

Personal Consciousness

By Richard Barrett

The purpose of the self-leadership component of the New Leadership Paradigm learning system is to help you find personal fulfilment by uncovering and exploring your authentic self, thereby fulfilling your potential and becoming all you can become.

This requires you to establish an intimate understanding of who you are, how you operate, what is important to you, and, most importantly, what you need to do to find fulfilment in your life. The self-leadership programme also develops your capacity to manage your internal stability and external equilibrium by making decisions and choices that support you in meeting your needs, your ego's needs (deficiency needs), your soul's needs (growth needs), and your body's needs (physiological needs). We find personal fulfilment when we are able to meet all of these needs.

The iceberg (Figure 8.1) provides a useful metaphor for understanding how you operate in the world. The part of the iceberg that is above the surface of the water is what is visible to the world; the things you talk about, and what you do to make your plans, objectives, goals, strategies, mission, and vision tangible. These are the outward demonstrations of your inner life.

Below the surface of the water is what is not visible to the world, what you feel and think and everything that motivates the behaviours that you exhibit regarding your plans, objectives, goals, strategies, mission, and vision. Five layers are below the waterline. The upper layer represents your thoughts, feelings, and emotions, everything that is an immediate driver of your behaviours, words, and actions.

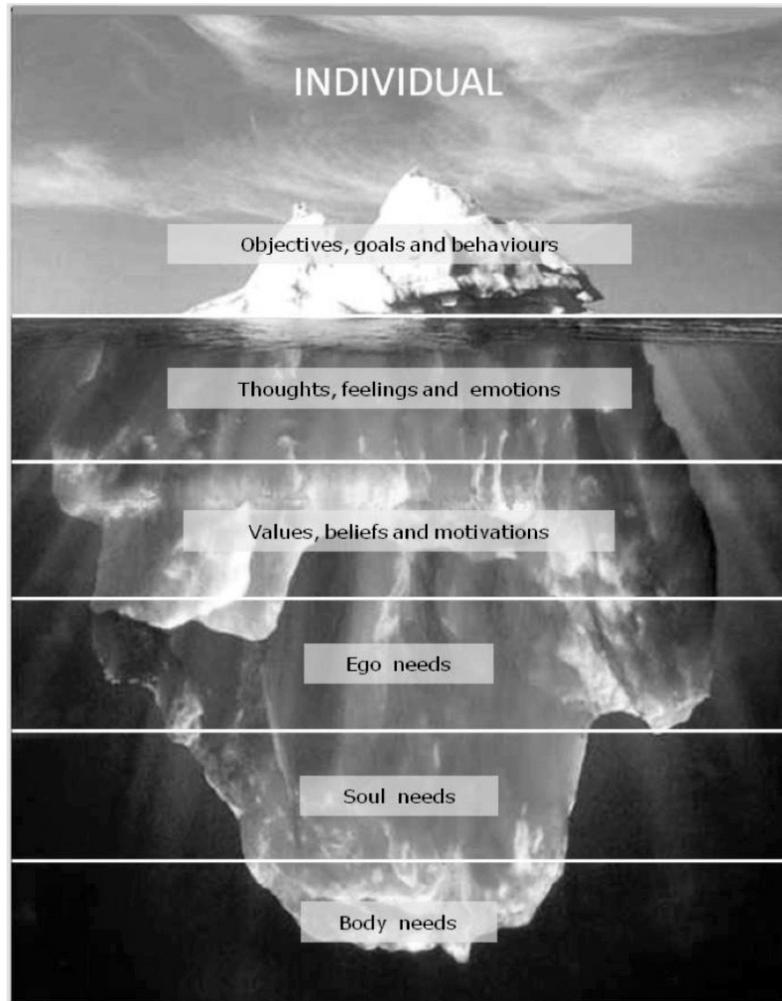
At the next level are your values, beliefs, and motivations, everything that drives your thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Below that level lie your ego needs; below that lie your soul needs. Below your soul needs are your basic body needs, everything you need to sustain your physical existence.

I have placed body needs at the base of the iceberg because, if these needs are not fulfilled, you will not be able to stay alive for very long. I

have placed the soul needs just above the body needs because, if these needs are not met, you will not be able to find fulfilment in your life.

The ego layer is placed above the body and soul layers because its needs are somewhat transitory and illusionary, but, nevertheless, take priority when you are operating from the lower levels of consciousness.

The ego interprets what is happening in the world through the filter of its beliefs and reacts or responds accordingly to attempt to try to get its needs met. If the needs of the ego do not align with the needs of the soul and the body, the ego can and will override almost all of your body and soul needs. Excessive smoking and drinking, for



example, are driven from the ego level and can significantly inhibit the functioning of the body. The ego's lack of alignment with the soul and the body is the root cause of all of your suffering, both physical and mental. This is why personal mastery (the ability to overcome your fear-based beliefs) is so important for your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health.

Only when the fear-based belief filters of the ego are eliminated or attenuated and when the motivations of the ego are in alignment with the motivations of the soul is the soul liberated to freely interact with the world. And only when the motivations of the soul are in alignment with the motivations of the body can the body become a healthy long-lasting vehicle for the soul. A method for balancing the body's, ego's, and soul's needs (the balance wheel) can be found in chapter 12.

Internal Stability

You have internal stability at the ego level when you are able to manage the situations that occur in your life with minimal energetic (emotional) discomfort—without anxiety, impatience, frustration, anger, or depression. The emphasis here is on the word “minimal.”

Everyone, including the most evolved sages, experiences upsets from time to time. It is the nature and frequency of these upsets and how you deal with them that determines your level of internal stability. If you are internally stable, you are able to understand why you are upset, and you know what you need to do to return to a state of equanimity in a short period. This is what I mean by minimal energetic discomfort. The ability to take potentially upsetting situations in your stride so they cause minimal disruption to yourself and others is a measure of your personal adaptability. When you can't get what you want when you want it. You experience anger when such situations persist or when a current experience reminds you of a past experience, usually from your childhood, when you were unable to get your deficiency needs met, an experience where you felt vulnerable and afraid to express your emotions. The emotions you repressed and the hurt you felt about not getting your needs met got stored away in the subconscious memories of your ego-mind. The only way your ego could handle its inability to respond to such situations was to make you a victim of your circumstances.

Whenever you experience a situation in the present that reminds you of such a situation in the past, your emotions are triggered, and the old wounds are felt all over again. Your reaction is an indication of the lack of alignment between your ego and your soul due to the presence of conscious or subconscious fears. The impact this has on other people is a measure of your level of personal entropy.

Personal entropy is the amount of fear-driven energy that a person expresses in their day-to-day interactions with other people that causes dysfunctional situations and relationship issues. It is a measure of their lack of personal mastery skills and capabilities.

What is important for you to understand is that, unless you learn to express your needs without fear in a non-confrontational manner, not as demands and not accompanied by vocal or written emotional outbursts, then you will never be able to achieve personal mastery. And you will never be able to purge these fear-based demons from your past.

If you are confident in your ability to satisfy your ego needs (deficiency needs) or you consider that you have no needs (the needs you have are somehow satisfied before you even know you have them or you are always grateful for what you have and have an optimistic outlook about the future), you will feel a strong sense of internal stability. This is the mark of a self-actualized individual.

External Equilibrium

External equilibrium refers to your ability and your body's ability to survive and prosper in your physical environment. You experience a lack of external equilibrium when:

- You are not able to meet your physiological survival needs (clean water, food, warmth, shelter, safety, and so forth).
- Your body is not able to cope with the challenges of your changing external environment (too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry, and so forth).

You know you are failing to meet your survival needs when you feel life has become a struggle. You feel stressed. You are anxious about your finances. You are anxious about your security or safety, and you seem to be constantly

focused on trying to find ways to make ends meet and earn more money.

You know your body is failing to meet the challenges of its external environment when you feel physical discomfort, lack of energy, sickness, or pain or you are making frequent visits to your doctor's office. All these physical and mental signs are feedback that is telling you that you need to do or think differently in order to get back into equilibrium.

Viewed from this perspective, anything that disturbs your internal stability or external equilibrium can be regarded as a sign from your natural self-correcting alignment system telling you to change your thinking or do something different. If you constantly pay attention to how you are feeling and take appropriate actions to manage imbalances, then you will always be able to stay physically and emotionally healthy.