the support that you need to do it.

To that end, I want to offer that if you do get really stuck—sometimes it sounds a little bit easier than it actually is—I will offer just one short, free email response to questions that you send to me. I can't get into a lot of engagement, but a little bit I'm happy to do and happy to get you unstuck. My email for that is NFegley@gmail.com.

So we have about 12 minutes left until seven o'clock. As we've walked through that, any questions that have come up, any comments, any insight, I'd love to hear from you. So if you'd like to speak or ask a question, unmute yourself and you'll be able to speak. If you would, if you're interested and up for it, just give me your first name maybe and where you're calling from, that'd be really helpful. If you're not up for that, that's cool too; we are recording.

Listener My name is Lawrence, and I'm calling from Austin, Texas. I was looking through, when we were talking about the issues from all the quadrants, what do you do when you find that you're overwhelmed with issues in every quadrant? How do you decide what deems your priority at that moment?

Nicole Yeah, great question. Because we all have issues in every quadrant, I'm sure. I think that's really where a couple things come up, and one of them is patience. Again, practice is a lifelong journey. So new subjects and new topics will arise as we go on, as we're presented with new challenges. Some of the same issues might creep up in different facets in different times in our life. So I'd say really just, as you wake up in the morning, what feels most present, what maybe feels more fundamental even? You may have a particular issue around self-confidence, say, and then that self-confidence issue makes it difficult for you to communicate with others, let's say. If you look at it like that, you can say, I actually probably need to work on the confidence piece first, before I can then move into more of a communication practice. So sometimes the issues stack up like that, and sometimes we just have to cultivate patience and say, what do I feel up for working on, what do I feel like is going to be the most fruitful thing for me to work on, and what can wait? You can also work multiple issues at once. I don't suggest doing too many, I really think focus is the best way to go.

One other thing I'll say about that is—I was going to talk about this earlier, but I didn't think we'd have the time—but also there's something working around preference. So I always seem to come up with lower-left issues; I orient from the lower-left, and I'm constantly working in that We territory. That's something that another level of what topic to work on is getting curious about what keeps coming up. Preference doesn't necessarily mean that you shouldn't work on it, but you might be hanging out in that area because you're favoring that, or you find that the practices in that area easiest to work on. So just get curious to a next level of what quadrant you're gravitating from or towards. That's probably a lot, I don't know if that was helpful. Did you have any other questions or anything else I can expand on?

Listener I think it's that and finding that deeper motivation for that practice of that change, just being able to prioritize them in each quadrant.

Nicole Yeah, and don't get lost in thinking too hard about it. Just feel into it, commit to it, and try it out for a while. So that's moving from the complexity to the Second Simplicity. I know there's all these issues, I know there's tonnes of stuff to work on, but this is what I feel I'm going to move in that direction, and as much as I can, I'm going to stay focused in that for a certain period of time, and just commit and move into that Second Simplicity place.

Listener My name is Sue, and I'm from Minneapolis. My question is, and this is probably more in that lower-left, and I wonder if other people are dealing with this. So when you've moved beyond simplicity, probably beyond the complexity, and you're into that Second Simplicity level or that higher developmental level, and you're working with a lot of people that aren't there, I really struggle with how to interact with that. That's something that I find myself stuck in with, whether it's like my kids, my partner, my business colleagues. They're just at a level that I cannot connect to; we're not connecting. It's really important in all three, for me, that I connect. Maybe I need to not focused on that, and more focus internally. So I'm just wondering if other people find that and what your thoughts are on that?

Nicole Thank you. It's certainly something that I've heard come up, definitely more than once. I think that's the edge for you to work, that is in and of itself a practice. You were once at their level, you were once struggling with the issues that they're struggling with, you were needing the things that they need. So to be able to touch in with compassion, and again, with patience, those are different aspects that you can actually work on in your practice. It's not easy, I know it's difficult, and it's a struggle.

But you're going to encounter much more of people that may be at a "lower level of development," or struggling with things that you're no longer struggling with, or not seeing the world in the same way that you're seeing. So your capacity to make a difference in those people's lives, or to serve those people, or to be compassionate, it's everywhere, and it's endless. I don't have the exact answer to that, but I know that it is something that I've definitely heard that people struggle with. The key there I think is compassion and patience, and that might be the topic that you want to work on. Does that make sense to you?

Listener Yeah, it does. I just think, like you said, it's a struggle when a lot of people aren't there. Just how do you interact with that, and then how do you bring them to a different level so that they're interacting at a different level?

Nicole Bringing them to another level, or getting them to communicate at your level, that's a slippery slope; that's very tricky. They're on their own growth path. It would be nice, but it's not necessarily your responsibility, and it's their territory to traverse basically. There's a term called carpet burn, and that's what you're experiencing, which is a term Ken uses. Any other last-minute questions?

Listener Yes. What if you have an issue that you've been working on for a long time, and you've looked at it from lots of points of view, and it's still resistant to being changed?

Nicole Yeah, totally. Welcome to being human. If you can, seek out support; that would be my best suggestion, because it's always just really helpful. Support can come in a lot of

different ways; it could be a book, it could be a friend, it could be a coach, it could be a therapist. But having just another perspective on what you're going through and dealing with, especially with someone that knows you well, or can get to know you well, or is trained, I think is really the best answer to that.

Again, it keeps coming up, patience. Sometimes our issues, as I'm sure you probably all know, are also part of who we are; they're part of our deep structures, or our personality, and they often have a very beautiful and light side to them. People might even like them, who knows? So to just recognize that, to hold that, and to get support, if you can, is what I'd recommend.

It is seven o'clock, our hour is through. Unless there's any really burning questions, I will bid you adieu. Thank you just deeply for being with me on the call, and for your great questions. I just really hope that this was of service. Everyone, have a great weekend. I will talk to you all next Thursday on our integration call with Marc, Clint, Zak, and me. Thanks, everybody. Bye Bye.

LivingBeyondComplexity-March-Call 2-Zak

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Speakers

Zachery Stein

Zak Hello, everybody. I think we've got kind of a small group here. So when we open it up for question and answer, I think it can get pretty interactive. So we've only got an hour. I'm a talker, and I'm sure a lot of us in the line are talkers as well. This first call is really just going to be setting the stage. I want to give you a sense of the way I'm going to run these calls moving forward, and my broad goals for even getting involved with this project or this offering. But ultimately, just to foreshadow, I do want this to be an interactive thing. This first call maybe a little bit more lecturing, and I'm going to give you guys a homework assignment as it were, which will make the next call much more open and participatory.

Let's just jump in. I'm Zak. I don't know exactly who's on the call and how many people know me, so I'm just going to give my standard introductory spiel. I'm right now a doctoral student at Harvard, and I'm studying cognitive developmental psychology, philosophy, and education. So I'm kind of just a philosopher of education. In the Academy, I do a lot of work in the field of mind, brain, and education. There, I focus on philosophical issues tied up with this emerging field of Educational Neuroscience. In particular, I'm worried about psychopharmacology. So I'm counteracting flatland in the Academy in this field of mind, brain, and education, calling for a comprehensive approach to issues of education.

I also am Deputy Director of the Developmental Testing Service, which is a nonprofit geared towards standardized test reform in K-12 education, and also adult assessment in large organizations, or coaching in psychotherapy contexts. The work I do there is basically working in cognitive developmental psychology, and we are, to use kind of Integral terms, operationalizing altitude to change the standardized testing infrastructure

for K-12 education, to move from arbitrary IQ type assessments towards actual developmental assessments in teaching and learning.

In both those areas, in the Academy and in this education reform world, I'm consistently using philosophical and meta-theoretical lenses that are roughly coterminous with Integral Theory. I started out as a Wilberian, just dyed in the wool. Like, I was a musician, and then I started reading Wilber, and then the rest is history as far as that goes.

This is where it starts to get relevant to this theme of Second Simplicity that Marc raised on the first call. So I had a period of engagement with Wilber where I just simply bought it in a very simple way. I learned all the terminology and had a really nice working model, and everything got simple. But then, as I started to read through into Wilber's footnotes, and to follow up through his bibliography, all of a sudden, some of those constructs, that were once simple, became really complex. Actually, I pushed back against them, and I started to question them. I started to see all the counter-arguments, I started to see all the nuances, for example, just like levels of development.

So it went from being simple to being complex. Then after a couple of years of holding Wilber at arm's length, I compared his meta-theory to at least six other large-scale philosophers like Peirce, and Kant, and Hegel. So what was once simple, this simple just Wilber position, became this very complex, nuanced position. For a while there, I didn't know exactly, for example, how to engage in a language game around education without using the vocabulary and the four quadrants model and all of this Integral language. But slowly, I was able to transition towards a new way of using language. I talk about making Integral moves in non-Integral language games. I see that as one of these transitions from simplicity to complexity, and then back to simplicity, or to a Second Simplicity on the other side of complexity.

One of the things I want to do on these calls is actually, as an educationist, I want to help people who are very fluent with Integral Theory, move through something like that transition. To complexify some of the basic concepts of Integral Theory, especially the developmental ones, and then to come to find a way to re-articulate them in a new language, possibly one that's more digestible to broader audiences. That's one goal I want to do here. But the other goal is also to talk about this dialectic—the move from simplicity to complexity, and then back to simplicity into a Second Simplicity—because it's actually one of the basic developmental mechanisms that's been on developmentalist's radar since before there were psychology. It's one of ways of characterizing Hegel's dialectic, for example. But it shows up early with Jean-Paul through Piaget, Kohlberg, Fisher, and Wilber, if you look at spectrum of consciousness, for example, or transformations of consciousness, which was Wilber's earlier works, he identifies this fulcrum mechanism, the move from the one to the many, and then back to the one differentiation and hierarchical integration, basic development and so on.

So I want to talk about that, and the way it shows up, especially in the second tier, of course, because second tier is the one that we want to focus on. But there is something going on in the move into the post-formal levels, post-formal operational forms of cognition, post-conventional forms of morality, autonomous or integrated forms of self; all these things that happened roughly at that higher stages of human development. One way of characterizing that, and the one way it's been characterized in the literature, is as a move from just being mired in complexity, to all of a sudden, finding this new type of simplicity; finding this new, more general, more organized and integrative way of making sense of yourself in the world.

So I think that's an important developmental transition, which on the micro scale, in the upper-left quadrant, many people are navigating in our culture, as a result of our pretty remarkable educational opportunities that are available; we're actually getting up to those levels, and people are trying to transition out of a fragmented or fractured identity with multiple roles conflicting into some unified self, with a single but more abstract orienting framework. On a micro scale, that's the transition we're making quite a bit in our culture. As someone who deals a lot with higher education, looking at student populations in higher education, especially with these Gen X and Gen Y folks, that's a major issue with identity development. So that's going to be a theme that comes up in my breakout calls.

On the macro scale, so it's what's happening with individuals, but I also think it's happening in the culture of ours. I think, as a culture, we're trying to find that Second Simplicity, and as a culture, we're trying to find narratives that weave unity out of the diversity. So that's something that's also very interesting. One way, I think, to think through what Wilber has brought to the table is that meta-narrative; a single coherent narrative that unites a bunch of different strands or fragments of culture. So that's another theme that will come through.

So we'll work with the Second Simplicity as micro, for the individual, and try to talk about what are those emergent forms of sensemaking and self-making. But then we also want to talk about the move to Second Simplicity in the macro, and what would some kind of broad unified social narrative look like in this postmodern culture? For example, if you were trying to organize a coherent narrative for my generation, people who are between 25–30 years old, what would that coherent social narrative look like, given that this is an age of fracture, this is an age of complexity; an age that pushed back against the simple narratives of the post-war America, or even the simple narratives that our parents gave us?

So those are some of the ways that I frame the issue of Second Simplicity; those are two broad goals. But I think the real goal here is actually, or at least my interest in teaching the class, is to learn from you guys. One thing I've learned through years of teaching is that if you structure a class right, it's actually tremendously rewarding for the instructor. So the way I want to work these calls is to have you guys bring problems or topics under those broad headings. For example, we can talk about just one of Wilber's constructs. So for example, we could talk about this idea of growth to goodness, or we could talk about this idea of Value Memes and the Spiral Dynamics model. So there's a variety of Wilberian concepts that we could put on the table and then move through to Second Simplicity, as a process of the dialectic.

So we could just look at what does Wilber say, and then we can say, how is this actually not as simple as Wilber makes it? What are all the complexities and caveats that need to be issued around, for example, at developmental level, as a construct? Then once we push through all the complexity and we have all the caveats in hand, how do we then talk about it in a simple way that gets traction? So that's one thing I think we can do. I don't want to supply those constructs, I want you guys to bring, I've got ideas in mind, in case no one knows, but I'm sure you guys have your favorite Wilberian constructs you'd like to kick around for a while.

Then the other issue is that of the Second Simplicity on the micro and on the macro. So we can bring up issues in our lives or issues that we're seeing in the culture, and try to find, like I'm suggesting, these new ways of putting language to them, beyond the just

simple everyday Integral analysis, which I think a lot of us are getting bored of. How do we make those same insights, but in ways maybe where the language is more revealing and less confusing to people outside of Integral circles, so it gives you a little bit more traction? That's another thing I want to work on.

So that's the broad frame of how I want to run the breakout groups. My suggestion would be that we can get going down that path right now today, and you guys can bring up questions. Or I could just take the lead and work through a couple of Wilber's constructs that I think are particularly amenable to this type of analysis. Then, if you guys didn't want to get into now, you could send me emails, for example. I'm willing to throw out my email at the end of the call, and you can email me suggestions for the next breakout call; big picture topic type stuff. So that's kind of my initial feel or my initial frame. Now what I want to do is open it up, get some reflection back from you guys. How does that sound, does that make sense, and where should we go from here?

Listener It's Sasha here from Tasmania, Australia. Thank you, I'm really fascinated and interested in engaging in this process and communication. But unfortunately, I'm just brand new to the whole site, and I've been very fortunate to pick up on being able to become part of the training in Second Simplicity. I'm a little bit familiar with what you're saying about Ken Wilber, but I actually haven't read Ken Wilber or had information or instruction on his background more than last week's seminar. So if you could expand on some of those constructs, I'd be really grateful. Because I feel like I'd love to come in and communicate on some of the things we've discussed, but I actually don't have Ken Wilber's constructs in place. So could you enlighten us a little bit more on that?

Zak Yeah, I can definitely give a quick overview of Integral Theory. I mean, that probably is the place to start, just to make sure we're all on the same page. I can even step back and put it in context and actually demonstrate what I mean by complexifying our ways of characterizing Wilber. So if you see Wilber in historical context, you'll see that Wilber emerged in a particular intellectual epoch in American ideas. There was a time after the Second World War when some of the most important psychoanalytic theorists and some of the most important cultural and social philosophers migrated from Europe, landed in New York City and on the west coast. So what emerged from that was a distinctly American brand of depth psychology and psychotherapy, and it started to mingle with the unique and multitudinous forms of American religiosity that were also flourishing in kind of post-war America, especially the influx of Eastern religions.

So in the early 70s, Wilber started to imbibe this ecology of ideas that he was surrounded by. He was able to—for example, in Lincoln, Nebraska, where he wrote his first book—to buy copious amounts of published material through the mail, which was something that was unique to that time in American history. But not just any old books, the first translated Buddhist sutras to be mass-distributed. So Wilber was really one of the first great east west synthesizers after Alan Watts, let's say. His first book, which he wrote when he was 21, launched a career where he would become known as the Einstein of consciousness. It was, of course, extremely impressive, and to this day stands as one of the better intellectual offerings of the past 30–40 years.

His first books were primarily about integrating Western models of psychology, specifically developmental models, from Piaget and Kohlberg, with Eastern models of, let's just call it spiritual attainment or awakening. But what's interesting in his early work is that all he's interested in is what I called the micro, which is, how does an individual go from the cradle, to becoming a mature autonomous ego, to then transcending that ego

and seeing that the ego is actually a part of a much larger surround? His first books were that; his first books were laying this developmental spectrum he called it. He wrote several books along those lines, unpacking individual developments and unpacking socio-cultural development.

Then, to make a long story short, he gained and then lost a wife to breast cancer, reoriented some of his theorizing, and came out this massive magnum opus called *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality*. It's in that book that he laid out what's called the four-quadrant model. I'm not sure if that terminology is familiar to you, but most people associate Wilber now with the four-quadrant model.

I think a simple way to break down the four-quadrant model is just that—and this is classical Integral parlance—it's the inside and the outside of exteriors and interiors. Another way to break it down is first-person, second-person, and third-person perspectives; I, We, and It. The idea here is that these are the most primordial distinctions that can be made when considering the world; there's the first person, then there's other people, and then there are objects. Out of those most basic primordial constructs—that's where nature gets carved at the joints—arise the methodologies that we consider scientific.

So the four-quadrant model is basically a set of meta-theoretical constructs to both organize the phenomenology of our experience, but also to organize the special disciplines that populate the Academy. It's a very simple thing because he explains it in terms of I, We, It, and Its. But it's also very complex as far as it plays what I say is a discourse regulative role. So Wilber is trying to organize sciences, Wilber is trying to make sense of the scattered array of academic disciplines, and somehow draw a unified language from it. That's one way of characterizing his work in terms of the four-quadrant model.

But of course, in *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality*, he also ties in all of his prior writing on the deeply religious strains of human transformation that need to be facilitated through structures in all four quadrants. I'm not giving your standard AQAL account here, I'm trying to demonstrate that there are multiple ways of giving narratives about Wilber; that's just kind of a given for the people who know Wilber.

My suggestion, as far as getting up to speed for future calls, would be there are quite a few good introductions to Integral Theory out there that are freely available on the web. The Second Simplicity course is offered through Core Integral, which my dear friend, Clint, he built some of the best e-Learning. So if you don't want to read, whatever it was, 800 pages of *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality*, you can get some of these e-Learning in Clint's style, which lays out the same conceptual frame. You can't do justice to Wilber even in an hour, but I hope that that was enough.

Listener It is. Actually, I did listen to a series or a seminar on the quadrants, so I do have that basic understanding. I just wanted to understand the perspective that you're plugging into, because I don't have a lot of background, obviously, just this initial kind of introduction. But thank you for that. I don't know if anyone else has any questions like that.

Listener This is John. I actually just was trying to find an introductory summary of Wilber to share with some people, and I found an article that I thought was really concise and gets a lot of concepts in a short reading. So this is online at, it's called an Integral Theory of Consciousness. I don't know, Zak, your opinion on that article. It's a short article that's

from the Journal of Consciousness Studies. It's a pretty quick and easy read that just puts a lot of stuff down very neatly. So that might be a good place to start reading to. The web address is www.imprint.co.uk/Wilber.html. I sent it out to some friends who I was wanting to share this with, because I thought it was a very nice read.

Zak That's a good overview, the one from Journal of Consciousness Studies. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to say my email now, because I have a PDF of that, and I have a PDF of quite a few of the other things we may be mentioning. I want everyone to have my email as well, so that we can really exchange documents and build knowledge together here collectively. The email I'd like to use is Stein.Zack@gmail.com. One thing I want you to do with my email is, before these breakout calls, if you're going to be on it with me, send me a list of questions or a list of things you'd like to hear talked about. I find that's a good way to get some things going, but also, it will be a way of, if I mention a reading or I mention a theorist in passing and you catch it, send me an email and I might be able to follow up with some readings or some hints or something if it's easy.

Listener I'm very interested in this whole topic of what you've generalized on the table here. I have, I suppose in a very individual or singular way, been trying to approach the same topic since the 70s myself. I've written a thesis on it in 1999 that was called "Landscapes in Primordial Space: Resonance and Patents of the Forgotten Language," trying to bridge or connect different faculties of academic thinking into a more unified approach and understanding, especially directed towards development and learning or consciousness. That's where I've come from.

I'm not overly learned; in that I haven't been able to remain in academia land. I've also wanted to do a PhD and traveled circles down here in Tasmania, many times knocking on doors, but found that there wasn't the right medium of supervision or interest, if you like, in such an esoterically based—it's not really esoteric to those who understand a bit more—but for them, it was far more esoterically-based than what anyone was really interested in at the time.

So my interest in this has been long-term, and I'm very interested in this whole aspect of unified language. In actual fact, that was the one criticism I got back from one of my literary professors, who I have great admiration for, that he missed the plot in terms of how I was presenting that concept, and thought that I meant to destroy diversity by having a unified perception or language base from which we operate. But he didn't understand that, I don't think. I'm on the same storyline, if you like.

Zak Yeah, and it's worth kind of riffing off of that. Because I think, as far as this Second Simplicity broad structure that we're holding here, there have been attempts to forge one language out of the many languages of the Academy before. For example, the basic thrust of analytical philosophy in post-war America, the Vienna Circle, who migrated to the United States to logical empiricists, they had a plan for an encyclopedia of the unified sciences. So they were actually looking to do that. But here's the catch, it was a kind of first simplicity. They wanted to say, there's all this diversity—there's all these social sciences, and there's all this psychological stuff, and there's all this emotional language—and none of that's actually real language; what's the real one language is the language of the hard sciences. So let's find a way, in a way, to conk off new voices and translate it into a single tongue. That's a different way of forging a unified language.

So when some people hear the Wilberian hubris as it were, to unify all the disciplines, they think that this is just an imperialist modernist way of squelching diversity of

language games in the Academy. But the truth is, it's not that way of forging a single language. That's the trick with moving from simplicity to a complexity, and then what's that simplicity on the other side of complexity where it's a unified language, and yet, it doesn't squelch that diversity. I think, to do that, you need to build orienting generalizations the way Wilber has, and you need to frame things in extremely abstract normative terms.

So we can talk more about the way he has done that meta-theorizing. There're different arguments where people think Wilber has, in a way, squelched some diversity and toned down some of the debates and disagreements that surround his most basic constructs. So that's interesting. That's one point, which is that there have been attempts before to give a single language of the diversity of the Academy, and not all of them have been as complex and as coherent as the Wilberian project.

But the other point is that this stuff isn't really what's happening in the Academy right now, per se. The Academy itself is increasingly fragmented. Now there's a reaction, and what I mean by that is, a new journal is founded every day; departments which used to be big coherent silos have now become silos within silos within silos. In a way, it's good; in a way, it's what you would expect, where you have these clusters of new disciplines arising around advances in technology, for example. When the fMRI scanner became affordable so that every hospital could have one, you had a cluster of neuroscientific disciplines emerge around that technological advance; you had different clusters of disciplines emerge around government funding. So the Academy is just kind of sprawling and evolving.

You have some reactions where you have some interdisciplinary programmes, some kind of problem-oriented programmes—a new thrust on general education for undergraduates and those kinds of things—to try to weave a coherent picture for these kids who are just overwhelmed by information. But on the whole, the move isn't towards a unifying account or a unifying transdisciplinary approach in the Academy. So that's in a way why I get on calls like this, because you can't speak in overarching terms a lot of the time, even when it's appropriate.

For example, when I had done my work around the ethics of psychopharmacology in educational contexts, which is, I think, an extremely relevant and important issue, it was hard for me to get in the door with a commitment to a biopsychosocial approach, which is the way I was thinking. Integrally, I was thinking that we want a comprehensive approach or an approach of comprehensive care, which means you include biological, psychological, socio-cultural factors. But it was tough, because the brain scientists wanted basically just the neuroscientific part, and the educationists didn't want to hear anything about biology of the brain, because that's just eugenics. So it's tough.

People like Wilber, and there are others like Habermas, they're kind of voices in the wilderness in an Academy that is flourishing and evolving, but not concerned about being coherent. So anyway, that's me riffing off of your point. Let's have somebody else who's just some questions or topics to bring up on this first call.

Listener If no one else is jumping in, this is John again. I'm struck by listening to your description of the academic world. It basically really boils down to a pretty standard, almost impenetrable wall, that academia really ignores in many ways, of what you would call the interior subjective. For me, that's where my heart is in education is, in the interior objective, obviously, not to the point of imbalance. But we live in a world where the

interior objective is so ignored, that the shift needs to be much further in that direction, almost radically in the direction of interior subjective, which we see in the larger world, but really not much in academia. I know, here in Massachusetts, we have things like the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction programmes that are integrated into the academic world, but it's small.

But it seems to me like that's almost like banging your head against the wall sort of proposition, in some ways, taking the descriptive and linguistic way to explaining these things. It's really almost insufficient to people who don't explore that landscape of the interior subjective.

I don't know if I have a question so much, I guess I'm curious more about your experiences, Zak. Because I dropped out of academia myself, mostly for those reasons, and I'm curious about your thoughts on that and how that's going, and how you find the reaction. Because it's an experience-based system, people have to develop the ways where they can comprehend this sort of stuff, they have to explore themselves on many different levels. I'm a teacher who puts my whole really wraps most of my work up more into that realm of interior subjective, and I find it excruciatingly satisfying. I don't know, I'm just curious how that's going and if you can speak more about that, if you want to?

Zak I think point taken. I think it is tough going to get certain types of enterprises underway on a large scale. The good news is that, like I said, it's not homogenization, so it's not like everything's moving towards some direction or some reductionistic stance. You're getting a lot of flowers blooming in a lot of different places, so there's kind of multitudinous endeavors, especially in education. I think for me, the difficulty with the emphasis on the interiority and getting a foot in the door on that stuff is that people always talk about meditation, and people always try to bring in these approaches which have a lot of baggage from the spiritual marketplace in which they were first involved. There's the religiosity and sentimentality, but I think it's also the truncating of the interiority.

I think what students need, especially college kids and high school kids, is not experience on the mat meditating. I think they need to have a coherent action-orienting self-understanding, and values that aren't a result of the superficial media culture; all of that stuff is interiority. It's not about getting kids to meditate, but it's about, for example, weaving this new narrative about what is the nature of the society, and how do we orient as human beings relating to one another? Those are the discourses I want to see in schools, and there's some push in that direction.

Again, some of the work I'm doing in standardized testing is, I'm characterizing this contrast between efficiency and fairness in education. I think, because our system is so big, and because it's struggling in so many ways, with such diverse populations, with radically changing economy, there's been this emphasis on efficiency. But as a result, we've neglected the experience of the student, as you're saying, and that's just unfair.

The other thing is the motivation of educational systems. As people use this term, we lack a grand unifying narrative which gives us purpose and reason. If you really look at the purpose and reason behind the educational system, it's very institutionalized creating humanoid cogs of a machine process. So really, there's no reason to delve into it.

Again, this is the Second Simplicity thing. We're New Englanders, so I can be grumpy, and it's been a hard one. But my point would be basically, there is a big technocratic

element to American public education, and you can't ignore the fact that the government has instrumentalized the educational system to produce certain types of citizens; they threw money in certain directions and not in other directions.

Listener Not necessarily consciously. Though, some people like to believe that it's all very conscientious, all of the ways in which we've created the system.

Zak No, but my point is more that there was that motivation. I would say that that's this principled motivation towards efficiency, both in terms of the economy and in terms of our foreign policy, especially during the Cold War with big national educational reforms, with war on poverty and that kind of stuff. But the other side of it, to complexify it—to not just tell a simple story about this is economic determinism, but to tell a more complicated story—there was also a thrust, which is represented by people like Cremin, and even Jefferson. There was a thrust where education is actually this radically liberation enterprise, and that the goal of the American educational system is to create a fluid classless society, where fairness is the most important thing, and not the pursuit of happiness, but the pursuit of dignity and mutual respect, and a variety of things that can only be fostered through educational meaning. There was always that discourse as well.

Again, how do you hold both of those? How do you admit that, in a way, this massive educational system is the result of some powerful white military industrial complex style decisions? But at the same time, it's also the result of this lineage of people who were deeply concerned about social justice and about the liberation of human potential, and about the pursuit of freedom and good stuff? Both of those were part of the system.

That's just an example of, I think, to see just one or the other is to have that kind of simplicity. All the educational systems are great, the American system is the best in the world, or is it bad? But to somehow tell a story that weaves both the good and the bad together at a higher level, that's an example of the Second Simplicity. Actually, at the cognitive operation, it's an example of post-formal operational thinking, where you have two fully elaborate systems of ideas, which you then bring together in terms of an overarching construct or generalization or principle.

Listener Yeah. In a way, as we see it at this time, it's like we're witnessing "the battle between good and evil" in some ways. I mean, even just from day-to-day experience from my local public elementary schools, they have so much heart and so much great intention and so many wonderful teachers. But the principal of the school will shrug her shoulders and say, "I know exactly what you're talking about, and here's where my hands are tied. Just sort of existing in the institutionalized framework makes all of that stuff that's happening, not that it isn't happening to some degree, but it creates a very stifling environment for that to grow in.

Zak I think that's one of the other motives for this type of educational thing here on the phone, which is that, how do we find ways to bring this stuff into these structures that exist? The thing about social change is, you can't rebuild your boat at sea, you have to rebuild it piece by piece.

Again, I mentioned this phrase before, to make Integral moves in non-Integral language games. It's not to sellout and to say, we can't change the system, so we have to work in the system. But it is saying actually, social change is what systems theorists called path-dependent, which means that there are tracks laid down. So think about, for example, the changeover to different forms of energy. One of the main reasons it's so difficult is

because you can't just scrap the entire prior infrastructure. The reason ethanol is so appealing is because we'll still have gas stations and highways and these kinds of things. Similarly, there are comparable path dependent or prior track dependent aspects to cultural change and social evolution.

It's not so much about accepting the system as it is finding those leverage points. I think there's a lot of ammunition as it were in Integral Theory, that is actually really good at that. I think once you've moved past the all you can talk in Spiral Dynamics language phase, and towards a phase of using Integral Theory where it actually can speak to people, it becomes a much more powerful tool. I'm talking about people transforming in their engagement with Integral Theory, and this is something I've actually studied.

I meant to say this when I introduced myself, but I forgot. I work with Shawn Hart in the John F. Kennedy University Integral Research Centre, where we're actually doing a pretty large-scale research study on the way Master's students in Integral Theory programme change over the course of the programme, specifically the way they think about Integral Theory itself. So we're actually building what we call learning sequences in the way people understand Integral Theory, and that's pretty fascinating. This is relevant to what I was saying about moving beyond simple ways of grasping Integral constructs.

We've had, for example, people first start using developmental level, mostly by just using the Spiral Dynamics color language, and the colors essentially serve as stereotypes for making broad brushstroke generalizations about cultural groups or about individuals. So that's kind of the first understanding. Then, all of a sudden, there'll be the transformation where the story gets more complicated, and now they see that there's actually a variety of different models and they can switch speaking; they can speak Spiral Dynamics language, but then they can also bring in Kohlberg's language, or they can bring in Gardner's language. They're kind of playing with multiple models. Then people actually start to reflect on where the models themselves came from. Well, how come there are so many models, why isn't there just one model? How were the different models built, what are the different methods that are involved?

Slowly, the simple story about levels of stereotypes becomes increasingly complex, increasingly reflective, especially reflective on issues of psychology. Then on the highest levels, you find people actually move beyond a kind of agnosticism to multiple models and a kind of methodological sophistication, so much so that you're making caveats about every claim you make. Then to move beyond that, now they're actually using the sophisticated models they have to speak in simple ways and to offer simple suggestions, for example, in education.

Listener My assumption, though, about that Integral education is, you're studying people who are probably being schooled in a way that is much more holistic or Integral or whatever term you want to use; they're having experiences in all of the quadrants that are affecting their growth, which is maybe the thing that's missing from other people and other educational systems developing that way is approaching it primarily cognitively. There's only so far you can go that way.

Zak Yeah, it could be. I mean, this is a unique programme, for sure. Like I said, we're studying just simply the way the concepts of Integral Theory themselves evolve and change while they learn about them, and we're also measuring aspects of student development there. So for example, with a structure they're thinking about themselves in

relationships, how did that change as a result of getting more sophisticated in thinking about Integral Theory or something like that? It's an interesting research project, but it's part of the context for these calls also, is my growing understanding about how people grapple with this content; how people grapple with Wilber's ideas and the kind of constellation of comparable theorists? It's interesting to me.

But there is this movement from a simple getting it and loving it and seeing the whole world in terms of it, to pushing through that and really questioning, and really actually looking and reading into the bibliographies and footnotes, and then re-embracing and refining it to a more nuanced, and yet still simple way of using theoretical constructs.

So we're running down on time here. Let's take a couple more questions, and then I want to wrap it up and make sure we're on the same page. So that in the next call, we can hit the ground running and really do something we can take. So anybody else got some lingering thoughts here or ideas on the frame I'm offering? Are we sure what we want to do moving forward?

Listener Is there anyone else out there? I think there might just be John and myself.

Listener Hi, this is Fabio. I'm very interested about what you were saying, all of you. It seems like you guys all know about the Integral Theory. I have to confess that I don't know a lot about this. But I was wondering when you were talking, do you know how or what Integral Theory would say about the grim events in the Middle East and in North Northern Africa and Egypt and Libya, etc.? Is the planetary consciousness speeding up, what's happening? So how can we use Integral Theory to understand the current events?

Zak That's absolutely a huge question, and I think that's probably a question that we're going to want to continually revisit over the course of these calls. So you can already look in, I don't know if you'd call it maybe the Integral blogosphere or something, where there's a bunch of Integral writers out there on the web, and many of them have already taken stabs at characterizing the situation in the Middle East and the Arab world, and I guess, in other parts of the world where the economic crisis is. For example, there are labor disputes in the United States right now, which hasn't happened in a while.

So yeah, people have already taken a stab at it. One thing we could do on these calls is look at the way people have used Integral Theory to characterize situation in Middle East and see what we think of it. I think what you'll find is that there are accounts with varying levels of complexity. For example, I've read some stuff coming out of the Spiral Dynamics camp where they're talking about this in terms of clashes between different developmental levels.

You have the kind of Green or egalitarian or pluralistic postmodern Egyptian youth; apt into social networking, educated in American universities, instilled with American ideals. Somehow they get organized with the Muslim Brotherhood, which is a Blue meme; kind of very organized, down there. They're pushing against the Orange, modernistic, imperialistic dictatorship. It's a coherent story, and it's based off the fact that there's kind of a developmental model implicit in it, but it reads in kind of a simple way. For example, notice the way it supervenes on Egyptian history. What do we know about the history of the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization? That'd deeply complexify this simple characterization as Blue meme. What do we know about all the Egyptian youth who've left Egypt after getting educated and said, I'm not going back? So there's a bunch of

subplots, which I think sometimes the shot from the hip Integral vocabulary can actually ignore some of the details, because we're so happy with the generalization.

Those are just some initial thoughts. Because, frankly, I haven't gotten to the Second Simplicity around the issues in Middle East. I'm still in overwhelmed by complexity phase of thinking about it, and just seeing the full world historical significance potentially of these pushes, these kind of thrusts towards what could be a much more democratic, if you're optimistic, geopolitical climate in that area.

Anyway, I want to table that and say, maybe that's something that we want to continue to bring up. For example, if we start to look at some of Wilber's constructs around sociocultural development—look at them in terms of Habermas, in terms of Gebser, in terms of William Irwin Thompson—and then get a deeper understanding of how those cultural dynamics move, and then maybe we can look at it and wrap some different language around it. It's certainly a relevant topic, certainly amenable and in need of a coherent meta-narrative. I think, for me, it's an issue of, is it ours to impose that? Like, where is that going to emerge from amongst the participants themselves?

Because I think one of the driving questions behind this kind of disruptive social media is, will this ever be more than disruptive social media? So with this type of social networking, for example, are you able to weave coherent narratives that combine groups of people together? Or is it by its very nature this fragmenting, isolating, disruptive technology?

Anyway, so I'm just riffing here. I'm going to kind of draw this to a close with just a few requests moving forward. So if you're on the call tonight, please email me, just so I have a sense of who was on the call. Let me know how it went, give me some feedback, and give me a set of ideas about what maybe we'll talk about next time. Like I said, it could either be Wilberian constructs that we want to run the Second Simplicity dialectic on; move past simple understanding towards all the complexity and caveats, and then re-articulate it simply again. Or it could be, as this example of the Middle East crisis, a macro-level issue that we want to think through together.

Again, the email is Stein.Zak@gmail.com. So we'll see where it goes, I'm excited. I used to live in Northampton, Massachusetts, and we had this Wilber group on Friday nights from 5pm to almost 11 or midnight, and we would just talk and everything would come up. It was I think the way philosophy should be, which is discourse and debate about stuff that actually informs who you are and the way you see the world. So my hope is that we can slowly cook together and build a container, and hopefully, do some fun stuff here on these calls.

LivingBeyondComplexity-March-Call 3

Track: LivingBeyondComplexity-March-Call_3.m4a

TRT: 1:00:17

Speakers

Marc Gafni

Clint Fuhs

Clint I see some more people joining, just want to welcome you to the call. This is called Number Three of the March module, of the Living Beyond Complexity course. Marc, I think we're ready to get started, if you are.

Marc I am completely ready, Clint. I'm delighted to be here with you, and with Zak and Nicole. Here we go, everybody. It's delightful to be with you, and to be in this Second Simplicity framework at the end of this month. I know that there must be I think 60–70 people who participated in calls with Zak, and with Clint, and with Nicole. I got just incredible feedback from them, that each one of them was just so productive and deep, and just a world unto themselves.

Just to say something, as we begin, just about the wonder of this format, to recapitulate for a second. This is an entirely new, really leading-edge Integral format, and we're calibrating as we go; we're in the kind of great Integral laboratory. So for this month, what we did is we did an initial call, in which I did a kind of Dharma talk about Second Simplicity and what we mean by that. Then, there was some weaving, by Zak and by Clint, giving a little bit of Integral theoretical pointers, just what we might want to think about as we engage this conversation. So that was kind of part one. Then there were three breakout calls: a more philosophical bent with Zak, a theory bent with Clint, and a very practical coaching bent with Nicole, which really worked to this idea of Second Simplicity. So we tried to bring it and integrate it in those three ways.

Now we're coming back in the third week, and it's a three-week cycle, to now see how would we apply this framework of Second Simplicity to life. So we're going to return to a big view, a meta-picture, a large story view, and try and see how do we apply this to life? How does this actually play out, and most importantly, why is this so unbelievably important? In some deep sense, the question that we're going to be answering today is, why is this so important, why is Second Simplicity so critical? So that's where we are. I hope that gives everyone a kind of orienting framework. That's number one.

Number two. Before we begin—or we've actually already begun, but in the midst of our beginning—number two is, we talked about, about a year ago, when I was teaching with my dear brother, Clint, at the pre-day of an iEvolve event that we did with Clint and myself and Mariana and Nicole and Ken, in Denver, I talked about the idea that theory is love. Clint and I did actually a couple of dialogues on this, which I believe were sent out to Core Integral in that beautiful Core Integral framework.

Theory is Love is a very important idea, because there's this kind of New Age preference for experience. Now, we all love experience; experience is fantastic. Experience is the first-person, and sometimes experience is also the second-person; there's a second-person experiential, or intersubjective exchange and meet, and there's deep contact. Those are all critical faces of the Divine. Then there's a third face of the Divine—and I think, Clint, you specifically spoke about this in your breakout call—which is the story, the narrative, the picture, the theory, the map. We call that, in Hebrew mysticism, the Torah, or we call it in Buddhism, the Dharma. It's the teaching. It's the sutra, in an older, Hindu format.

The reason it's so important to reclaim that is because it's gotten lost. In the New Age world, if you don't, immediately within three minutes, go to an experience, then who's going to come back; we just want to have our experience. It's like, give me my hit, give me my experience. That's all well and good, because experiences are beautiful, but they're just one piece of the story. Not only are they just one piece of the story, not only is experience only one out of three perspectives—particularly first-person, sometimes, of

course also second-person—but what’s critical is that the experience is always interpreted through what Charles Taylor calls in his book *Sources of Self*, in the beginning, he calls it ‘inescapable frameworks,’ which is a fantastic phrase.

I’m always chatting with my friends, Zak, Clinton, and Nicole. So, Zak, this is more your kind of book, *Sources of Self*. Clint, I don’t know if you’ve ever ran across that book, it’s one of those awesome books. But Zak and I both have the same crazy reading list, that’s what we share in common: an insanity for books of this nature. But this book is awesome, it’s one of the great books ever written. Charles Taylor is just one of the fantastic writers.

So he talks about in the very beginning, inescapable frameworks. Now what he means by that is, is that there’s no way that you cannot have a framework of interpretation; whatever happens to you gets interpreted, every experience gets interpreted through a framework of meaning, of values, of orientation. So the story, the narrative—which is your organized view of reality, which sometimes is conscious and other times is unconscious—if you don’t have an orienting framework and you don’t make that conscious, then you’re basically being driven either by an unconscious framework, or by a framework that could very possibly be wrong, but you don’t even know that you’re using it. It’s hugely problematic.

So you can’t just have experience, you need a framework, a story, a prism, through which you interpret your framework. You need that to be the best story that you have, the best framework; the most advanced moral framework, the most advanced epistemological framework, the most advanced psychological framework, the most advanced spiritual framework, the most advanced political framework. You need to actually know what’s the narrative, what’s your vision of values and meaning through which you interpret things. Because without that, you don’t know what to do with your experience. So that’s really important.

In this course, in Second Simplicity, what we’re interested in doing is reclaiming that framework, or reclaiming what we called the first week, the story; the meta-narrative. The meta-narrative is enormously humble, it acknowledges lots of uncertainty. But it also claims its certainties, it also is aware of what it knows. It’s also aware that there’s a Second Simplicity, that there’s things that we know that guide us in the world. Those are the orienting generalizations, to borrow Ken’s phrase, through which we guide our lives, through which we make our ethical decisions, our relationship decisions, our love decisions, and through which we transmit values to our children and grandchildren, whether those are our biological children or grandchildren, or the next generation that we affect through our work in the world.

So that’s what this course is about. This course is about, let’s actually build together a framework through which we can live our lives. Now, the Integral framework is basically a set of tools of pointing out instructions in first, second, and third-person, which help you create the story; they help you create the most advanced story that you could create today on the planet. The Integral framework is a set of discerning tools that help you create the most advanced story. For example, you might want to be able to distinguish between prerational and transrational.

So if you’re in a drumming circle at Burning Man, are you engaged in an ecstatic and beautiful experience, and whatever you experience there, you should experience as a great vision to guide your life? Maybe, that could be true. But you just want to figure out, that drumming circle where you’re feeling total ecstasy, is that prepersonal or

transpersonal? That distinction between pre and trans is a distinction offered by lots of really important thinkers that we've placed front and center in the Integral framework. That pre/trans distinction, that's a discerning instruction that helps you interpret your experience in order to guide your life.

That's a perfect example. You're involved in deep ecstatic prayer. Is that good or bad? Well, it depends. Are you in a cult, which is prepersonal? So that ecstatic prayer involves a regression, because you've given up your autonomy which is personal. Or are you in an authentic, wholesome spiritual community, which is transpersonal? That means it transcends and includes the personal, so therefore, it includes your personal autonomy, your personal integrity, and you're able to give up your small self to merge with the larger community, without giving up your sense of personhood and integrity. That's a critical distinction.

In other words, the fact that I'm having a great experience of ecstasy, that by itself is just what it is, it's an experience. How do I interpret that experience, is it prepersonal or transpersonal? That's a discerning instruction that the Integral framework and this distinction will give you. That's just to give you an example of what we mean by this. I need an orienting story, and then I need discerning instructions to actually interpret what's actually happening in my life, and to understand how it actually lines up as part of this larger story. So all of this is just by way of introduction, this is what we're doing in Second Simplicity. That's what this whole course is going to be about. We're going to talk about kindness, laughter, ethical mindfulness, relationships, sexuality, and all the things that are actually essential to our lives.

So we're going to expand and deepen the texture of the Integral framework by addressing all these areas that actually don't get talked about a lot. Because the purpose of Integral is to provide a framework, but we now have to fill in the framework. How do we actually engage kindness? How many times do you hear people talking about kindness in an Integral discussion? What do you mean; we're talking about theory? No, theory is a framework for more love. It's a framework where I can be a kinder person, it's a framework for how I can be a more passionate and creative person. But that creativity, that passion, that kindness, that love, is expanded when I actually am living in a framework, a context of meaning; a moral context, a spiritual context.

That's what this is all about. Second Simplicity is about a reconstructive project which allows us to reclaim—not at the level of fundamentalism, not at the level of the dogmatism which marked much of the great traditions, but kind of post great traditions where we transcend and include the great traditions—we use the Integral framework to recreate and reconstruct core frameworks of meaning that can guide us and guide the future generations. So it's a leading-edge reconstructive project, to create the Second Simplicity; not the fundamentalist simplicity, but to actually go beyond complexity to the Second Simplicity.

I've spent now about 12 minutes on that, and that was just an orienting introduction to Second Simplicity, to deepen what we said week one, and to really help you understand why we're doing this course and why you might actually want to be with us in the next seven to eight months, to really benefit from this interdisciplinary conversation between myself and Zak and Nicole, as we actually bring online together, this deep inescapable framework of our lives at this new level of consciousness, this level of Second Simplicity.

So now, breathe for a second, and let's apply the Second Simplicity model. I want to play everything we just said, which was all these meta-comments, I want to apply it to life to see why is this so necessary. So what I want to talk about in the next few minutes is, we're going to offer a real powerful application of Second Simplicity and how it plays in your life and in my life, for a certain period of time, and then we're going to stop and offer the people on the phone the opportunity to ask some questions and to hear whatever commentary and exchange we have between us on this call, in this living Integral conversation.

Here's the application. So now we're in part two. We did the introduction and the meta-frame, now the application: part two. The application is Japan, my friends. Oh, my God. I mean, we've all followed the news, and you can't even just begin to describe horrific. On Sunday night, I came back from a vacation with Mariana and Zion, and we were watching the news and we were arguing about some little detail of life that people argue about. Then we just got shame-faced with embarrassment as we see the news come on, and this mother is describing how the tsunami ripped her daughter from her hands. Oh my god, you just fall apart. I mean, 10,000 people killed, just the horror of it and the way it happened, what do you do with that?

Now, if approaching this isn't part of our lives, then we live poor lives indeed. If a framework of Integral thinking can't address how we grapple with something like Japan, then the framework is not too helpful. How in our real lives do we actually open ourselves up to this horror, without getting destroyed by it, without getting absorbed by it, and without getting paralyzed by?

So I want to try and walk you through the three levels of consciousness that we described in the first week. First simplicity, complexity, Second Simplicity, those are the three levels. We gave a couple of applications to them. There's a meta-narrative story, then no story, where the meta-narrative is undermined or destroyed, and then after it's destroyed, a new higher story comes back online: the story of Second Simplicity. Simplicity, complexity, Second Simplicity; level one, two, and three. Story, then level two: no story, then level three: a higher reconstructed story.

So how does this apply to life? Let's see how it applies to Japan. So what would the first simplicity response be to Japan? I would love actually to hear everyone's response, but I don't think we're technologically set up for that at this moment. But just think about it, what would a first simplicity response be to Japan, to this terrible human tragedy? Level One is, remember, simplicity or story, or what we offered in the first week, two weeks ago, certainty; certainty, simplicity, story. So what would the story be?

The story would be what's classically called, in philosophy, theodicy. Theodicy means, how do you explain suffering? More particularly, it means, you as a spiritual human being who believes that the world is good, and that the divine force that animates the world and that guides the world is good, how do you explain then the evil or the apparent evil of suffering? That involvement and that search is called theodicy. So why do seemingly bad things happen to seemingly really good people?

My colleague, Harold Kushner, wrote a book by that title, some 20 years back, which sold tens of millions of copies in America. Because everyone said, like, "Oh, my God, this is the question. We're talking about kindness and goodness, but the world operates with tsunamis that wipe people out. The world doesn't look very kind and very good. If the world is a reflection, either of a personal God or of a Love-Intelligence that guides

and animates the Kosmos, well, then why is there so much evil? I mean, how do you recite psalms of praise in the face of burning children in Rwanda?"

So what does that mean? It's like the question is beyond, and the question is huge. That question, the great question of human suffering and of evil, that is the great question. So the first way that it's been responded to, in a very sophisticated way, for basically 3,000–4,000 years at least in the classical traditions, is through explanations of suffering. These explanations, as sophisticated as they are, they're still at the level of simplicity; they're still Level One. Why?

Okay, here we go. So we're going to do this big leap of understanding here. It's going to be very clear, and it's going to really open your mind and your heart. It's simple, but you've got to follow it. You see, what are the basic explanations given for suffering? The basic explanations are, in one way or the other, that this suffering was intentionally caused by the universe for a series of reasons, which we can actually understand. So for example, one explanation is called the "Soul-Making Theodicy." It says, that through this great suffering, your soul is improved, your soul evolves; you become a deeper and better person. So actually, although it looks like suffering, really on the inside of it, it's this great gift from God.

The Soul-Making Theodicy is actually several thousand years old, but the modern teachers, the way they usually explain it is, if you look at an operating table, and you see on the operating table, there's a person laying on the table, and you say, "Oh, my God, the doctor is taking a knife and cutting the person open. Oh, my God, they're killing the person!" But then you realize, no, they're not killing the person, they're actually performing surgery; they're actually saving the person's life. That's Soul-Making Theodicy, which says, it looks like it's bad, but really, it's not. If you really knew what was going on, you would realize that this is really for the greater good of the person. That's one example of theodicy.

Another example, a second example might be, the people that you think are good, that are suffering, really aren't good. They have some hidden evil, either in this life, or in a previous life. So don't think they're good. If you really had all the information necessary, you would realize they weren't good, and they were actually getting there just punishment; this is actually some form of punishment.

Or a third version of a classical theodicy, which Thornton Wilder describes in his book *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, in which five people fall down to their deaths on a rickety bridge, traversing a kind of mountain pass. A religious priest watches this happen, and he's devastated by how God can allow these good people to die in this way. So he begins to look into the story of each one of them, and somehow it emerges that it was actually perfect, that this ending was exactly necessary and perfect for each one of the five people, based on their story.

People call that the "Tapestry Image Theodicy." So what they mean by that is if you look underneath a tapestry, if you remember when your mother was sewing a tapestry, underneath you see all the threads hanging out, and it looks like a mess. So we're underneath the tapestry. But if you look above the tapestry, you see how it's a beautiful, organized, coherent picture.

So these are all forms of theodicy. Now, are they wrong? They're not wrong, they're partial. They each touch something which has truth, but they're insufficient. Is it true that

we don't know everything? Of course it is. Is it true that in a larger meta-picture, things might well make sense that don't make sense to us from our narrow perspective? Of course it's true. Is it true that a person can deepen through suffering? Obviously true. But those are still insufficient, we still view them as simplicity. Now, we view them as simplicity because it's an attempt, through the answer, to simply remove the question. There was a question, and the question was, how can people suffer? Then there's an answer, and the answer is simple in that the answer removes the question.

Now that we have the answer, there's no longer a challenge to God's goodness; there's no longer a question. There's no longer a raging, burning, existential angst and pain, ripping my heart apart, because now I understand. This was for the person's betterment. This was because the person who looks like they're good really isn't good. This is because in a different incarnation, we needed to work out what went wrong, so it's being corrected in this incarnation. These are all forms of clear-cut theological explanations that explain away the problem of suffering.

Now, let me say it again. These explanations might be true, but they're partial; they're insufficient. So what I mean by insufficient is, is that actually, no theodicy, no explanation for suffering, can explain away the horror of the Holocaust, of people burning in gas chambers. No explanation can explain away 100,000 people completely brutally murdered in the first 10 days of the Rwandan massacres, and it went up to 800,000 by the time the 100 Day Massacre was over. No amount of explanation can remove that; no answer can remove the question. So that's already the rejection of the first simplicity, we say that we actually don't accept these answers for suffering because these answers for suffering are too simple. They're answers which say, we're now going to remove the question; the question doesn't exist, we've answered the question. That actually doesn't work for us.

So what we do is we go to the next level of consciousness. This next level of consciousness is the rejection of the first simplicity; we get lost in the complexity and sometimes we just have no answer, we just don't know what to do. I'll give you an example of a voice like this. If you read *Brothers Karamazov* by Dostoevsky, it's an awesome book. You see that Ivan talks to Alyosha, one of his brothers who's a priest, and Ivan says to Alyosha after describing this horrific scene—there's this brutal General who has these hounds, and there's a child—he says, let me describe to you what happened. There was this boy and this boy threw a pebble at a hound, and then the General had everybody gather in the town, and brought all of the hounds together and brought the mother of the boy and told the boy to run, and the boy had to run. Then sicked all of the hounds and the boy as they ripped the boy apart, as he made his mother watch.

Oh, my God! Ivan says to Alyosha, to his brother, he says, "I don't want to hear your explanation of why this is theologically justifiable." I don't want to hear your theodicy, is essentially what he says. He says, I don't want to be there in the resurrection when Jesus and the General and the boy and the mother all join together in tearful embrace, realizing the justice of God and why this needed to be. In other words, what Dostoevsky is doing through the voice of Ivan is saying, I'm rejecting the first simplicity. I'm rejecting, in this case, the classical theodicies and the explanations of suffering; they don't hold. The pain is so intense, I'd rather be lost in the complexity of not knowing, I'd rather reject any possible answer, than accept the obscenity of the simplicity of the classical theodicies.

That's it, that's the second level of consciousness. In some real sense, Dostoevsky is reflecting a modern Zeitgeist, in which the classical theodicies of the great traditions were

rejected. Now, this is very significant, so let's just drop in this together really gently. Because we're trying to understand how do we deal with Japan, how do we explain Japan? So the first simplicity is, we give for Japan any one of the explanations of suffering.

Let me be really clear, and this is a critical point to understand in our discerning. It's not just the great traditions or the religion to offer the classical theodicies, the New Age movement does the exact same thing; the New Age movement and classical traditions both do the same thing. They both say, we can explain why people suffer. The New Age movement will give its explanations and say, you created this reality; no reality is created that you didn't create yourself.

But why is the New Age movement doing it? For the same reason the great traditions are, in order to maintain power. In other words, if terrible things happen to people, and it's not a result of some form of sin or of something we've done wrong in this life or a past life, then the world is incomprehensible and we've lost all power. But if we use a classical theodicy and say, this is happening because God's actually making this deeper, or this is happening because we've sinned, then we can at least retain power. So we retain power because either there's a good God that's taking care of us, or it was our sin that caused it, and so if we correct the sin, it won't happen.

Same thing with the New Age. The New Age, which refuses to recognize mystery, tries to apply a whole set of what I would call the New Age Kosmic laws. You go to Avatar, one of the largest New Age movements, you go to the landmark forum, all expressions of the New Age, they'll explain to you that any suffering that's happening your life, you created it. It's not real, it's in your mind, and if you would readjust your mind, it wouldn't be there anymore.

By the way, a classical expression of this is Byron Katie, who's a dear woman, and I had a long conversation with her about this. She's a fantastic person, and has done a lot of good. Her basic teaching is that actually there is no real suffering, it's all about you having a wrong mindset and your wrong mindset is what creates the suffering. That if you would shift your mindset, there wouldn't be suffering. I did a dialogue with her which actually appears on my website, where we went head-to-head with this and I tried to explain to her that actually, it doesn't work this way.

If you look at it from an Integral perspective, you actually have to understand that not everything is created in your mind; that's just the upper-left quadrant. But there's all these other quadrants that are at play, that can actually create suffering, which are not controlled by the upper-left quadrant. Now, when one quadrant controls the other quadrants, Ken very beautifully refers to that as quadrant absolutism. So this is a real issue we're dealing with here.

So we've got first simplicity, where we explain suffering. First simplicity can be expressed by the great religions and the great traditions, or it can be expressed by the New Age movement. But either way, we have explanations for suffering; we know the laws of the universe, and this is why suffering happens. Are those laws all wrong? No. Are those explanations all wrong? No, they're true, but partial. They have a partial insight, but they don't exhaust the full pain and horror of suffering. So what we need is we need to move beyond the first simplicity, and that's what Dostoevsky has Ivan do when he rejects the classical theodicy of Christianity.

Then where do we get to? So we get to complexity, that's Level Two. Complexity can lead to lots of things; it can lead to skepticism, and it can also lead to a loss of an ability to access an organized universe or a good universe, a universe in which there's personal caring. Because the brutality of it all leads one to believe, which is exactly where Sartre went to and where Camus went to, and where lots of the French existentialist in the 30s and 40s went, which is, the world is ultimately meaningless. Read a great book by William Barrett published in 1958, called *Irrational Man*. It's the best summation of the Gaya committee sculpture meaningfulness of the world, which was affirmed by the existentialists in rejection of the first simplicity classical theodicies of the great traditions.

So one characteristic of this second level of consciousness—beyond first simplicity, and this place of complexity—is we lose the personal caring and loving quality of the universe, which is precisely the desperation of the existential level of consciousness. This existential desperation is the flip side of what Ken calls Centaur consciousness, for those of you who really know Integral Theory. If you don't, just completely skip that line, not important. But when Ken describes Centaur consciousness, the flip side of Centaur consciousness, which is the highest edge of personal development before one makes the leap into the transpersonal, one experience is also this incredible sense of pain; pain at the meaningfulness of it, that the undergirding frames and frameworks have been undermined, that the story has been de-storied.

So when we're talking about suffering, when we reject the classical theodicies and we get to the second level of consciousness—the consciousness of complexity, of uncertainty, where we've left the certainty behind and we're now in complete uncertainty, we have no idea; we've left story behind, and we're now in the de-storied world—there is no organizing narrative which explains how Japan could possibly happen. That's the second level of consciousness.

Then, we get to the third level, and the third level is Second Simplicity. Now, why is the third level so important? So now we're doing this very deep entry into perhaps the greatest problem that a human being faces on this planet, which is, how do I actually act constructively as a constructive force for healing and transformation in the face of horrific evil? How can I even possibly believe that there's actually a Love-Intelligence, an organizing structure, a trajectory of goodness, that actually undergirds and inheres and animates the universe? This question is so burning for any person whose heart is open. I spent a decade of my life just thinking about this day and night, and at some point, when I was like 32 or 33, I stopped everything I was doing to write a several hundred page book in Hebrew to try and explain this to myself. That's the only reason you ever really write a book, to explain something to yourself.

It's a big deal, this question, and not to realize that this question is like the biggest deal in the world is to be dead; that means your heart is closed. Or your heart is egocentric; it's only open to yourself and your immediate circle. Or you're ethnocentric; you're only affected by suffering that affects your particular communal orientation. But if you're really alive, if you're really at worldcentric consciousness—or even at Kosmocentric consciousness, where you identify not only with the suffering of human beings, but the suffering of all sentient beings through generations—if you have any sort of worldcentric or Kosmocentric consciousness, which I think everyone on this phone call probably does, then your heart is ripped open by the problem of suffering. So this framework that we're offering is the biggest gift we could possibly give you, because you can't live as a Kosmocentric person or as a worldcentric person without engaging and grappling with this in the very heart of your being; this is everything.

So let's try and understand it. How do we get to Level Three? How do we get to Second Simplicity? How do we get to a reconstructed story beyond the de-storying of meaning, which is caused by radical suffering, which is caused by gas chambers? How do we actually reclaim meaning in the face of gas chambers, in the face of Japan? One is man-made evil: gas chambers, the other is ostensibly natural evil, which is tsunami, but both cause enormous suffering. How do we work with that?

In order to offer an approach to it, let me just deepen the question one level. So what's the problem, why is suffering so problematic? Because how can I relate to a personal God or to a Love-Intelligence that cares, in the face of such apparent radical uncaring? That's the question, that's the problem; that's the huge ripping or tearing conundrum; that's the violent and demanding koan of suffering.

So what the third level or Second Simplicity says is, is that actually, any theology that deadens your sensitivity to pain is not kosher; it's obscene. That what we need to do at the level of Second Simplicity is not to answer the question, but to actually cry out the question. So we cry out and say, why is there suffering? How could it be that the Love-Intelligence of all that is, that I access in interpersonal relationships, that I access as that motivating force of the Kosmos—which moves us to higher and higher levels at every stage of evolution, of recognition, mutuality, union and embrace—how could it be the love that I access in deep meditation and in prayer, how could that Love-Intelligence, those two qualities together of love and intelligence, how could those qualities allow for suffering?

I actually turn that question to the Love-Intelligence itself and say, how could this be? In some frameworks, I turn to actually the personal face—what we call in Integral the second face of God—and we say, God, how could you allow this to happen? Or as Abraham says, in the old biblical story, *hashofet kal ha-ares yas-seh mis-pat*: will the judge of the entire universe not do justice? The question is hurled at God, and when I hurl that question at God or at the Love-Intelligence that animates all that is with its personal face, it's the question itself which is the answer.

In other words, it's not that there's an answer to the question and the question disappears. But the very fact that I'm horrified at evil, that itself is God in me being horrified. The very fact that I refuse to accept the world of gas chambers, the very fact that I'm horrified at the injustice and the terror of a tsunami, that voice itself is the God voice. That voice itself is divinity calling out and saying, this can't be, this is wrong. So when I actually call out and say, "Judge of the whole world, how could you not do justice," the voice of Abraham in the ancient mystical text is actually incarnating the voice of God.

It's by asking the question that I'm actually engaged intimately with spirit. Because if the world is flatland—if the world is as Lewis Mumford says disqualified, if there's no depth to the Kosmos, there's no spirit to the Kosmos—if the world does not inhere with Love-Intelligence and it's a mere dead matter flatland, then there's no reason to ask why do people suffer? Of course people suffer, why wouldn't people suffer? The word suffering doesn't even make sense. So the only way that the outrage at injustice makes sense is if there's an implicit understanding deep in our consciousness that the world should be just, that human dignity and adequacy should be affirmed, and lives shouldn't be cut short, and torture is a violation of *Homo Imago Dei*: the spirit that lives as man.

In other words, our very outrage at injustice, the hurling of the question itself is the answer. That's Second Simplicity. It's a very simple understanding, and the simple understanding is, my outrage and injustice itself and the great question of why people suffer, that question itself is the answer. It's a simple recognition, that I affirm the dignity of my outrage. I affirm the knowing that lives deep within me, that babies shouldn't be ripped apart in front of their mothers; I know that's wrong.

My mother lived in a holocaust world—and I'm not going to tell you crazy stories today on the phone—but she lived in a world in which she saw babies ripped apart. How did she know that was wrong? She knew that was wrong because the God in her knew that was wrong. It's the simple understanding that it's wrong. Now, I can't explain why it happens, I can't explain what the Love-Intelligence of all the Kosmos was thinking. But I know it's wrong, and that knowing that it's wrong doesn't distance me from the Love-Intelligence of the Kosmos. It doesn't distance me, if you will, from God; it makes me closer to God. My very anger is intimate. My very anger demands explanation. I know the explanation is not there, and I stand in uncertainty. But that's okay, because the anger itself affirms the dignity, the rightness, or the meaning that exists.

So when I ask why is there no meaning, that doesn't make any sense. If the world is a flatland, why would there be meaning? The very demand for meaning, the very demand for justice, is meaning and justice itself. That's Second Simplicity. Second Simplicity says I stay in the relationship, and I understand that shouting out the question itself is the highest expression of spirit.

I'm going to end with this example of Second Simplicity, and then we'll open up. My lineage Master, Levi Isaac of Berdichev, who is part of the lineage that I'm in in Kabbalah, in the mid-19th century, he actually put God on trial. Levi Isaac of Berdichev was a radical non-dual master. So when he's putting God on trial, what does that mean? He puts God on trial for all the suffering in the world. Does that distance him from God? No. But what he's saying is, as an expression of divinity, I stand and incarnate justice in the world. That actually is the impetus of every great social movement. Every great social movement is God in action; it is God as a verb, living in incarnating through human beings. That's Second Simplicity.

Second Simplicity says, how do I respond to Japan, how do I respond to Rwanda? First off, I cry out against injustice. Two is, I feel the pain of it as God. Three is, I work to change it in every possible way I can, whether that's by sending relief, whether that's by creating better structures for early warning, whether that's by helping people who are victimized and helping them rebuild their lives. But I act as God in rebuilding; that's Second Simplicity.

Level One: simplicity. I give an explanation for the suffering, that this is why all the terror happened in Japan. That's a New Age response, it's a classical great traditions response; it's a classical response of theodicy. Level Two: complexity. I don't know the explanation, I can't work it out, can't figure it out. There probably is no personal divinity, and certainly there's no Love-Intelligence that inheres in the Kosmos. Because if there would be, why would there be all this suffering? That's getting lost in the complexity. I rejected the first simplicity, but I remained denuded, lost in my skepticism, which quickly become cynicism. Level Three: Second Simplicity. I realize that I can't accept the simplicity of first simplicity with its easy theodicies. At the same time, I realize that the flatland world of Level Two actually doesn't accord with my own deepest experience

through injunction and practice of a world that inheres with love. I have a world that's actually meaningful and good.

So what do I do? I affirm the dignity of the question. I affirm that the question itself is the answer. The question itself doesn't distance me from the divine center, it actually creates enormous intimacy with the divine center. Second Simplicity. So now what we've done is we've showed, I hope, with a lot of humility, and hopefully with some holy audacity, as we've all grappled with Japan over the last week and a half, how we actually use this framework of three levels—first, second, and third: simplicity, complexity, Second Simplicity—to actually engage a burning development that just has been before us all in the last week and a half, which demarcates the world we live in now. This is how we actually use this framework to actually navigate and create a framework of meaning within which we can live and act.

That was 46 minutes, and I tried to get us kind of a decade of thinking about this in this 46 minutes to really show you how this works. So now let's open up for comments and questions. Usually, we'll be weaving with Zak and Clint. They requested before this call that we should, on this call, just give the example so you can really see why this framework is so important. Now let's just take any comments and questions from anyone. Of course, Zak, Clint, and Nicole, anything from you guys is obviously completely welcomed, although that wasn't the complete plan for this week. So please, let's take any questions, any thoughts, any responses from your heart, from your gut, from your mind?

Listener Hi, Marc. This is Charles, from Ottawa. I just want to make maybe three very short comments on the topic here. One of the first things is, it's amazing, these things have been happening to me lately. You mentioned two books, Taylor's and William Barrett's book, both of which I've been reading for a long time now, and it's incredible that you highlighted both of these. Actually, the William Barrett's book, which is a continental transatlantic move of existentialism to North America, I've been teaching that for 16 years. It's a wonderful book, written in the 50s, and in spite of that, it's beautiful.

But I'll move to the second point quickly, because probably other people would like to talk as well. The notion that you mentioned of theory as love as a framework, and you mentioned the word kindness, I really think that is so crucial, and perhaps another quantum leap that we could make. But within kindness, what I would probably emphasize is what I read in the Corpus Hermeticum once; the Egyptian wisdom traditions. Let's see what you think about this, it's very brief. It's a bit of a critique of the Greek. It says this: "For the Greeks have empty speeches, O king, that are energetic only in what they demonstrate, and this is the philosophy of the Greeks, an inane foolosophy of speeches. We, by contrast, use not speeches but sounds that are full of action."

So I think, with kindness, we have to pick a tone and a rhythm as well. So it really matters that we probe this wonderful concept in in all its validity, in all its complexity. I mean, it's probably happening because everybody on the Integral crew is such a wonderful person. But we can push this even more because I think there is a danger of being caught up in a kind of theoretical self-sufficiency, which is not the love of theory, which you mentioned.

The third thing which I'd like to mention just very briefly, is when you mentioned Second Simplicity as cry out the question or hurl the question to God, I can really relate to this. To say that the question is the answer, that really resonates with me. Yet, I feel there's something missing there to some extent. Because what I feel is not that the

question is the answer, but that the question is something that goes beyond question and answer. So there's a loss of duality with that.

Marc Charles, let me jump in here for a second. Thank you for all three of your comments. Just to make a very brief observation on your third comment, just because each one of them deserves a world and we don't have quite enough time, I think you're exactly right. So when I said the question was the answer, that was, in a certain sense, a transitional comment. Meaning, I move away from the notion that there's an antinomy or a duality between the question and answer, which is exactly what you're talking about.

It's kind of like in both Buddhism and Kashmir Shaivism, and in Kabbalah, the realm which is not the dual or the non-dual, it's the dual and non-dual. So it's this place in which the question and answer, that whole split doesn't exist anymore. The question is the answer to the extent that the question maintains the relationship instead of creates an alienation. But the question is never nullified, and the answer is never nullified. It's not that there's a question and then there's an answer. No, actually, the question and the answers kind of live together. The question is the answer, the answer is the question, and we hold that dialectical dance between the certainty and uncertainty, which I think is what you're pointing to, and that's deeply correct.

Listener Marc, I had a question. I'm Lawrence, I'm from Texas. I was wondering, when you were talking about being confused and crying out and feeling the pain and working to change it, I've recently read a bunch of Joseph Campbell, and he points towards the loss of community which leaves individuals without a direction or without a role or without even a God of some sort. How can we bring this Second Simplicity to the community, when people who are crying out the question and they don't know who they're crying it out to? So what is our role to help that Second Simplicity come to the community?

Marc Oh, my God! I'm sure that Clint and Zak and Nicole just were as delighted as I was, by that inquiry, because that really was our intention in creating this course. So let me just make a meta-comment, and then a specific comment. Here's the meta-comment. The loss of community is the loss of the second face of God; the loss of community is the loss of a framework within which we live. Community is an incarnation and an expression of a lived divinity. So we need to be able to actually engage within that context of community. One of the things that we need to do in the Integral framework is, as Charles says, that it shouldn't be a kind of self-sufficient theorizing, but if theory really is love, it's also got to be love in the second-person.

Our goal, in the Second Simplicity course, is to create a living community within the Integral framework, that both meets in-person and that's on the phone, and we meet each other in all these frameworks, and we actually engage as a community in this inquiry, in this transmission, and in this shared investigation, with all the passion that's necessary. Because we've lost the ancient Mystery Schools that engaged in what Paul Tillich called ultimate issues, so we need to re-engage ultimate issues. But not as what Sartre called spiritual masturbation, but as poignant alive issues that engage us and that transform the way we live in the world. That's precisely the kind of community that we're actually trying to create here in the context of Second Simplicity. So Second Simplicity, the idea is not just to be a course, but to actually be a community that actually engages. That's exactly the intention, and you're pointing towards it, which is completely awesome. I can't believe the time is just about over. Clint, what do you think, should we just give people a sense of what the possibilities are, moving forward?

Clint I'm actually partial to seeing that there's one more question. I loved the comments that Charles and Lawrence have offered, and I wonder if there's any more. But I can briefly mention, just in short, that what will happen next is that, we'll send you guys an email that shows you, again, how to get download access to this call and all the other calls, as well as explain what the options are for going forward with the course into April and beyond. Rather than taking up too much time now, I'll just get that into an email, which will most likely come out tomorrow. Then, you can always contact us with any questions.

One meta-comment, not so much on logistics, but just on the point that Marc just made that Lawrence brought. It's so key that we find a way to come together, whether it's this space doing these calls during this course, mixing it with a live event, whatever we can come up with to pioneer this conversation, but it's so radically essential, both for the development of ourselves and for the development of ourselves as a culture. Because what just keeps ringing on for me in this conversation is recognizing that, outside of this context, I know many of you because I've met you before in events or whatnot, but we interact on Twitter and on Facebook in 140 characters or less, in the constraints of that emerging communication technology.

I think that technology has profound effects, both positive and negative, but I'm particularly pointing at the negative right now, that we just don't know how they're going to impact us over the span of 20 years, what will be the impact on the deepening of a discourse with it. I think we can argue that the discourse does need to get deeper, and it needs to get wider, and yet, the technology is getting shorter and quicker. I guess what I'm saying is, when we send out the email, take a moment to open it, take a look, and really contemplate your important role in what we're unfolding here.

Marc Clint, thank you so much. Really everyone who's listening to this downloaded call, it's been a fantastic three-week course. I think about 180 people signed up, and it's been just a great experience. By itself, we've created an artefact, if you will, of Integral consciousness, in these three weeks. Now it's really up to everyone, are we going to really go forward? If enough people convert to be able to sustain a course at this stage, we'll do it. If not, we'll offer it in some other format, and Clint will send us the directions for that. You really just have an incredible group here.

I just want to say that Clint working deeply in theory, Zak working deeply in theory and philosophy, Nicole working from theory to kind of the practicum of Integral coaching, each one of these people are people that you'd want to take 10 courses with. So really having this kind of weave, and we'll work out how the weave works together in this larger meta-framework of the great traditions, of a kind of the highest-end integral coaching, of the depth of philosophy and all of its expressions of deep leading-edge Integral Theory. It's really just a very special offering, I just don't know that anything like it anywhere in the world.

So I want to invite everyone really, to step forward and create this community together in a way that feels good and gentle and powerful and audacious. Let's do it for the sake of the all, for everything in the most Integral and evolutionary way we can, even though Integral and evolutionary are really the same words, because Integral is the evolution of consciousness that we're engaged in together. That's it.

