

# NPD

# The What and Why of VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT

## 1 You are not static - You are evolving

Most people assume that once you are grown up, your growth has ended (hence the term).

Researchers have found that adults don't stop growing – they can continue to go through further stages of development. However, while children grow naturally, adults need to work to keep growing through these stages.

**The 7 stages of adult development** based on the research of Bill Torbert:

- Alchemical – Integrates material, spiritual, and societal transformations
- Transforming – Generates organizational and personal transformations
- Redefining – Reframes complex problems in unique ways
- Achiever – Driven by personal and team achievement
- Expert – Focuses on logic and expertise
- Diplomat – Wants to belong & fit in
- Opportunist – Wins for self in any way possible

## 2 Adults evolve in predictable ways

Researchers who have studied human development have found that adults move through predictable stages of growth (see 7 stages on right). At each later stage adults can: deal with more complexity, see more perspectives and be more aware of their own thinking. For leaders dealing with very overload and complexity this makes a big difference.

At later stages people can handle more complexity and ambiguity. A study by Keith Eigel looked at 21 CEOs and 21 promising middle managers from various companies, each with annual revenues of over \$5 billion. The study showed that across a range of leadership measures, there was a clear correlation between higher levels of vertical development and higher levels of effectiveness.



People operate from a center of gravity – it's not like you are at this exact stage – you tend to think mainly from that level of development. When we grow through these stages we transcend and include them – so you are capable of doing all things that you previously did.

## 3 There is a difference between Vertical and Horizontal development

 **Horizontal Development** is

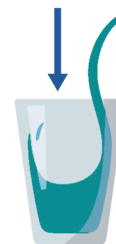
- Adding knowledge and skills
- Transmitted from experts
- It's about what you think

 **Vertical Development** is

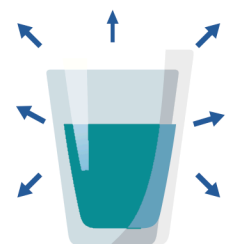
- Growing abilities to think, feel, and act in complex, systemic, and interdependent ways
- Earned through life experience
- It's about how you think

A good way to think about this is the metaphor of the cup and the water

**Horizontal Development** is having an expert fill your cup with concepts, techniques, and skills.



**Vertical Development** is about growing the size of the cup, (your mind) so that there is more capacity and space.



# How people grow Vertically

There are **three primary conditions** that need to exist in order for vertical growth to happen.

## 1. Heat Experiences

Leaders grow fastest when they find themselves in situations that create heat. Heat experiences have 5 criteria

- i. First time experience
- ii. Results matter
- iii. Chance of success or failure
- iv. People are watching
- v. It is extremely uncomfortable

## 2. Colliding Perspectives

- a. Surrounding yourself with people who think very differently to you. Your ideas might often clash with theirs in productive ways.
- b. Connecting with people outside of your normal network
- c. Seeking other people's perspectives about challenges you are facing

## 3. Reflection on Experiences

- a. Getting on the balcony to make sense of the experiences you are having
- b. Learning new lessons from novel situations and people
- c. Reconfiguring your: values, beliefs, identity

What are some practices you can proactively do?

### 1) Seek the Heat

- Many leaders think they have a lot of heat but what they really have is a lot of work. Heat requires new experiences that push you to: think, feel and act in new ways
- Consider who on your team does not have enough heat and let them take on more challenging experiences.
- Rather than delegate tasks ask them 'What activities do you see me doing that you would like to take on or would like to learn how to do?'
- Also, think about who might have too much heat. How could you increase the level of support they have?

### 2) Build a More Open Network

- Most leaders are exposed to few new perspectives because they have built very closed networks (see below right). At work they know a lot of people who all know each other and recycle the same info. This means there is little fresh thinking coming in.
- In contrast, leaders with open networks (below left) are connected to many different groups who don't know each other. This means they hear diverse information, have broad influence and can get support and resources from across the business and outside.
- You can quickly open your network by:
  - Collaborating with people outside of your: function, location, industry
  - Reconnecting with your 'dormant ties' - people from your past who you'd still consider colleagues but who you are not currently in contact with

