

# INTEGRAL LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVE

## Interview Notes: **Russ Volckmann**



## Russ Volckmann interviewed by Michael McElhenie

Presentation Notes prepared by Matthew Rich

*What is capturing your attention / exciting at the moment?*

- *The book that Russ is writing in collaboration with Brett Thomas has entailed interviewing a number of integral leaders many of whom are CEO's who have gone through the Stagen Integral Leadership program.*
- *A number of these eminent integral practitioners, such as Laura Roberts, will be participating in the Integral Leadership Collaborative.*
- *Conducting these conversations has radically shifted Russ's appreciation for what it means to be engaged in integral leadership.*
- *Two examples of important realizations about characteristics common to integral leaders-*
  - *The network of support systems in leader development are critically important and far reaching in these leaders lives.*
  - *These leads also exhibit an incredibly wide range of abilities and competencies which they have*

*been able to effectively apply in a wide range of contexts both inside and outside of the organizations in which they work.*

- *Excellence in leadership development requires an enormous investment of energy and time in terms of personal growth, networking, and the development of a diverse skill set in a very wide range of areas.*
- *Through his work in teaching integral leaders Russ has come to realize the importance of attending to the way we think about leadership and how this is embodied in the language we use to talk about this topic.*
- *"The whole field of integral studies is enmeshed in an ambiguity of language".*
- *We begin to distinguish, rather than define (as the definitions are always contextual), between:-*
  - *Leading (as an action);*
  - *Leader (as a role including all of the expectations of various stakeholders); and*
  - *Leadership (as an integral concept).*
- *The AQAL model has an enormous amount to contribute to our understanding of leadership.*

- *Language reflects not only our understanding of reality, but effects the ways that we will understand it in the future as well.*
- *Most people understand leadership in terms of a heroic leader archetype.*
- *This type of leadership certainly has its place, but most peoples attachment to this image obscures their ability to acknowledge or understand other types of leaders.*
- *When we focus our attention on how to go about engaging the heroic leader we tend to neglect the interests of other stakeholders.*
- *These stakeholders include not only followers but also those who are in opposition to the leader.*
- *This understanding also neglects to attend to the complexity of leading at multiple levels of organization and society.*
- *This is very clear when we look at the level of national government where there are many heroic expectations placed upon public leaders.*

- *Barrack Obama, for example, despite his leadership efforts constantly disappoints his supporters by failing to live up to their heroic image.*
- *This is similar to a romantic relationship. We enter this type of relationship with a large number of romantic expectations of what this type of relationship should be like, and are inevitably disappointed to discover the great complexity that actually exists in the context of this kind of relationship. In this way our fantasies die a painful death.*

*What do integral leaders do?*

- *What integral leaders do depends on the context in which they are leading.*
- *Russ used to distinguish between a manager and leader in the typical way, but has now come to see that many of the practices of integral leadership are indeed common to both roles.*
- *Foundational practices include:-*
  - *Clearly understanding different world views and vMemos.*

- *Multicasting (framing a presentation in such a way as to bring value to a diverse group of stakeholders all at different levels of development).*

## *Expectations for the Integral Leadership Collaborative*

- *Integral Leadership Review serves as a bridging publication that reaches out to leaders, academics, students, consultants, coaches, etc.*
- *There are many scholar-practitioners developing and applying integral thinking across the world, and Russ's aim has always been to try and connect them in order to harness the learning that exists in their collaboration and see this used to create positive change in the world.*
- *Hopefully this conference can contribute to that process.*

## Russ Volckmann

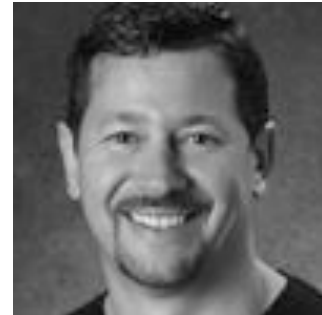
Russ Volckmann, Ph.D., has worked for over thirty years as an organization development consultant and executive coach. He is the publisher and editor of *The Integral Leadership Review* and *LeadingDigest* and the founder of *Integral Publishers* (having published nine books by integral authors). As an educator he has taught at U.C., Berkeley; the University of Arizona; the United States Army Intelligence School at Ft. Juachuca, Arizona; Sonoma State University; Golden Gate University; John F. Kennedy University; Leadership University; and the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology. He has served on dissertation committees for the Fielding Graduate Institute and the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology and mentor for Antioch University. As a writer and editor, he was the founding editor of a professional journal, *Vision/Action*, for five years. He is currently on the Editorial Board of *Integral Review* which is published by ARINA, Inc. He has authored two books and is currently working on his third with co-author Brett Thomas on the topic of Integral Leadership.



## Michael McElhenie

Michael McElhenie, Ph.D., has led major humanitarian projects, many for the United Nations, in regions around the globe: Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. Michael's key area of expertise is helping executives assess the organization's culture, discover optimal mission-alignment and bridge the gap through intentional, integral leadership.

He has designed and implemented major leadership, executive coaching, change and learning projects for global and national clients, including American Airlines, Anadarko



Petroleum, Berlex Pharmaceuticals, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Exelon Energy, H&R Block, Intel, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Motorola, Nortel Networks, Progressive Insurance, Sabre, Texas Children's Hospital, Texas Instruments, Unicredito Banca, Unilever, United Nations, Victoria Order of Nurses (Canada), Wal-Mart, World Bank, and YMCA. Michael has over twenty years of leadership and consulting experience, and he currently runs Metatropia Institute, a leader development and change management firm out of Dallas, Texas. He is a faculty member for Duke Corporate Education's Global Learning Resource Network, a faculty-coach for Southern Methodist University's Advanced Leadership Program and a member of the Business & Leadership Center for Integral Institute. He is also a Senior Associate for Teleos Leadership Institute and has worked with Teleos since its founding in 2002.