

*Three plateaus in adult mental development (systems of meaning)**

The three adult meaning systems: socialized mind, self-authoring mind and the self-transforming mind make sense of the world and operate within it in significantly different ways.

Socialized mind

- We are shaped by the definitions and expectations of our personal environment.
- Our self coheres by its alignment with and loyalty to, that with which it identified.
- This expresses itself primarily in our relationships with people, with “schools of thought” (our ideas and beliefs) or both.

Characteristics: Team player, faithful follower, aligns with those with whom they identify, seeks direction and is reliant.

Self-authoring mind

- We are able to step back enough from the social environment to generate an internal “seat of judgment” or personal authority that evaluates and makes choices about external expectations.
- Our self coheres by its alignment with its own belief system/ideology/personal code; by its ability to self-direct, take stands, set limits, and create and regulate its boundaries on behalf of its own voice.

Characteristics: Agenda driving, leader learns to lead, has own compass and frame for giving meaning, independent problem solving.

Self transforming mind

- We can stand back and reflect on the limits of our own ideology or personal authority; see that any one system or self-organization is in some way partial or incomplete; be friendlier toward contradiction and opposites; seek to hold on to multiple systems rather than projecting all but one on to the other.
- Our self coheres through its ability not to confuse internal consistency with wholeness or completeness, and through its alignment with the dialectic rather than either pole.

Characteristics: Meta leader, Leader leads to learn, has multiple frames, holds contradictions, is problem finding interdependent.

*Kegan, Robert and Lisa Laskow Lahey, Immunity to Change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization (2009). P. 17