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Levels of Development

Ripeness is all

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever felt that the people you were talking to just couldn't get what you had to say? They were following the words, but they didn't seem to understand the essence of what you were trying to impart. And if you wanted to communicate with them, you had to set aside an important part of yourself and "talk down" to them? Or conversely, you were interacting with people who seemed to be talking over the top of your head. You could follow the conversation, but you suspected there was another level of meaning which you could just recognize, but not fully grasp. And we don't mean a lack of specific knowledge or familiarity with jargon here, but a way of looking at the world that was somehow more comprehensive, sophisticated, or insightful than your own. In either case, you quite likely encountered a mismatch of Levels of Development. To underline the point, imagine what shifts you have to make while talking with a small child. This phenomenon is clearly understood in relation to children, but there is a presupposition that adults operate, more or less, from the same arena of experience—adulthood.

NLP usually ascribes *rapport* to matching modalities, word usage, physical posture, and other observable behaviours. It has little perception of global perspectives which direct entire patterns of behaviours, nor that these different perspectives are paramount throughout life. Here we offer a model of human development which is applicable to all people in all stages of life as a way to understand, anticipate, and deal with the disparities of human beings and their organizations.

Levels of Development are essential for understanding the intri-

cacies of communication and change. They reflect the larger rhythms of individual and societal evolution. Whereas Dilts's Logical Levels help identify the structure of experience at a given moment in time—for instance, whether people are speaking from the level of capabilities or are engaged with their beliefs and values—Levels of Development point to the larger perspective or frame characterizing a person's (or group's) overall outcomes and ways of understanding the world over a much longer period of time. Levels of Development reflect and illuminate the steps of maturation.