

Jeff Salzman Interview Notes

Jeff has been a leader in the Integral movement for many years. What compelling things are you working on?

- *Focusing on current events: the U.S. debt problem, Afghanistan, global events that are troubling humanity. All can be more fruitfully understood from an integral perspective. Talking about current events from an integral perspective is great way to teach integral.*
- *Seeing the forces at work gives us a view which is more friendly and powerful, enriched with understanding, compassion and skillfulness.*

How do you manage all the different views out there from an integral perspective?

- *We're called to a new level of consciousness... basic integral theory. A whole new way of processing the information we have. It's evolutionarily potent... we're constantly unfolding into new levels of beauty, truth and goodness... and it's not always pretty.*
- *As integralists, we can take a step back and notice if we're wanting to become gripped by a particular perspective, so we practice holding perspectives which*

don't come naturally to us... befriend people who don't think like we do.

- Integral is always looking at the bigger picture. The biggest picture is our new creation story - 13.7 billion years ago, out of a singularity emerged an ever-increasing continuum of time and space... the Big Bang. 30,000 years ago humans lived in caves. Today we're living with the internet. Most of us would consider that progress.*
- But there's also an attitude out there that in some ways we're living in a uniquely debased age. That's the opposite of what's happening. This is a uniquely enlightened age of unprecedented material bounty, unprecedented peace. The headline ought to be, "7.2 billion people didn't kill each other yesterday." That's what's new in the world.*
- As integralists, we notice this and see that "integral" functioning is arising under its own power in the world.*
- The story is, there's a new emergence of people able to see systems of systems; able to see interiors; able to hold multiple perspectives, and able to see through the eyes of people who aren't like them.*

That's new... you didn't see this 25 years ago.

- *There've been saints and sages throughout history, of course, but in terms of masses of people who are operating with more complexity... I see this in many young people I know. I'm very excited and hopeful about how all this is unfolding.*
- *Research from the Pew Study on Religion stated that American Buddhism has shrunk about 0.9% in the last ten years. Shocked by that, being a Buddhist practitioner. The fact is that people aren't necessarily signing up.*
- *The self-identified Buddhist is "flat." But every YMCA in America has a class on meditation or yoga. Everywhere you look, the intelligence of Buddhist psychology has flowed into the system. Self-observation, compassion, emotional intelligence... without anybody necessarily knowing where all this came from... simply because they're ready.*
- *I would argue that the same thing is happening with Integral Theory. I would doubt that Barak Obama has ever heard of integral theory or read a Wilber book. But he has the ability to harmonize and hold multiple perspectives as good as anybody I know.*
- *One of the roles of an integral leader is to notice this and point it out, and challenge "first-tier despair."*

- *All first-tier worldviews - traditionalist, modernist, post-modernist and the rest - all have a creation story; all have a story about how humanity has run itself into the ditch. We fell from paradise, the rational Orange didn't work with WW II bombing and concentration camps.*
- *At Naropa University, a Green institution, we were taught that our main job was to sit with the suffering of an ever-darkening world. That sort of Green despair is seen everywhere these days.*
- *It's my job as a leader to say, "Stop! Look around! What era would you rather go back to?" There's an imperative to move beyond the reflexive "we're screwed" idea, and actually look at what emergence is doing in the world. Realize that the emergent impulse is happening under its own power that's so fruitful and evolutionarily potent. All the ways the world is knitting itself together; whether or not we know it, we're moving into a world-centric space in all four quadrants.*

I once asked Ken what the leverage is. He said, to help people self-identify. What's your thinking about that?

- *I think Ken would be the first to say that you use discernment to see whether people are even open to that discussion, because you can't shove this stuff down people's throats, and people don't necessarily want to be told who they are.*
- *All the screaming media heads, politicians, etc. are all evolutionarily very potent. Everybody has a megaphone now, all screaming their points of view... traditionalists, secularists, modernists, post-modernists... they're demonizing each other, assassinating each other's characters, spinning facts, all the stuff people do.*
- *It reminds me of therapy I did years ago, using voice dialogue and other modalities to surface the voices in my own mind-body. They're all basically crazy! And many don't like one another. What's new is that now they all have megaphones. So it's not unlike the gestalt therapy I was doing years ago, only in the mainstream media. It's potent to have these voices expressed fully in the field. Because what happens is that eventually you get bored with it. This is progress.*
- *Boredom is one of the great engines of evolution. We see that we're not getting anywhere with it all. A philosopher, Leszek Kotakowski, came up with a Law of*

Infinite Cornucopia, which says that in these days we have all of human wisdom on the table; all facts are basically available to everybody. At this stage of the game, there's no shortage of information and evidence to support any point of view you want to have, for whatever reason you want to have it.

- *Many people, like Republicans and Democrats, have internally coherent worldviews that make perfect sense within the center of gravity of their own structures of consciousness. So one of the things integralists need to get hip to is: that's not the argument anymore. Those arguments go on infinitely.*
- *The new game is expanding one's structure of consciousness, so that rather than identifying with any of those internally coherent worldviews, we begin to identify with the space within which these worldviews and perspectives are arising.*
- *For people who've been exposed to the meditative and contemplative practices, this is a bit easier to understand. If we take the perspective of the entire world of culture, we see all of the perspectives put forth by all the commentators and players, and we notice certain ones we're attracted to, and others we're*

repulsed by. We realize that we ourselves naturally have an affinity for some perspectives.

- The key is that we see these perspectives, rather than be these perspectives. It's like seeing an itch instead of having an itch. Subject-object discernment.*
- You start seeing all these perspectives as arising within this bigger space of your own awareness in a way that you're not so gripped by any of them.*
- That doesn't mean you can't take a stand, or fight tooth and claw for what you think is right. But it does mean that you don't hate and demonize the "other" anymore.*

You have "it," rather than "it" having you. You "have" that perspective; it's not that you "are" that perspective, and thus gripped by it. Right?

- Exactly. Most of us listening have at least some Green in our value system... socially liberal, pluralistic, etc. So the natural "enemy" is the right-wing social conservatives... the Limbaughs, Hannitys, Bachmanns, etc. Our challenge is to shift from reaction ("How can they say that!") to inquiry ("How can they say that?").*
- The practice is to look behind the eyes of the Traditionalists...*

To understand their perspective, to not discount or reject it out of hand.

- *Yes. This is what developmental psychology teaches us. It's not what people think, it's how they think. That's key. People at the traditional level of consciousness have absolutistic thinking - black/white, right/wrong. That, evolution-wise, is great progress from the thinking that came before it - chaotic, hedonistic thinking. Absolutistic thinking was a huge developmental progress on the planet when it arose, as well as in every individual moving from Red to Blue (Amber).*
- *To a traditionalist, the whole world is a cosmic battle between good and evil. It means seeing the devil in the world, in other people, in myself. So if you approach a person in that worldview with your own worldview of "we're all One," they think you're crazy! They think you want them to compromise with the devil.*

This is showing up right now in the U.S. debt crisis negotiations... basically a battle between post-modern and traditionalist perspectives.

- *Each of those structures thinks their point of view is best for the country. Republicans don't compromise.*

That's not what they do. It's totally flummoxing for liberal Democrats. The battle is with these two ways of thinking. The "right" wins in terms of having a strong spine. The "left" wins in terms of having more complexity of thinking. They both have strengths and weaknesses. It's evolution playing itself out... and it's tremendous progress that today, we're fighting this battle with words, and not bombs and guns.

- *Also, they're pandering to their constituents, the voters. For most of human history, leadership of the likes of Stalin and Genghis Kahn didn't give a hoot about what people thought. So pandering to voters is great progress.*
- *A pastor of a small church here in Colorado who's operating from an integral perspective has parishioners who are modernists and traditionalists. He says, "What I try to be for my parishioners is the non-anxious presence in the room." That's one of the key markers of integral leadership.*
- *As integralists, we see these battles going on, and we can be the non-anxious presence. Like a grandparent's view of their grandchildren... they have a vibration that loves the whole system, without adding to the contraction and the anxiety that's so characteristic of*

all first-tier memes. That's one of the practices of integral leadership... to love the whole catastrophe.

- *Practice is something we do not to feel good, but because we're faithful... to god, or whoever... to Life Itself... to the fact that you can see what's going on.*
- *All of this is no accident. There's something big going on here that we can trust and have faith in... that's taking a cue from the traditionalists... for them, it's all about faith. We can understand that value.*
- *From the modernist level, facts actually count. Evidence is really important. We see that, too.*
- *We also see the post-modernist, world-centric perspective of bringing in the people who've been left behind... the sinners, the victims, the oppressed, the marginalized.*
- *By bringing in the best of all the levels, we become cosmo-centric. We're seeing the animating energetics of emergence itself. We as integralists can, as a practice, open ourselves up to reclaiming what are the gifts and gold of all these previous structures. We can go further back than traditionalists to reclaim the power of Red, and the magic of Purple (Magenta). The world*

actually is enchanted. And before that... to be aware, without thought. That's a practice.

- As integralists, we shamelessly co-opt what is beautiful about each of these structures of consciousness and integrate them into a structure that allows them all to arise as appropriate.*
- If we hold these structures in free-floating awareness in space, what's appropriate arises under its own power. When magic is called for, magic is available. When rationality is called for, rationality is available. When faith is called for, faith is available.*
- We don't have to do anything. As integralists, we can finally relax! And realize that life is living us. On one hand, it's very important, and on the other hand, all is well. Emergence is doing its thing, and we don't have to get so worked up all the time.*
- So whether you're a captain of industry or the captain of your home, as an integral leader you can be the non-anxious presence for people. They'll love it.*
- People want to be seen and heard; they don't want to be caricatured. They tell their truth, and we can see them, nudge them, in every circumstance, toward love. And it's*

not from the place that's fighting to defend our perspective and worldview. Because we realize we don't have to. Emergence is taking care of that.

What's your hope for our community who listen to these interviews and if they so choose, to come together for deeper exploration during our 4-week conference?

- First, god bless you and the folks at Integral Leadership Review and Integral Leadership in Action that are putting this together. It's God's work and blessings on everybody who's part of it.*
- In our Integral Institute programs, one of the most important things that people would point to was how beautiful it was to be with people who "got" them, to be with people with whom they could be themselves. I would encourage people to drink up the "lower-left"...*

Absolutely... be part of the "we," our global tribe.

- Yes. It's one of the great things we bring from the Purple (Magenta) meme. Tribal is good. When we deeply recognize our brethren... without demonizing or being exclusive. It recognizes the deep connection and community that people who are flying at this altitude*

need to recognize in each other. See, and be seen. That itself is a practice.

- *There's an emergent, positive quality that comes out of meeting in virtual emergent space that in some ways is better than meeting in real space... we have more to work with when we can bring people's voices in from around the globe to be part of this vibratory emergence.*
- *We realize that reality is non-local. When people see and connect with each other, that's as real as it gets, whether they're in the same room or not. We have technology (lower-right) that's facilitating this in constantly new and amazing ways. It's emerging in a stunning, real-time way that I don't know how anybody can't be jumping for joy.*
- *It's a moral imperative for us to wake up! To point out to people that we're not living in some debased age. As a species and cosmos, God himself is waking up. Hallelujah!*

Jeff Salzman

Jeff Salzman is lead teacher at Boulder Integral as well as part of the founding circle. He is co-founder of CareerTrack Training, and has worked in adult education / transformation for twenty five years.

For three years, Jeff worked side by side with Ken Wilber building the Integral Institute, an international center for integral theory and application.

A Divinity School dropout, he has a Masters Degree in Indo-Tibetan Studies from Naropa University. Jeff is devoted to the Integral Worldview and to helping it arise in people's mind/bodies. He can be reached at jeff@boulderintegral.org.



Brett Thomas

Brett Thomas is the co-founder of Stagen, a Texas-based organizational consulting firm that specializes in Integral Leadership. He is the author and architect of the Stagen Leadership Academy's 52-week intensive *Integral Leadership Program* (now in its 10th year). Brett is a 20-year veteran in the field of human performance and organizational development having designed and facilitated hundreds of workshops and corporate training programs. Brett has logged over 10,000 hours coaching CEOs. He has published hundreds of pages of applied integral theory and has co-designed and co-delivered numerous international conferences and seminars on applied integral theory. Brett served many years as the Managing Director of the Integral Institute *Business and Leadership Center* and on the Editorial Board for the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*. Brett currently serves on the boards of both *Integral Leadership Review* and *Integral Publishers*. He is writing a book with Russ Volckmann on the subject of Integral Leadership.

