With

Leadership in a Vuca World

("Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous")

"In terms of leadership, the stage from which you are thinking and acting matters a lot. To be effective, the leader's thinking must be equal or superior to the complexity of the environment. In a VUCA world, ***everything is interconnected*** and no one can predict what big changes are coming next. Leaders who are equal to the task are those who can deal with constant ambiguity, notice the key patterns amongst the noise, and look at the world through multiple stakeholder perspectives.

... Much of the stress I now see in leaders has less to do with workload and more to do with the strain of trying to make sense of an environment that has become too complex for their current stage of development.

The first step in helping leaders develop for a complex world is to acknowledge that there are really two types of leadership development: **horizontal** and **vertical**." - Nick Petrie, Centre For Creative Leadership

Horizontal Development refers to the adding of more knowledge, skills, and competencies. It is about what you know, which we can measure through 360-degree feedback.

Vertical Development refers to advancement in a person's thinking capability. The outcome of vertical stage development is the ability to think in more complex, systemic, strategic, and interdependent ways. It is about how you think, which we can measure through stage development interviews and surveys.

If **Horizontal Development** is about transferring information to the leader, **Vertical Development** is about transformation of the leader.

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Mindset, Identity, and Mental Models

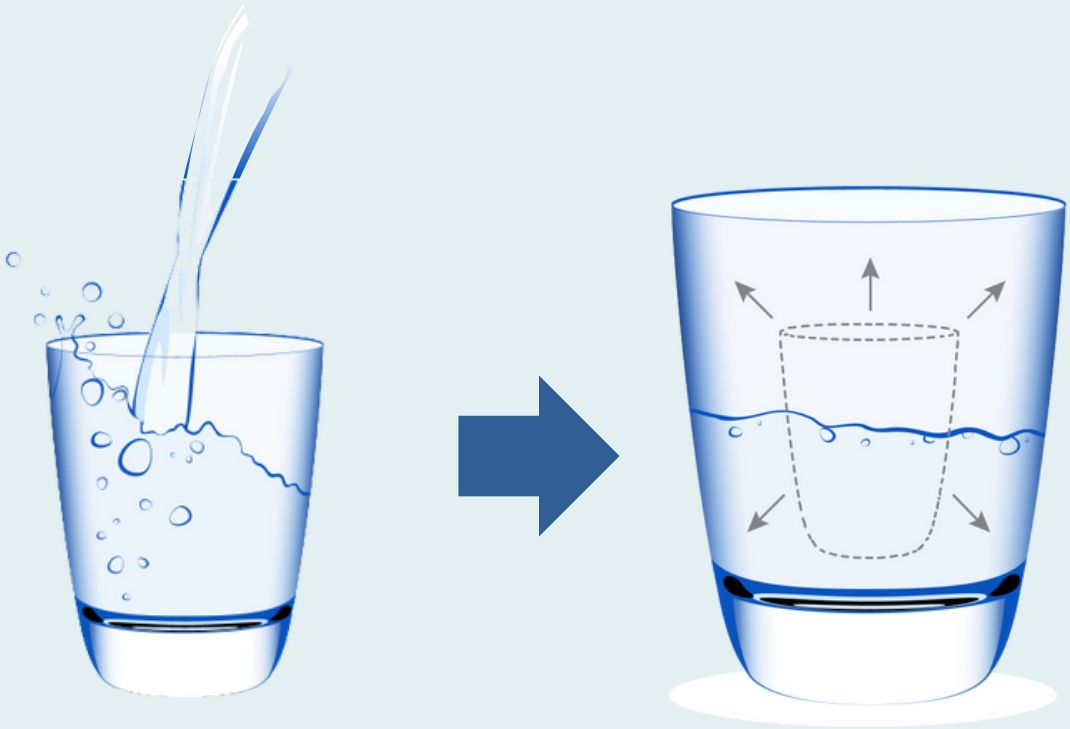
“A traditional, horizontally focused program aims to pour new content into the leader, such as how to develop staff and how to communicate effectively.

The problem for most leaders, however, is that the cup of leadership knowledge is already full. They have heard this all before. ***They already know it; they just can’t be it.*** The limiting factor is no longer the content (the leader’s knowledge); it is the cup (the leader’s being, the leader’s mind).

In a VUCA world, it is the developmental stage of the thinker that matters.

For this reason, a vertically focused program places less emphasis on the content to be poured into the leader and more on the cup itself (the mindset, identity, and mental models of the leader).

The aim of Vertical Development is not to add more to the cup but to grow the size of the cup itself.” - Nick Petrie, Centre For Creative Leadership



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"As leaders advance vertically, the way they think about and enact leadership competencies expands. The question your organization might ask changes from "Do our leaders possess leadership competencies?" to "From what level of development can they apply them?"

- Nick Petrie, Center For Creative Leadership

What Vertical Stages look like

Competencies	Strategic Thinking	Leading Change	Conflict	Leading across Boundaries
Interdependent - Collaborator	• Long-term view • Sees many shades of gray • Sees many patterns and connections • Accepts uncertainty as the norm	• Change is a collaborative process • Comfortable with ambiguity • Success means realization of a shared vision	▪ Healthy way to gather more views ▪ Something to be encouraged ▪ Increases learning and performance	▪ Sees the world through others' perspectives to understand more ▪ Shares knowledge across boundaries ▪ Works in partnership with other functions
Independent - Achiever	▪ Medium-term view ▪ Sees parts of the system ▪ Sees some patterns and connections	▪ Has own views about best change ▪ Sees the mechanics of change needed ▪ Success is achievement of individuals and teams	• Worked out behind closed doors • Produces winners and losers	▪ Able to think from others' perspectives ▪ Horse trades for favors ▪ Focused on success of own silo
Dependent - Conformer	▪ Short-term view ▪ Tactical tasks ▪ Black and white ▪ Either/or ▪ High need for certainty	▪ Expects change to come from above ▪ Needs and trusts authority to give direction ▪ High need for certainty	• To be avoided • Authority is in charge • Feels torn by conflict	▪ Trust allies and people you know ▪ Them versus us ▪ Distrust of outsider
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