Functional Intelligence

By T.Collins Logan

In the context of Integral Lifework, *functional intelligence* represents our effectiveness in perceiving, developing and operationalizing personal values. This demands a high level of self-awareness, and answers to some detailed questions. For example, are we aware of our operative values hierarchy, especially in contrast to an idealized one? Do the outcomes of our efforts actually align with our values? Do we routinely and accurately predict those outcomes? Over time, have we been able to improve our skillfulness in actualizing our primary values? Do we recognize when we stray from a desired course? Over time, have we been able to integrate new, idealized values with our more intuitive and reflexive values? In this way, does our values hierarchy reflect an ongoing maturation process? In the most concrete and measurable terms, what is the relationship between our internal values, what we think, how we feel, and what we do? By answering these questions and elevating our attention to these patterns, we begin to outline the many facets of *functional intelligence.*

To begin, we need to define what values and intelligence represent in this context. By "intelligence" I am not describing IQ, g (general intelligence), emotional intelligence, or any other metric limited to perception, cognitive ability, emotional capacity or the like. Regardless of whether such abilities and capacities can be objectively measured or not – and there remains debate regarding this – they cannot provide anything close to a complete picture of intelligence; they are facets of an amorphous whole. Howard Gardener's theory of multiple intelligences – logical, spatial, linguistic, kinesthetic, interpersonal,

musical and so on –hints at the complexity of a broader, more inclusive understanding of intelligence, but a Cartesian division remains that distracts from a synergistic whole. And it is the whole I wish to delineate – an intelligence that integrates all such components to act in concert, and thereby engineers successful interactions with each new challenge or encounter. That is, a practically applied integral intelligence; an intelligence that matters most in day-to-day living as well as iterative imaginings, that enhances survival of the individual and the whole in as many contexts as possible. In part, this sort of intelligence is measured by how it contributes to personal and collective well-being and, I would think, the holistic evolution of civil society and perhaps even the human species itself. And thus "functional" intelligence becomes our shorthand for a pragmatic, multidimensional perspective on being smart in an ever-enlarging context.

There are some existing frameworks that come close to this conceptualization, because they account for real-world outcomes and how people navigate complex interrelationships. One such is the theory of "systems intelligence" proposed by Raimo P. Hämäläinen and Esa Saarinen. Here intelligence is measured through successful interactions with an environment, and a person's ability to modify their behavior based on feedback from that environment. The broad conceptual placeholder of "social intelligence" also has elements of a functional definition, as it emphasizes attributes that contribute to positive interactions with others, the skillful navigation of complex social situations, and successful adaptation to dynamic periods of social change. And in Integral Lifework theory, there is a particular dimension of self – called *flexible processing space* – that also informs my thinking about functional intelligence. Flexible processing space represents our ability to access and harmonize different processing centers within ourselves – for example, intellectual processing, emotive processing, transpersonal processing, somatic processing and so forth. Each of these processing centers embodies one kind of native intelligence within, but it is our

ability to coordinate and balance those input streams that allows us to relate with our environment in dynamic and productive ways, to make the most effective decisions in-the-moment and over long periods of committed effort.

The nourishment paradigm of Integral Lifework also offers important additional considerations. Integral Lifework describes twelve dimensions of self – twelve "nourishment centers" – and various approaches to nurturing those dimensions in a balanced way. Nourishment centers include things like our physical well-being, emotional connections with others, sense of purpose, sexual satisfaction, intellectual stimulation, interior disciplines of consciousness and so on. That nourishment is then expressed in ever expanding arenas of intention and action, so that the more effective we become at multidimensional self-care, the more we nurture everyone and everything around us. This harmony between intentions and actions is further described as authentic love; in other words, the efficacy of our nurturing and balancing twelve dimensions of being equates to the efficacy of loving kindness in widening circles of interaction. This concept of compassionate, ever-enlarging self-actualization adds additional components to functional intelligence. It creates and insistence on balanced and holistic effort that is grounded in a desire for the greatest good for the greatest number, including self. So if we accept the basic premise of Integral Lifework, then individual and collective healing, growth and transformation also help define how functionally smart we are.

All of these ideas add to a broad definition of functional intelligence, yet none of them fully encompass it. There is still a missing piece, and that is the role of *intuitive values*; that is, values that we are already operationalizing whether we are conscious of them or not. As one obvious example, many of the values expressed in Integral Lifework theory have become part of how I navigate functional intelligence in my own life. In one sense, it is impossible to separate most definitions of intelligence from our values system because all such

definitions operate within specific values structures. In our definition of functional intelligence, we are simply recognizing that intuitive values are nearly always the mechanism of prioritization for our actions, thoughts, attitudes and intentions. And, to reiterate, these values are not conscious ideals, carefully structured beliefs, or socially imposed mores. Ideals, beliefs and mores may help shape or influence intuitive values over time, but, in what once again is a mainly pragmatic concern, such values are what actually govern our priorities in-the-moment, in what are most often unconscious or reflexive ways.

I would propose that intuitive values tend to be framed by the four qualities of *clarity, emphasis, hierarchy,* and *consistency*, and I would define these as follows:

- **Clarity.** Our values are most clear when they regularly express and reinforce themselves, and when we can then observe and interpret that expression. Introspection can aid us in discerning what our values may be, but the most effective means of understanding what we value – and the actual hierarchy of those values – is to simply pay attention to our behavior over time and correlate that with values structures. Thus, although intuitive values operate mainly in unconscious ways, we can become more conscious of them through observation and introspection…and this creates clarity.

- **Emphasis.** What is most important to me? What has the most emphasis and influence in my life? Is it the emotional quality of my relationships with other people? My level of power of influence in a group? How quickly or ingeniously I can solve complex problems? The safety and happiness of my family? The amount of money I have in the bank? The perceptions of my peers about what I think or how I act? The size of my vocabulary? My sexual gratification? How creatively I can cook a meal?

In other words, what consistently ranks highest in priority, as evidenced by my thoughts and behaviors?

- **Hierarchy.** What is the cascading, hierarchal structure of my values? Are their overarching values (meta-values) that influence that prioritization and organization? Are there values that are primary and intrinsic to how I view reality, which then inspire other, more instrumental values? For example, if I have a primary value of protecting my family, I might have a secondary, instrumental value of building strong fences, or installing high-end security systems. Then again, my primary values might be a pride in building things, or learning about electronics, which then subordinate the protection of my family to an instrumental value (that is, the secondary, family-protection value facilitates my primary, building-things and learning-electronics values). All of these, in turn, may be guided by the meta-value that any value that preserves the life, thriving and reproduction within my local gene pool should be prioritized as primary.

- **Consistency.** This relates to how I contextualize my values. Do my values somehow contradict and compete with each other, or do they consistently align with each other? Are they internally consistent? Also, are my values and their hierarchy consistent from one moment to the next, or do they change when I am with different people or in different environments? How steadfast and resolute am I in demonstrating the same hierarchy in diverse situations? Do I demonstrate one set of values at work, and another at home? One set with my close friends, and another with strangers? One set with men, and another with women? How does this impact the alignment of my values with my meta-values? Is there potential for cognitive dissonance or self-defeating patterns, or is there overall integrity?

Once again, all of this would mainly occur on an unconscious level, rather than what we consciously intend or desire our values to be. This is our de facto values system – but where do these values originate? From the same processing centers within – the same facets of self that synthesize functional intelligence. That is, from our analytical mind, our somatic mind, our emotional mind, our transpersonal mind and so on. In Integral Lifework, all human motivation is attributed to four fundamental drives: to *exist*, to *experience*, to *adapt*, and to *affect*. These in turn, stimulate sixteen different fulfillment impulses – impulses that shape every aspect of our intentions, longings and behavior in order to satisfy those fundamental drives. Among these fulfillment impulses are intrinsic desires for mastery, belonging, imagination, autonomy, discovery, sustenance, reproduction, understanding and so forth. A brief overview of the sixteen fulfillment impulses is provided in the following chart.

FULFILLMENT IMPULSE	ACTIVE EXPRESSION	FELT SENSE
Discovery	Observe/Explore/Expand/Experiment	Sense of adventure, risk, opportunity
Understanding	Contextualize/Evaluate/Identify/Interpret	Sense of purpose, meaning, context, structure
Effectiveness	Impact/Shape/Actuate/Realize	Sense of activity, success, achievement, accomplishment
Perpetuation	Stabilize/Maintain/Secure/Contain	Sense of safety, family, security, "home"
Reproduction	Sexualize/Gratify/Stimulate/Attract	Sense of attraction, arousal, satisfaction, release, pleasure
Maturation	Nurture/Support/Grow/Thrive	Sense of caring, supporting, growing, maturing

Fulfillment	Complete/Transform/Transcend/Become	Sense of wonder, awe, fulfillment, transcendence, self-transformation
Sustenance	Taste/Consume/Quench/Savor	Sense of fullness, enjoyment, contentment, satiation
Avoidance	Escape/Evade/Deny/Reject	Sense of fearfulness, self-protectiveness, wariness, stubbornness
Union	Accept/Embrace/Incorporate/Combine	Sense of "being," union, interdependence, continuity
Autonomy	Differentiate/Individuate/Rebel/Isolate	Sense of distinct self, uniqueness, freedom, personal potential
Belonging	Cooperate/Conform/Commit/Submit	Sense of belonging, trust, community, acceptance
Affirmation	Appreciate/Enjoy/Celebrate/Create	Sense of "I am," play, gratitude, aesthetics, inspiration
Mastery	Empower/Compete/Dominate/Destroy	Sense of strength, power, control, skill, competence
Imagination	Hypothesize/Consider/Extrapolate/Project	Sense of limitlessness, possibility, inventiveness, "aha"
Exchange	Communicate/Engage/Share/Interact	Sense of connection, intimacy, sharing, expression

If these fundamental drives and fulfillment impulses reside in every person to varying degrees, then one way to define self-nourishment is the satisfaction of these drives and impulses via every internal and external relationship in our existence. What our intuitive valuations really represent, then, is the way in which each fundamental drive and fulfillment impulse manifests in all of these relationships. In relationships between ourselves and other people, between our conceptions and our perceptions, between our invented divisions of self (heart

and mind, mind and body, etc.),between ourselves and any system in which we operate…and between our contribution to those systems and everything else in the Universe. Our values system – as defined by the qualities of clarity, emphasis, hierarchy and consistency across all of our intuitive values – is therefore an expression of which drives and impulses most observably influence on all of these relationships.

So values originate from every dimension of self, and attempt to fulfill every dimension of nourishment. What differentiates the intuitive values stream from the functional intelligence stream is that intuitive values are mainly embedded knowledge – innate, conditioned or fully integrated conclusions about what we perceive, learn and experience – whereas functional intelligence involves the active, self-aware arm of our cognitive processing. Intuitive values are the passive lens through which we automatically assess and navigate each moment, and functional intelligence is a our demonstrated capacity to operationalize those values, and adjust those operations according to perceptions and feedback. Certainly all values seem to change as a result of our experiences and reactions, but the change occurs at such a fundamental level that we are seldom aware of it. What I will suggest here is that these intuitive values interact with pragmatic, functional intelligence on many levels – each interaction shaping and maintaining every other – and that we can and should become more conscious of these interactions. But functional intelligence and intuitive values are really inseparable – they are two sides of the same coin, and cannot exist independently of one other.

Perhaps an example would be helpful. Let's say I'm deciding how to cross a busy city street. I am in a hurry to get to a meeting with my friend, and am running a little late. As I asses my situation, I notice that the nearest crosswalk is a half block further than I need to go, since my destination is directly across from me. I also notice that, even if I ran to the crosswalk, the traffic light is about to

change, and I would end up waiting for a minute or more for the light to signal permission to cross.   But I am nervous that my friend will be angry if I'm late, and I want our meeting to go smoothly. I reason that, if I act quickly, I can time my J-walking to avoid most of the traffic. So I look carefully around me, observe that there aren't any cars approaching from either direction, and run across four lanes of traffic towards the coffee shop. Just as I reach the other side, the traffic light changes and cars begin speeding by. But I am safe and on-time.

Now there also happens to be a young boy on a bicycle who was also riding along that same street. I didn't see him, but he had watched me run across. For some reason – perhaps inspired by my example – he now also launches across four lanes of traffic just moments after me. Unfortunately, he does not reach the other side of the street in time, and a large commercial truck collides with him head-on.   The boy is killed instantly.   This results in a long chain of consequences. The van driver is arrested, tried for vehicular manslaughter, and is saddled with a lifetime of guilt. He loses his job, and eventually his marriage falls apart as a consequence of all the financial and emotional stress. The family of the young boy is of course also devastated, and is understandably seeking someone to blame for their grief and pain. So an opportunistic attorney obliges them by helping them sue the delivery company that owned the truck, resulting in a large settlement that eventually bankrupts the company. All of the company's employees then end up jobless, losing their homes, life savings and retirement security.

Here is how intuitive values and functional intelligence are represented in this example. First, because I value my relationship with the friend I was going to meet, and because I wanted to prevent her becoming upset by my tardiness, I ordered my decisions and actions accordingly. By disobeying the rule of law and risking my own safety, I was able to affirm these values with my actions, using my perception and a quick assessment of probabilities to navigate a dangerous

situation. And what happened? I succeeded. I facilitated my intuitive values with my functional intelligence. Except…there were some unintended consequences. Perhaps I didn't realize until much later – after the squealing tires and ambulance and milling crowd of shocked onlookers – that I had somehow contributed to the boy's death. But those unintended outcomes are still part of assessing my success, especially from the perspective of my meta-values. Certainly, the more I discover about the cause-and-effect relationship between my J-walking and all those horrible results, the more I will have to factor that into my conclusions about whether I really did succeed in my values operationalization – that is, whether my decisions in that moment really were "smart" in a functional, practical sense of aligning with my values and meta-values in each broadening context of perception and understanding.

This is how we assess functional intelligence for each set of reactions, decisions, etc. Taking all of the available data into account, do my actions operationalize my values or not? Does the relationship between my values and my actions express integrity between the two? In this example, if I value human life, and if I prioritize the well-being of others as part of my decision matrix – and indeed if I desire to make a positive contribution to society – then I have failed horribly. Instead of my J-walking being a clever, carefully-timed risk, it morphs into the stupidest thing I could possibly have done in that moment. Instead of demonstrating how smart I was by flexibly skirting the rule of law, finding just the right opportunity to quickly and easily honor my own values, I become an idiot in my own estimation, mainly because I was not appreciating a broader context for my actions.

Of course, if I don't value human life, or if I somehow rationalize away my responsibility for what happened, or if I deem all those cascading consequences as outside of my control or influence…well, then I can remain self-assured in my cleverness. In my own mind, I can defend my choice as intelligent and

successful, regardless of what anyone else says. I was able to meet with my friend on time, after all – she didn't have to wait one single minute. This illustrates how differing hierarchies of intuitive values – and different levels of self-awareness and scope for the qualities of clarity, emphasis, hierarchy and consistency – can alter how functional intelligence is predicted and measured.

Thus the interplay between values and intelligence becomes obvious. If my intelligence allows my values to be expressed in action, then I'm functionally smart. If it doesn't, I'm not so smart. And the inverse is also true: if my values are confused and muddy, lack a definite priority, compete with each other in some way, or change rapidly from one situation to the next…then I can never fully operationalize my values. No matter what my native cognitive and intuitive capacities may be, if my values are not clear, hierarchical, or consistent in emphasis across many contexts, then my functional intelligence will always be hampered. No matter how clever I may be in one type of intelligence (emotional, analytical, somatic, etc.), I will remain functionally stupid if my values lack these qualities. But I think we could expand the example to clarify this dynamic interplay.

I am now the young boy riding my bike through city streets. I know how to ride safely because I've been riding downtown for over a year, and I've already had a lot of close calls. I have learned that following traffic rules is important, not just because I can avoid accidents that way, but because when I break rules drivers get angry at me. Once an old geezer in a Buick chased me down and threw a hot mug of coffee at me just because I ran a red light. Another time a soccer mom in a minivan ran me off the road, screaming at me through her window because I cut in front of her without signaling or looking over my shoulder. So I stopped breaking rules and got a lot more careful. I figure it's practice for when I have a car, and I'm really hoping my folks will pay for driving lessons when I'm old

enough. If I show them I'm a really good driver, maybe they'll even buy me my own car.

So when I was riding downtown today, there was a guy standing on the curb, looking across the street. I was about to ride by him, but I could already tell what he was going to do, just by the look on his face and how he was glancing around at traffic. He was going to J-walk. So I slowed down so I wouldn't hit him, because I don't think he even saw me coming. And, just as I thought he would, he ran across the street right in front of me. Then I remembered all those times when drivers got mad at me for pulling stunts like that, so, after a quick look to make sure no cars were coming, I chased after him. I was going to give him a piece of my mind, partly because I wanted him to feel the way I had felt so many times…and partly because some people just need to know that they've done something stupid. After all, getting yelled at had changed how I rode my bike downtown, and in a strange way I felt like it was my duty to pass on the good advice. Something like "Hey! I almost ran right into you!" Or maybe "You should watch where you're going!" Or maybe something more colorful. I couldn't decide. Unfortunately, before I could get a word out, this big truck came out of nowhere. The last thing I saw was the horrified look on the driver's face. I didn't even have time to be afraid…I just felt really surprised, and kind of sorry for the poor driver.

In this example the boy thinks he understands what will keep him safe, and values that; he knows how to navigate traffic and avoid trouble from his limited experience. But, on impulse, he decides to shift the prioritization of those values, and subordinate them to another value: the abruptly elevated importance of correcting someone else's behavior. At his young age, he has probably never deliberately concluded that informing someone else of their errors is more important than his own safety, and, given some time to think it through, he

might have made a different decision. But he hasn't done this. Instead, his teenage, incompletely myelinated brain flares into self-important befuddlement.

So the person who hasn't clearly evaluated their priorities (or consciously prioritized their values) has no real means of measuring their functional intelligence, and someone without a well-developed functional intelligence will have trouble operationalizing their intuitive values and maintaining ongoing integrity between values and actions. In this case, the young boy is demonstrating poor functional intelligence because he isn't able to prioritize his own well-being as a meta-value that overrides an impulsive reorganization of his operational values in a given moment. The qualities of clarity, emphasis, hierarchy and consistency are not being demonstrated by his decision, with devastating results.

To move this discussion into a more personal sphere, I consider myself much more functionally intelligent now, in my late forties, than I have at any other time. It's more of a relaxed subjective sense than an objective measurement, but it has produced a steady confidence that I can navigate complex situations to arrive at outcomes that conform to my hierarchy of values. Objective metrics (Raven's Progressive Matrices)might show my general intelligence ("g") is actually be in decline. However, when I was younger, even though my IQ may have measured higher, my intuitive values were more muddy and partially formed, and my success at conforming my actions to the few values I was clear about was inconsistent. Today, my hierarchy of values is much clarified and more orderly, and my ability to embody it in my thoughts, intentions and actions is considerably improved. So, subjectively, I feel much smarter than I did those many years ago.

But lest it become obvious that my motivation for writing this article is to compensate for a declining IQ, let me move rapidly on. In my other writing, I

have often described the importance of harmonizing different input streams to develop accurate wisdom and discernment, and in this article is a variation on that theme. In the first perspective of our pedestrian example, the decision to cross a busy city street did not account for a sufficient number of variables to result in a truly intelligent choice – at least according to values that transcend a self-absorbed context. In the second perspective of that example, an impulsive jumbling of priorities hindered a skillful result. In both cases, outcomes did not align with values according to the qualities of clarity, emphasis, hierarchy and consistency. And that is really the key observation. Even if we can rationalize that a "reasonable decision" is being made given the data available to us, if we continue, time-after-time, to observe that the results of those decisions don't align with what we set out to accomplish, or aren't able to achieve even indirectly what is most important to us, then we cannot claim to be intelligent decision makers.

Of course, both values and intelligence are not static. Though founded on innate capacities, new values are inculcated through exposure to new experiences, and new competencies are developed in our functional intelligence as we experiment with different tools and approaches. The key concern, however, is how we manage the relationship between the two. If we ignore, forget or suppress our intuitive values, we will never be able to chart a steady and disciplined course for their operationalization. If we don't pay attention to how insights, intentions and choices correlate with values-reinforcing outcomes, we will never be able to appreciate what functional intelligence looks like. In either case, we will remain functionally stupid.

My observation is that most folks seem to be divided into two broad camps. On the one hand, there are people with loose, cloudy or limited values hierarchies, but extremely well-developed execution of whatever values they happen to be operating from in a given moment. And, on the other, there are individuals with

well-ordered and consistent values hierarchies, but who haven't yet found a reliable way of operationalizing those values from day-to-day. So there are those who can accurately execute a very narrow spectrum of shifting priorities, and those who can't execute a much broader spectrum of clearer and more well-developed priorities. Neither achieves a high level of functional intelligence, because some aspect of their values actualization is unreliable or inconsistent. These may be emotionally wise people, analytically brilliant people, spiritually perceptive people, somatically aware people...just not functionally intelligent people. But because these other forms of intelligence may be celebrated in certain relationships, communities, professions or fields of study, the more inclusive faculty of functional intelligence is often left underdeveloped. There are probably many reasons why underdevelopment occurs, and I suspect functional intelligence plots a bell curve, just like IQ or EQ do...it just doesn't necessarily correlate with those other attributes in each person.

Perhaps we can now contemplate some broader implications of the dynamics between values and intelligence. For example, in building consensus in any group, values must be clarified first before meaningful discussion, agreement, decisions or planning can occur. In the sphere of politics, the only meaningful metrics for any office holder's performance could be derived from that person's expressed values: Do the results of their executive decisions, the legislation they support, and the actions of the people they appoint operationalize those values or not? In the workplace, it should be incumbent upon management to communicate a clear values hierarchy for the enterprise, so that workers can adjust their habits – their functional intelligence – to aim for desired outcomes. In intimate relationships, both intuitive values and an agreed upon approach to values actualization could be consistently communicated and reinforced for the relationship to remain more cohesive. Each of these instances demands frank self-awareness about values and priorities, ongoing consistency in those valuations, and honest assessment of desired and actual outcomes. To then

execute a plan of action in the most intelligent fashion requires frequent revisiting of a values hierarchy, and a constant realignment of effort that adjusts to new information and feedback.

Regardless of specific approach, implicit to any process that examines values and intelligence are flexibility, openness and honesty. Without these characteristics – which of course reflect a values hierarchy in and of themselves – there is little likelihood of making intelligent choices. And without continual diligence in self-awareness, it is all too easy to form habits of thought, action and interaction that may once have skillfully reified what was important to us, but which no longer fulfill that purpose. It is also easy to mistakenly believe we are fulfilling our intuitive values when we are really acting on entirely different priorities – a loved one's requests, cultural norms, family obligations, or other external values we have not clearly prioritized or integrated. We frequently encounter these disconnects in large institutions, but they are equally evident in personal careers, friendships, a physical fitness routine or a spiritual practice. Unless we begin to order our perceptions and ideations, and filter our behaviors through a lens of functional intelligence, we will find it difficult to become operationally smarter and more effective.

Thus we begin to discern the many substantive barriers, which we might call antagonists or even enemies to both functional intelligence and intuitive values. One common barrier is social conformance, where we effectively elevate the values of our peers above our own, and live in perpetual contradiction to or competition with our own priorities. Another common barrier is ignorance – ignorance about what we really value (as opposed to our idealized values), or ignorance about the most effective ways of operationalizing those values. Then there is disempowerment, where we believe we simply cannot create conditions that align with our values and priorities – either because we fear the risk is too high, or because we have become habituated to dependence on someone else's

power and control. And then there is the barrier of egotism, which prioritizes all valuations according to their enlargement of our own control and self-importance. And finally there is the barrier of traditionalism or conservatism, where we condition ourselves to rely on past patterns, priorities and methods, and carefully avoid questioning their efficacy in the present.

Any of these can inhibit self-awareness about our intuitive values and the skillfulness of our actions, but, more tragically, they also tend to combine in a sinister synergy, amplifying each other to create an impenetrable, recalcitrant shell. In the end, they reduce our flexibility and problem-solving skills, undermine both creative imagination and critical thinking, inhibit our intuitive capacities. In essence, they shackle multiple intelligence centers at once. To our great detriment as individuals and a collective, once conformance, ignorance, disempowerment, egotism and conservatism conspire to entangle our minds and hearts, we will seldom see our way clear of them until our suffering is too great to bear. Even then, the stubborn conditioning these antagonists create within us will direct our pain and anger away from its true source, finding fault with everyone who disagrees with our worldview or doesn't cooperate with our efforts to reify that ideology. But I think this just distances us further from the personal responsibility and integrity we have been avoiding all along.
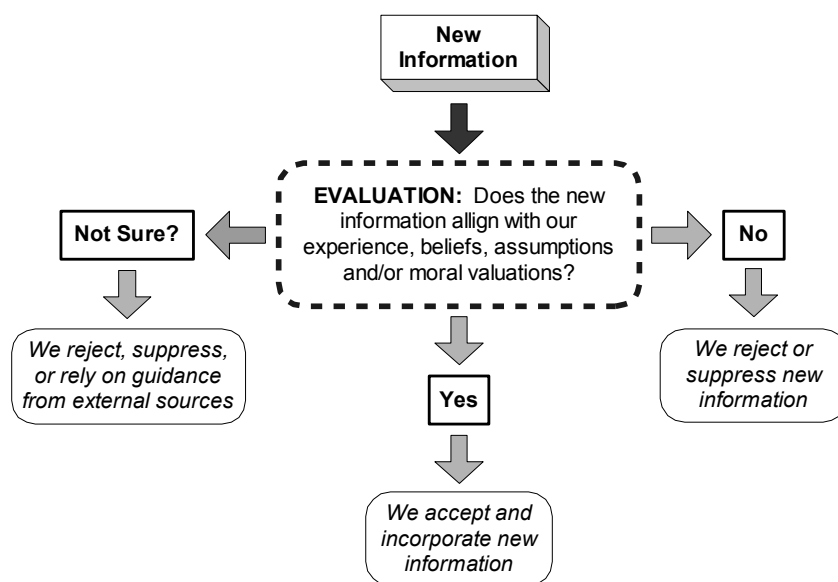
Why are these conditions so detrimental, and why is it so difficult find a way free of them? I think, at least in part, it is because they can so easily masquerade as loftier values and meta-values. Blind conformance can feel like loyalty or devotion. Ignorance can seem like safety from potentially harmful knowledge, or from scary and uncomfortable experiences. On the surface, disempowerment of self feels a lot like trusting or loving the person who has power over us – even though it really expresses a lack of compassion for self. Egotism often masquerades as righteousness, elevating our own belief, ideal or practice above the basic worth of other human beings; the egotist's intelligence is bent on
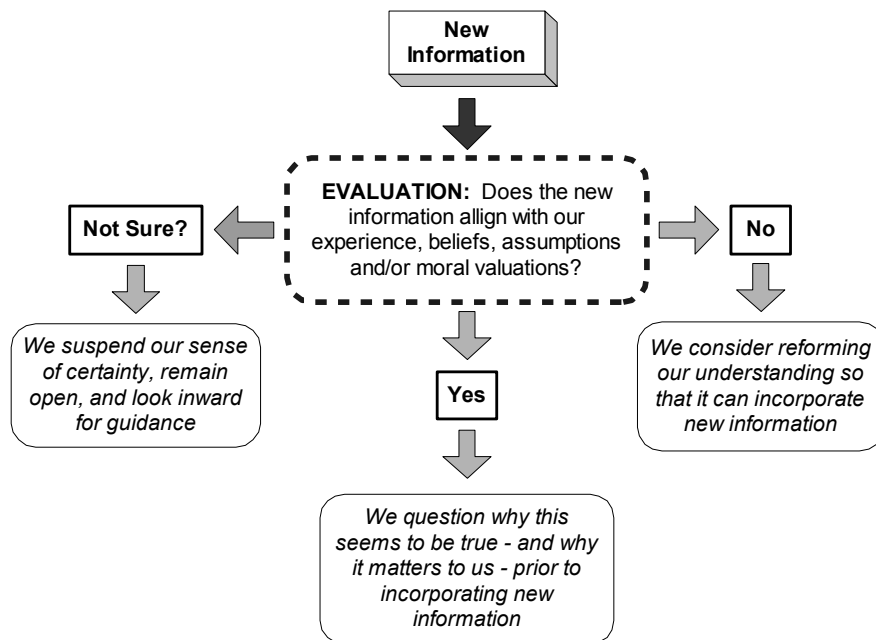
subjecting everyone else to a given worldview…*or else*. And traditionalism and conservatism likewise offer a veneer of rectitude – a thin layer of worthy practices, venerated by generations of the past – that promise success and validation to devoted adherents. Conservatism and traditionalism also generate confidence and momentum from the idealized and romanticized examples of the past, endlessly revising those histories, conforming them to an ever-changing present. So, in a way, these barriers are satisfying various fulfillment impulses (mastery, belonging, perpetuation, etc.), but they are doing so in an imbalanced way, disallowing other fulfillment impulses from being nourished.

And this is a critical concept. Overemphasis of certain intelligence centers, primary drives or fulfillment impulses will eventually undermine functional intelligence. Without balance, harmony and equity, either our intuitive values will become inconsistent or contradictory, our ability to operationalize them will be hampered, or both.   Unless we pay careful attention to all of our dimensions of being, we will not achieve the clarity or energy required to maintain a consistent values hierarchy and skillful actualization of that hierarchy.   Thus barriers can also be defined as conditions or influences that inhibit balanced, harmonized and equitable nurturing of all dimensions of self. All such barriers are illusions and distortions, ego defenses that cannot provide human beings with the tools to navigate complex, nuanced or unanticipated situations on-the-fly. They may help navigate the world in a limited array of easily predictable circumstances (that is, past circumstances that predictably repeat), but they lack the dynamic breadth that truly intelligent decision-making demands. Such reflexes are donned as rigid armor against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, but seldom provide the desired protection; they are a static shield that seeks to deflect failure, but more often simply hides it from view. It is indeed easy – even relaxing for a time – to avoid self-awareness and difficult choices by relying on ego defenses. But, eventually, there will come a time when they do not function as expected, and instead invite what we most fear and are least

prepared to engage. Both history and psychology teach us that, if we cling to such habits, they will always be outmoded by the inevitability of change, and we will suffer that much more because we refused to heal, grow or prepare.

Thus enemies of functional intelligence and intuitive values always share the same disabling characteristic: inflexibility. They don't permit new information to enter the decision matrix. They can't adjust to new situations because a trajectory of action has been predetermined. There is no nuance or subtlety available to transcend black-and-white reasoning, because that would require trusting an unfolding process of discovery rather than rigidly defined truths. It is my belief that these antagonists enslave all human thought and activity to an unquestionable and entrenched status quo, no matter how dysfunctional, inefficient or harmful that status quo becomes. In a way, they rob us of our humanity and relegate the riches of the human spirit to a trash heap of automatons. It is impossible to think creatively, critically or intuitively when all of our inner processing has become rigidified and patternized this way. I would even say it is impossible for our brain to retain much neuroplasticity if we allow the enemies of functional intelligence to take root.

```
                        ┌──────────────┐
                        │     New      │
                        │ Information  │
                        └──────┬───────┘
                               ▼
        ┌─────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────┐
        │Not Sure?│◄──│ EVALUATION: Does the new│──►│  No │
        └────┬────┘   │ information allign with │   └──┬──┘
             │        │ our experience, beliefs,│      │
             ▼        │ assumptions and/or moral│      ▼
   ┌──────────────┐   │      valuations?        │  ┌──────────────┐
   │We reject,    │   └────────────┬────────────┘  │We reject or  │
   │suppress, or  │                │               │suppress new  │
   │rely on       │                ▼               │information   │
   │guidance from │            ┌───────┐           └──────────────┘
   │external      │            │  Yes  │
   │sources       │            └───┬───┘
   └──────────────┘                │
                                   ▼
                           ┌──────────────┐
                           │We accept and │
                           │incorporate   │
                           │new           │
                           │information   │
                           └──────────────┘
```

```
                        ┌─────────────┐
                        │    New      │
                        │ Information │
                        └─────────────┘
                              ⬇
        ┌ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┐
        │  EVALUATION:  Does the new      │
┌──────────┐ ◄─  information allign with our   ─►  ┌──────┐
│ Not Sure?│ │  experience, beliefs, assumptions │ │  No  │
└──────────┘ │     and/or moral valuations?      │ └──────┘
        └ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┘
```

Not Sure? → *We suspend our sense of certainty, remain open, and look inward for guidance*

Yes → *We question why this seems to be true - and why it matters to us - prior to incorporating new information*

No → *We consider reforming our understanding so that it can incorporate new information*

Now let's consider how these barriers are represented in the previous examples. For both the pedestrian and the young cyclist, egotism played a significant role in their prioritization: "What I think is important is most important, regardless of how it impacts those around me." Ignorance of potential consequences also played a part for both. Where the J-walker was motivated by worry about his friend's anger, this may indicate a codependent or self-disempowering dynamic – a giving away of personal freedoms so that someone else has control. For the young cyclist, blind conformism may have played a part, as his corrective attitude was imitating what other people had done to him. Ironically, blind conformism could also have helped avoid tragedy in this situation, if everyone involved had followed established traffic rules. And this is one of the deceptions the barriers to functional intelligence present: sometimes, in certain situations, each one of these barriers can be productive. The challenge is knowing when and where to apply a particular tool in decision-making, and, once again, this requires flexibility.

There is a way to overcome all such antagonists, and that is to consciously evolve our intuitive values. What does this mean? Really, it means we must mature our morality. In this context, morality is one way to shape the four qualities of our values – a conscious way that is informed by conscience and conviction, our cultural commitments to society, and the responsibilities we accept in our relationships with others. This is where felt beliefs, intellectual ideals, and social mores enter into our values system anyway…but here we are attempting to consciously manage that process. As we mature our morality, there is a predictable trajectory to our evolution. For one, our values will gain clarity – more readily apparent upon reflection and introspection, and more obviously represented in our actions. For another, the emphasis, hierarchy and dependencies within our values system will become equally transparent. Most importantly, our values hierarchy will become contextually consistent. Rather than reorganizing our values to suit each new situation, or conceal certain valuations in certain circumstances, we will broadcast a concise mapping of what is important to us in every moment, and navigate according to that map. Finally – and perhaps most significantly – the scope of our priorities will shift from the self-absorbed obsessions of ego to the ever-enlarging inclusions of compassion. For example, to grow beyond an emphasis on I/Me/Mine, and embrace the inherent worth and importance of every human being.

A proposed progression of moral maturity is provided in the following chart:

| Applied Nonduality | This is an expression of mystical, nondual consciousness as a supremely unfettered existence where intuitions of universal freedom are fully realized. There is a certain irony that the autonomy one's ego so craved in earlier strata is now readily available through the absence of ego. The lack of a distinct sense of self in some ways eradicates any sort of identification at all - so non-being is equivalent to being, and self is equivalent to both nothingness and previous conceptions of "the All." Here inexhaustible loving kindness is conclusively harmonized through advanced forms of discernment. An enduring all-inclusive love-consciousness integrates all previous moral orientations, current intentions and actions into a carefree - but nevertheless carefully balanced - flow; a flow into what might be described as "ultimate purpose." Previous orientations are then viewed not as right or wrong, but as a spectrum of imperfect expressions of that ultimate purpose. In this final letting go of self-identification, all nourishment is love, all love is nourishment, and all values hierarchies are subordinated to skillfully compassionate affection. At the same time, |

	this realization and any other constructs become just that: constructs, inventions of the mind. Up until now, the main concern of moral valuation has been the orientation of self-to-self, self-to-other, self-to-community, self-to-environment, self-to-planet, self-to-humanity, self-to-nothingness, self-to-All, etc. In other words, previous values hierarchies tended to be preoccupied with the context of the self. In this stratum, that context is no longer relevant, because there is no self, and no concept of no-self. Along the same lines, the past/present/future construction of time dissolves into insignificance.
⇧ **Spiritual Universality**	Through persistent and intimate connection with an absolute, universal inclusiveness of being, moral function is defined by whatever most skillfully facilitates "the good of All." "The good of All," in turned, is an evolving intuition, a successive unfolding of mystical awareness in concert with dialectical cognition and neutrality of personal will. However, it tends to remain more of a felt sense than an exclusively rational construct. Skillfulness can still be refined through empirical experimentation and observation, but it is always subjected to a filter of intensified and unconditional compassion - a felt sense as well. Identification with the All is fluid and seamless, and moral thought and action flowing from this identification are also fluid and seamless. That is not to say that this stratum can't occasionally be interrupted by regressions to previous strata within one or more dimensions of being (usually as a reaction to overwhelming or stressful situations), but the contrast and incongruity of those regressions is strikingly obvious. Past, present and future become a continuum where "now" is less fixed; the experience of time itself is more relative and process-oriented. Nevertheless, "now" remains the primary reference for that process.
⇧ **Transpersonal Holism**	This stratum is marked by an increasing flexibility of moral orientation. For example, the realization that more than one values hierarchy can be valid, that someone can operate within multiple values hierarchies simultaneously, or that seemingly opposing values hierarchies can synthesize a new, higher order moral orientation. This intersubjective moral ambiguity is then navigated through the discernment of intentional, strategic outcomes that benefit the largest majority possible. Definition of what constitutes "the largest majority possible" likewise changes and evolves, but is strongly informed by transpersonal perceptions and experiences. In turn, identification with this transpersonal connectedness subordinates other identifications, so that, for example, experiencing a shared ground of being is indistinguishable from compassionate affection for all beings, and compassionate affection for all beings is indistinguishable from attenuation of individual ego. The relevant timeframe for this stratum becomes contextual; the relevance of past, present and future shifts with current priorities, and the cycles and patterns of time begin to give way to a continuum.
⇧ **World-Centric**	Now there is a greater appreciation and acceptance of ecologies that facilitate, transcend and include human society. These ecologies may contain biological, metaphysical, quantum or other systems-oriented constructs, with the feature that these systems are vast, complex and interdependent. Here moral function is inspired by individual and collective commitment to understanding and supporting those systems in order to support all life. Personal identification with this broader, ecological consciousness expands humanity-centric compassion and concern into world-centric compassion and concern. Values hierarchies now begin to be viewed as a primary form of nourishment, from which all other nourishment is derived. Time dilates and slows a bit here, tending to be viewed more as cycles and patterns than a line.
⇧ **Principled Rationalism**	Moral function is now defined by a rationally defined set of reasoned moral principles, principles with the unifying objective of benefiting all of humanity. For anyone operating in this stratum, empirical validation of moral efficacy is of particularly compelling interest; what really works should be embraced, and what doesn't should be discarded. There is also an additional form of individuation here, where identification with previous communities (communities whose values and goals had previously been facilitated and integrated) begins to fade, and is replaced with increasing identification with, and compassion for, all human beings. Social divisions are discarded in favor of equal status. The future can now become an all-consuming fixation that drives more and more decisions, the past becomes an advising reference, and the current moment a fleeting absorption. As a result, time tends to both constrict and accelerate in this stratum, remaining linear in experience and conception.

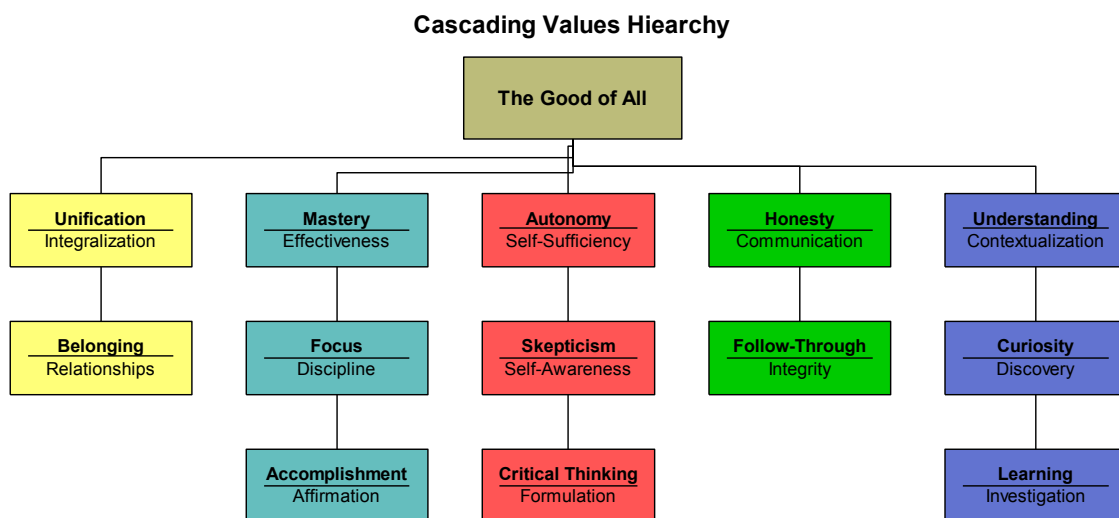|	
⇧ **Cooperative Communalism**	Here a communal role and collective responsibility is firmly accepted and established as part of moral function, and community is defined by shared values and experiences, rather than just shared benefits or just laws. The necessity of collaborative contribution to human welfare is understood, and the desire to compete for personal advantage fades away. A community's shared values are appreciated, integrated and supported in order to further that community's goals and collective nourishment, but without the suppression or sacrificing of personal values and identity that were common in earlier tribalism. Thus distinctions of class, caste, and social position tend to attenuate. This stratum tends to invite preoccupation with the future, sometimes even beyond one's personal future, because one is charting a course through increased complexity. Time is experienced and conceived as episodic.
⇧ **Competitive Communalism**	Moral function is strongly influenced by personal acceptance of the importance of participating in a mutually beneficial and lawfully just community, while still retaining individual uniqueness. However, this initial expansion into a communal moral orientation usually orbits around competition. Competition with others for personal positional power and influence in the community; competition with other moral orientations, asserting the relevance of one's own views and priorities; non-conformance with, and continual challenging of, a community's established values hierarchy; and competition for other forms of social capital. In this stratum the future gains more importance as one strategizes navigation of these competitions. The past also regains its teaching role, with emphasis on both failures and successes to inform current strategies.
⇧ **Contributive Individualism**	Now more fully individuated from the primary tribe and its social constraints, one continues to be committed to one's own well-being, freedom, wholeness and access to more subtle, nuanced and complex nourishment resources. Moral function is increasingly defined by efforts that appear "good" or helpful to others, as framed by conscience, the context-of-the-moment and one-on-one relationships. In this sense, moral relativism is derived from one's own experiences and interactions, and tends to be maintained and defended within this self-referential absorption. The present is still paramount here.This stratum is part of an individuation process from the tribe and the tribe's values hierarchy. Moral orientation may lapse into previous strata, but is otherwise centered around a sense of obligation to one's own uniqueness, freedom, well-being and wholeness. As a result, one is open to more complex nourishment that was not available within egoic or tribal orientations. Probably as a component of emancipation from tribal expectations, there tends to be minimal concern about the impact of one's individuation process on others. In this stratum, the present once again gains preeminence; the past is being left behind, and the future matters less than assertiveness in the now.
⇧ **Opportunistic Individualism**	This stratum is part of an individuation process from the tribe and the tribe's values hierarchy. Moral orientation may lapse into previous strata, but is otherwise centered around a sense of obligation to one's own uniqueness, freedom, well-being and wholeness. As a result, one is open to more complex nourishment that was not available within egoic or tribal orientations. Probably as a component of emancipation from tribal expectations, there tends to be minimal concern about the impact of one's individuation process on others. In this stratum, the present once again gains preeminence; the past is being left behind, and the future matters less than assertiveness in the now.
⇧ **Defensive Tribalism**	Here the social order and internal rules of our primary social group(s) are championed as correct and proper both within the tribe (regulation) and to the outside world (proselytization). Competition with - and subjugation of - other individuals or groups outside of the tribe (or one's class, caste or social position) becomes more pronounced. Thus moral function is defined by rigid definitions and legalistic rules (law & order, right & wrong, black & white) that justify and secure personal standing within the tribe, as well as the tribe's standing within a given environment. Now, because one's tribal position is secure, the past again dominates. Past authorities, traditions, insights and experiences infuse the present legalistic frame with self-righteous justification.
⇧ **Tribal Acceptance**	Conformance with social expectations, and approval of one's primary social group(s), governs moral function here. What is "right" or "wrong" is defined by what increases or attenuates social capital and standing within the group(s). The acknowledged link between personal survival and tribal acceptance expands self-centeredness to tribe-centeredness, but otherwise operates similarly to lower moral strata. In this stratum, one's "tribe" tends

	to be fairly immediate, and fairly small - a family, team, group of peers, gang, etc. Now the relevant timeframe shifts back into the immediate future, where status and influence will either be lost or realized; the past may still be instructive, but what waits around the next bend in the road is what preoccupies.
⇧ **Self-Protective Egoism**	Moral function is governed by acquisitive, manipulative, consumptive or hedonistic patterns that accumulate and defend personal gains (i.e. secure nourishment sources) in order to insulate the ego from risks and loss. This self-centeredness may be masked by primitive adaptive personas that navigate basic reciprocity, but is generally indifferent to other people except for the ability of others to satisfy personal demands. Now the past can actually become more important than the present, because the past is where wrongs were suffered and gains realized. Reflections on the present and future, on the other hand, tend to be inhabited by fear of risk and loss.
⇧ **Self-Assertive Egoism**	The aggressive utilization of basic tools to satisfy own wants and whims, usually without regard to the impact on others, is an overwhelming moral imperative here. In most situations, this imperative is only moderated by fear of "being caught" and the personal embarrassment, punishment or loss of personal nourishment that may follow. The relevant timeframe for fulfilling one's desires expands a little here, so that gratification can be delayed until the near-future. However, the past is largely irrelevant, except as a reminder of negative consequences to be avoided.
⇧ **Egoless Raw Need**	Naïve, helpless state in which volition is centered around unrestrained basic nourishment in every moment, but where the mechanisms of needs fulfillment are unknown, unskilled or otherwise inaccessible. In this stratum, the scope of one's "relevant timeframe" for this needs fulfillment is almost always the immediate, everpresent *now*.

Other manifestations of an increasing moral maturity are also predictable. We will tend to celebrate differences of opinion and worldview, rather than mistrusting them. We will take responsibility for our own well-being and effectiveness, rather than abdicating that responsibility to others. We will joyfully embrace new experiences and new knowledge, rather than being afraid of them. We will relinquish romantic attachment to the past, and eagerly seek out an unfolding future. We will be truly exhilarated by having to think for ourselves, evaluate on-the-fly, and integrate lots of new and varied information into that process…rather than resisting critical, imaginative or expansive thought. And in all of our relationships – with every aspect of ourselves, others, our environment and so on – there will be more intimacy, openness, honesty, insight and compassion. These evolutions will synthesize a more robust and finely tuned moral compass, which in turn will open us up not only to a clearer vision of our own intuitive values, but the most effective ways to operationalize those values within new situations and environments. As our moral orientation

expands to encompass and integrate more and more variables, we will inherently develop greater capacities for nuanced and flexible decision-making, and our actions will more easily and effortlessly align with our inner priorities. We will, in essence, become smarter humans.

In the following chart, I offer a limited example of what the values operationalization and assessment process looks like given a specific values hierarchy.

Cascading Values Hiearchy

		The Good of All		

| **Unification** | **Mastery** | **Autonomy** | **Honesty** | **Understanding** |
| Integralization | Effectiveness | Self-Sufficiency | Communication | Contextualization |

| **Belonging** | **Focus** | **Skepticism** | **Follow-Through** | **Curiosity** |
| Relationships | Discipline | Self-Awareness | Integrity | Discovery |

| | **Accomplishment** | **Critical Thinking** | | **Learning** |
| | Affirmation | Formulation | | Investigation |

Operationalization & Assessment

A friend asked me if I needed some help leading a community discussion about how to oversee business expansion in our neighborhood. I thanked her but said no, I would like to lead the discussion myself, and that I would appreciate any resources she could provide. So she sent me some information on how to seed a group with ideas and build consensus before the meeting occurred, so that it would appear as if consensus was happening organically, when really it was a result of prior persuasion. But, after meditating on the subject and discussing it with some trusted friends, I decided not to take this approach. Instead, I researched some more until I found material on facilitating group discussions that encouraged brainstorming among different perspectives, then provided ways of "bubbling up" those different ideas into shared primary objectives. I then led the discussion using these tools, and was able to cultivate consensus in the group regarding the question at hand. As a result, the community was able to consolidate behind a specific list of standards that businesses would be required to adopt when setting up shop in our neighborhood. It would be several years until we were able to assess whether the standards would have the desired results, but in the interim the community felt empowered to engage in the governance process, and optimistic about their prospective impact. What was clear for now was that I did seem to operationalize my own values hierarchy in this process .

Now there are some caveats to this proposed functional intelligence schema. One is that, at least from my experience and observation, it can only exist in

individuals and small, spontaneously organized groups, and cannot be institutionalized. Although it is true that groups of a certain size will facilitate more effective outcomes through collaboration (i.e. more accurate and effective values alignment, as long as a sufficient number of values are shared within the group), there is a threshold past which efficiency becomes deficiency. I suspect there isn't a precise number for that limit, and also that it depends on the circumstance, type and scope of decisions being made, and the moral maturity level of the group's members. But I also suspect that there is an ideal range, and that it is likely quite small. Perhaps three to five, or four to eight, or five to twelve, but never more than twenty. Once a group grows beyond the ideal size, other factors overwhelm functional intelligence – things like unconscious groupthink, peer pressure, interpersonal and societal power structures, and so on. Although these can of course occur in smaller groups, they tend to ebb and flow rather than rigidifying into a static structure, especially if the group is spontaneously formed. If all such groups dissolve and form new groups at regular intervals, this also helps avoid the pitfalls of institutionalization. That is not to say that there can't be James Surowiecki's "wisdom of crowds," but even here the key components of collective wisdom remain diversity of opinion, independence of thought, and decentralization (i.e. a diversity of resources, experience and skills) while still retaining a consensus of primary values and meta-values. Ideally, even a "crowd" would be aggregated from several small groups of decision-makers whose membership still does not exceed the ideal threshold.

Where does all of this lead? What is the next arena of exploration or implementation for functional intelligence? I would enjoy comparing and contrasting real world examples of clarified intuitive values and successful functional intelligence with less evolved modes of operation. I suspect a fairly lengthy book could be written on this topic by evaluating both ancient history and recent events, on the scale of both individual choices and cultural memes,

highlighting the fruits of different degrees of values actualization. For now, though, I'll be more concise and personal.

In my own life, whenever I avoid or neglect aligning my thoughts, intentions and actions with my own values and priorities, I fail painfully. And whenever I follow through on what I know to be important, weighing as much information as possible in my decision-making, processing that information through my hierarchy of values, I succeed. Yes, there are arbitrary flashes of effectiveness that seem to come out of the blue, and equally random stumbling blocks that offer unexpected challenges, but controlling for these, results at both ends of the spectrum are consistent. The point is that, when I live my life according to what I know is most important, I flourish. My will is focused and my life is full of constructive synchronicity. When I allow any of the barriers I've described to fog my vision, I struggle. And of course I have observed the same in others over the years.

In our most reflexive modes of operation, operationalizing our values is rarely a conscious process. On the other hand, moral development often requires conscious attention over time: it measures successes and failures, weighs options, intuits solutions, and imagines outcomes; it develops discernment in order to predict integrity between values and actions. So functional intelligence is one mechanism to aid us in this process. This is the secret that is hidden in plain sight, the mantle I believe we must accept if we wish to evolve ourselves and our society…and so my drive to evolve in every dimension of self has slowly been elevated to be one of my primary intuitive values. This, in turn, is only sustainable as I discipline my attention to consider the critical qualities of those values, and the meta-values under which they operate, and this, too, becomes easier over time. So although I may be entering a slow and inevitable cognitive decline, I smile with confidence and ease of conscience, knowing in my dotage

that, as long as I can remember what my values are and how skillfully reify them, I will be functionally brighter than ever.