Evolutionary Emergence Coaching

Activating Leadership Maturity

UNLOCKING YOUR LEADERSHIP AGILITY:

A QUICK GUIDE TO VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT

Evolutionary Emergence Coaching

THE VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT REVOLUTION

Most leadership programs focus on adding skills: better communication, sharper strategy, more efficient management. That's important.

But true transformation happens when leaders evolve their inner operating system—their ability to see the world, hold complexity, and make meaning.
This is called vertical development.

The concept of vertical development has been researched for over 50 years by pioneers like Bill Torbert, Suzanne Cook-Greuter, and Robert Kegan. Building on this body of work, Bill Joiner created the widely used Leadership Agility framework, which describes how leaders tend to evolve through predictable stages of development.

Evolutionary Emergence Coaching

THREE STAGES OF LEADERSHIP AGILITY: A SELF-ASSESSMENT

How do you solve a problem at work?

Review the following three responses to solving problems to get a sense of your automatic way of leading. No stage is inherently better than the other, but each has their strengths and weakness in a given situation.

EXPERT STAGE

- **Focus**: Mastery of knowledge, processes, and technical solutions.
- **Mindset**: “If I just know the right answer (or find the right authority), we’ll solve this.”
- **Strength**: Technical excellence and consistency.
- **Limitation**: Narrow aperture—often can’t see beyond their own expertise or the walls of the organization.

ACHEIVER STAGE

- **Focus**: Goals, strategy, performance, and results.
- **Mindset**: “What are the goals, what do the numbers say, and how can we achieve them?”
- **Strength**: Drives results, sets long-term plans, mobilizes teams.
- **Limitation**: May see goals in isolation; can struggle with complexity, paradox, and the human dimension.

CATALYST STAGE

- **Focus**: Culture, collaboration, purpose, and transformation.
- **Mindset**: “Whose voices need to be heard? What agreements can we create together? How do we innovate for the future?”
- **Strength**: Inspires people, integrates paradox, fosters adaptive and resilient teams.
- **Limitation**: Can sometimes seem less urgent or overly process-focused without balancing execution.

WHY IT MATTERS

Leaders who move from Expert → Achiever reduce staff turnover and drive higher engagement.

Leaders who grow from Achiever → Catalyst foster cultures of innovation, adaptability, and resilience.

In short: *when leaders grow, organizations thrive*.

Evolutionary Emergence Coaching

A PRACTICAL EXERCISE TO STRETCH YOUR LEADERSHIP

Next time you face a challenge:

1. **Write it down**: What's happening? How do you want to respond?
2. **Open it up**: Ask yourself: "What if this isn't the only way to see it? What else could be true?"
3. **Seek perspectives**: Invite trusted colleagues or mentors to share how they see it.
4. **Integrate**: Notice how your understanding shifts—and what new possibilities emerge.

This simple practice helps you loosen your grip on old ways of seeing and grow into the next stage of leadership.

Evolutionary Emergence Coaching

WHAT'S NEXT..

If this guide sparked something for you, imagine the transformation possible in a full Vertical Development journey.

I work with leaders and organizations to design programs that accelerate leadership maturity—helping leaders expand their range, hold paradox, and lead with wisdom in complex times.

Schedule a free discovery call to learn more.

CLICK HERE

www.evolutionaryemergencecoaching.com/

WAS THIS HELPFUL?

Read more at
www.evolutionaryemergencecoaching.com

CLICK HERE