

# Integral Career Development

## *The Implicit Career Search*

[Steve Miller](#)

The following describes a method of career planning and development that attempts to align itself with the integral approaches of such as Wilber (Integral Psychology), Beck and Cowan (Spiral Dynamics), and Murphy and Leonard (The Life We Are Given). The Implicit Career Search is a depth approach to career decision-making and provides a holarchic approach to career evolution.

Upon studying the field of career development intently for the last twenty years I have discerned three different approaches:

1. The **assessment approach** pioneered by John Holland – The Holland Codes assess clients in six different areas (Realistic-Conventional-Investigative-Enterprising-Social-Artistic) and gives them a "code" based on their strengths in two or three areas and then provides them with a list of jobs that match these strengths. Holland's research has been much plagiarized and diluted (consciously and unconsciously) and is used in various guises in many career development approaches.

The strength of this approach lies in the amount of research done by Holland. The weakness is that the research was all conducted within one strata of awareness (the red-blue-orange waves of SD or what I refer to as the craftsperson-manager stages of career development). The frustration I have observed with many clients who have used Holland's Self-Directed Search is that if they had been a banker before it was usually suggested that they become a banker again.

2. A variety of instruments and tools from other fields thrown together and called a **"holistic" approach**. This usually involves some form of personality assessment such as Myers-Briggs, some team building approaches, a variation of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' "Stages of Grief" model, and whatever the particular practitioner is currently working on, or finding interesting, at the stage of his or her personal development.

The strength of this approach is that the clients enjoy the experience and get introduced to a number of ideas from a number of different areas, psychology, philosophy, organizational development, etc. and usually experience an increase in overall self-esteem. The weakness is that they don't leave with a focused career development plan, in fact they often forget why they came to the program in the first place.

3. The **"Hero's Journey" approach** to career development was brought to western culture's awareness through Joseph Campbell's work on mythology. To use Campbell's own words:

"A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."

This approach to career development seems to have been available eternally and some percentage of the population has approached their work in this fashion. The work of such as Wilber, Beck and Cowan,

suggests that this percentage increases as each culture evolves. There are many "Hero's Journey" approaches currently being promoted in the career planning field. Most of them bog down in a muddled attempt to push some vague form of spirituality onto the participants resulting in understandable resistance from them.

The Implicit Career Search is an attempt to provide a clear, step-by-step approach to career decision making and development that provides participants with the methodology for making career decisions at various levels of depth, from persona through to essence, and for developing that career through increasing levels of holarchy from craftsperson to creator.

There are two stages to this approach.

1. **The Inner Journey.** The vast majority of career planning approaches are personality-based (Holland Codes, Myers-Briggs and many variations thereof). Once I moved away from this type of work and attempted to have clients make career decisions from a "deeper" part of their self I noticed a phenomenon; clients began to thank me for "reminding" them of what their work was. I had not set out with this in mind, I simply wanted them to come up with something other than banking. I am not convinced theoretically that they are actually "reminded" of their work, I suspect that that is what it feels like. This enters into the area of; "Is the baby in bliss or does she have gas?" and need not be addressed here. The point is that individuals were making satisfying career decisions based on a contribution they wished to release to the world and were able to develop solid career plans from that basis.

I then began to look for a method to help me organize this approach in order to deliver it more effectively. Inspired by Wilber's, and Huston Smith's descriptions of the varying levels of awareness outlined in each of the wisdom traditions included in the "Perennial Philosophy" I was looking for something that could be easily understood by my client base (red-green stages) and found it in the work of Will Schutz. I think Ken is familiar with Will to some degree, they lived on the same street in Muir Beach at one time. Schutz developed a theory he calls FIRO (Fundamental Interpersonal Relationships Orientation) and his company, Will Schutz Associates, delivers this as a workshop, "The Human Element", within corporations as a team building and leadership development program. I have always seen it, although before SD did not have the terminology, as a great method to assist individuals in moving from blue/orange to green and giving some directions towards yellow. Will does not like this description because that would mean he hasn't covered everything! Like Holland, he has done a tremendous job of covering a particular range of the spectrum. I have collaborated and mentored with Will to use FIRO as a method of helping clients to increase their level of self awareness on a spectrum that moves from personality-behaviours-feelings-self-concept. Clients develop concrete action plans that enable them to solve dissatisfactions at each of these levels freeing the way to the next level. Decisions can be made from any of these levels. Deciding which tie to wear to work is usually a personality decision. Who to hire as an office manager could probably be more effectively made at a deeper level of awareness. The fact that FIRO was originally designed to be used by engineers in the US Navy and the methodology created by Schutz makes it easily adaptable to my clientele.

I view personality assessments as translating the conscious level of awareness and use FIRO as a method for transforming the unconscious

levels. This is all part of the "hero's journey' toward Campbell's "...region of supernatural wonder.' The "...fabulous forces...' are encountered on this journey and victory is declared over them as the dissatisfactions of the unconscious level are dealt with. Schutz also provides some helpful material around dealing with the defenses developed at each level, though I think this part of the work could be enhanced by some of the material mentioned in "Integral Psychology.'

The Holy Grail of this journey is the individual's Work Purpose and it seems to be located in one's very soul or:

"Essence - that place where resides the growing embryo of a growing intelligence, a special intelligence usually buried under the immense weight of social shams"  
**Ken Wilber, No Boundary, Shambhala, 1985**

By removing the weight of these social shams, through FIRO, clients are ready to look at their essence. Will has provided a simple and very effective guided imagery that removes our characteristics to let us see what is left. The initial reaction to this is usually negative as clients have, to this point, confused their essence with their characteristics. Once this is realized, people go on to develop a strong sense of essence and usually conjure up a symbol to identify it. The next step would be to let go of that symbol and very few of my clients have felt like doing that in the time I have known them. They are delighted to have "reconnected' with their essence and base their career plan from there. The "witness exercise' that I have seen in Ken's books and other places, is also helpful at this stage.

I was a little nervous at first in introducing the concept of essence into government workshops in small town British Columbia. It has been enlightening for me to see how readily the concept is accepted. Unlike other parts of the program it has never been challenged and generally is met with an atmosphere of "Oh right, that part of me!"

**2. The Outer Journey** After considerable searching for an effective method of career development I decided that this was to be my contribution to the process. The only literature I could find on the subject focused on developing a career plan for climbing the corporate ladder not a way to decide upon a contribution, develop it and then deliver it. The Career Develop Spectrum attempts to do just that. I first stumbled upon the concept of a spectrum approach when I was playing around with the Holland Codes. The six areas are presented on a hexagon and each of us is said to inhabit a corner. This seemed limiting so I started thinking that maybe the six areas are more of a sequence (realistic-conventional-social-enterprising-investigative-artistic?). I remember getting very excited at the realization that this seemed to align with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Following the old adage around "When the student is ready..." I stumbled upon a copy of "Spectrums of Consciousness' and immediately became a keen student of Wilber. The world stopped to allow me time to read "Sex, Ecology , Spirituality' and I was on my way to a beginner's understanding of holarchy.

Instead of focusing on Holland's Codes I took the concept of isomorphism that I had picked up from reading Huston Smith and based the career spectrum on the evolution of work - foraging - agriculture - industrial - information - spiritual were individualized to craftsperson - manager - leader - expert - creator. Each stage of the individual's career is included and transcended. Individuals could develop their career plans along this spectrum and use different

approaches to help them at each stage. Traditional career planning techniques (Bolles, Holland, MBTI) were helpful at the craftsperson stage. Traditional job search techniques (Azrin, Bolles, etc.) were helpful at the managerial stage. Leadership approaches (Schutz, Bennis, Handy, etc.) moved people to the next level. The more advanced approaches (Leonard, Murphy, Walsh etc.) brought out the expert and creator that reside in each of us.

The concept involves involution as well as evolution. By developing my career along these lines I increase my chances of releasing a unique contribution to the world. It may also come to me in the form of an epiphany while admiring a sunset, or I may be someone who has been clear on his work purpose all along. The career development spectrum is based on the individuals work purpose statement (What will I contribute to the world?) which is derived from a personal mission statement (What kind of person do I intend to be?). The following description of the stages and their various attachments is taken from the workbook I have written for the workshop:

The **craftsperson** is to career development what a child is to adulthood and, like children, we learn how to enjoy our work at this point. We take great pleasure in learning and practicing new skills, but the trap here is the lure of instant gratification. Just as delayed gratification is an adult trait that can be useful when applied with purpose, or foolish when done just for the sake of "acting like an adult," the ability to organize our skills into a focused career plan, fueled by our work purpose, is what is necessary for realizing our ultimate contribution.

The **managerial** stage is where most of our culture currently resides, as ours is a culture driven by money. The work at this level is to learn how to earn, organize and respect the financial aspect of our lives. If we regard money as "the root of all evil" and avoid addressing it, it will forever haunt us in the same way as a repressed emotion or memory will. Lack of money will be the anchor that stops us from realizing our implicit career; nevertheless should we become totally enthralled by the dollar bill we will get lost in that world. Our insatiable desire for money will undermine not only our careers but our lives as well. To include and transcend money, we must allow it to be directed by our essence and it will become a stepping - stone in releasing our work-purpose to our community.

Each stage of the spectrum seems quite comfortable once we master it. The managerial stage appears especially so, because that is the one our current culture has bought into. If I have a fancy home and car, a good pension and lots of savings, I "fit" into this society. Some of us decide at this point to ignore that annoying "calling" that pops up every so often. We can use our intellect to write it off as a stomach ache...

For those that heed the call the next stage is **leadership**. Personal leadership involves a moving away from the crowd, an acknowledgment of uniqueness, a willingness to speak my truth. A well-developed ego is essential to help one stand alone. Much is being written nowadays about the ego and it may be replacing money as a catch all excuse for society's woes. Implicit career development demands the same of ego as it did of money and pleasure — develop and transcend! An increase in self-awareness is necessary as we move from each stage to the next and it is most evident here — I must understand myself better to see where I am different from the status quo. If I don't develop a healthy ego I get lost in the world of

conformity. If I over-develop, however, I get lost in myself.

It makes sense that a great deal would be written about leadership in a culture that unconsciously idolizes management. Due to our cultural evolution we mistakenly identify exceptional managers as leaders. They are not — they are simply very clever managers. Leaders take risks, not calculated risks, but risks that are true to their personal mission statements. The results are not as important as the intent.

The **expert** takes another kind of risk — not just differing from the status quo but challenging it. Not from a place of ignorance but a place of knowledge. The expert has developed the skills, organizational abilities and courage necessary to solve problems, not gripe about them. This solution will be challenged. If it is not, it is simply another recycled technique that agrees with the paradigm of the time. An expert therefore relies upon a high level of self-esteem that provides her with the courage to stand up and declare that the emperor has no clothes. What stops this exceptionally well-trained and well-equipped expert from delivering the solution? Too often the ego was sacrificed too early, when it was undeveloped, and there were issues left unresolved. The expert with the fragile ego confuses the legacy of the work with the person producing it. Books are copyrighted, ideas are patented, spirituality is sponsored. Essence-based work does not belong to an individual it resides in the universe. It was already there; the expert is simply a conduit.

To transcend my legacy I will recognize what I have done and be aware that I did not do it.

The **creation** contributed by the implicit career is the culmination of the previous four stages, craftsperson + manager + leader + expert. That which is created comes from essence and is a necessary part of evolution. The creator is freed from the restraints of attachments and is invincible and defense-less. The acorn has become an oak.



As the individual develops the career along these lines the mission and work purpose statements evolve from centering on self-family-nation-world-spirit. There is a curative spiral effect in place also as individuals intent on saving the world realize they would be better off to take care of their home first and starving artists understand the benefits of developing a stronger base of skills and financial management.

Career planning can be summed up by two questions:

2. What will I decide to contribute through my work?
3. How will I get paid for doing that?

The Implicit Career Search provides clients with the tools to answer these questions at whatever level of self-awareness they choose to use.

Levels of Truth*	Levels of Listening	Levels of Choice	Career Dev. Spectrum	Evolution of Work	Attachment
Personality	Ignore	Superstition	<b>Craftsperson</b>	Foraging	Pleasure
Behaviour	Instruct	Determinism	<b>Manager</b>	Agriculture	Money
Feelings	Sympathize	Proactive	<b>Leader</b>	Industrial	Ego
Perception	Recognize	Pay-offs	<b>Expert</b>	Informational	Legacy
Self-Concept	Present	Choiceless-choice	<b>Creator</b>	Imagination	Bliss
Accepting	Acknowledging	Liberating	<b>Essence</b>	Being	One Taste
*Will Schutz					

---

The **Implicit Career Search**, developed by Steve Miller of Nanaimo, BC, utilizes his own insights developed in over 30 years of employment counseling and a foundation based on the work of Dr. Will Schutz, an American leader in human potential movement and author of "The Human Element" and "Joy" among other books. The Implicit Career Search encourages career changers to take an inward journey deeper than the level of personality to look at behaviour, feelings, self-concept and onto one's very essence in order to arrive at a personal mission statement and from there a work purpose statement. Building on that, The Implicit Career Search takes the individual through a planning process to arrive at a strategy for developing that work purpose into a career. The author can be contacted at [smiller@sunwave.net](mailto:smiller@sunwave.net)

---