

The Seven Life-Logics in Detail

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The Seven Action-Logics in a Little More Detail

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Opportunist. The *Opportunist* treats the physical “outside world” territory of experience as the only reality and concentrates on gaining control of things there. This action-logic views unilateral, coercive power as the only effectual type of power and works within a very short time horizon of discretion, and can be good at grasping concrete opportunities and firefighting emergencies. S/he is frequently deceptive, manipulative, and distrustful, and rejects critical feedback by attacking. S/he often manifests fragile self-control, hostile humor, and flouts power and sexuality.



Seven Action Logics

Diplomat. The *Diplomat* treats his or her “own sensed performance” territory of experience as what is really real and concentrates on gaining self-control in order to act effectively. He or she imitates organizational routines and the behavior patterns of high status group members. This action-logic experiences high status referent power and the power to “charm” high status figures as the most real kind of power. It generally works within a one-week to three-month time horizon focusing on routine tasks.

Diplomat reasoning in action aims to generate a world that has order and clarity around concrete operations. It adopts a structure and norms from one’s immediate surround for how things should be; how people should act, look and speak. The individual reasoning from this action-logic is eager to behave in the right way to avoid conflict and losing face. Diplomats are keen to belong to their nearest group (family, gang, team). They see as highly problematic situations in which they are in conflict with their “in-group,” or where their in-group is not experiencing success. In both cases, they redouble their efforts to support the in-group.

Expert. *Expert* reasoning-in-action is a rebellion against the limits imposed on the effectiveness of one’s actions by the need to belong and the effort to conform, both of which are characteristic of the Diplomat action-logic. It bases itself instead on the relatively more objective and internally-coherent logic of plans, theories, and data.

Professors, engineers, lawyers, accountants, investment managers, World Cup sailors, ballet dancers and choreographers frequently use this action-logic to powerful effect. Indeed, according to a recent doctoral dissertation by Action Inquiry Fellow, Ed Kelly, Warren Buffett, the fabled billionaire operated from this action-logic during the first half of his career, working primarily with numbers and by himself. According to Kelly's analysis, Buffett's way of doing business has transformed several times since then.

Achiever. *Achiever* reasoning in action is best aligned with the market theory of unconscious capitalism, sharing its enormous virtues and its deep shadow... It's rational, reasonable and familiar... Goal setting and conscientious endeavor rule. It is well supported, as an approach to problem resolution, by the education system. So, it is not surprising that managers at this action-logic are regarded by subordinates and superiors alike as more effective than managers at earlier action-logics. Nor should it be surprising that, although junior management ranks are predominantly **Expert**, the majority of senior managers and CEOs measured developmentally to date are rated as **Achiever**.

Achiever Leaders become PRACTICAL in the objective sense that they understand why it is in their own interests to seek feedback within the organization in order to meet goals and get positive feedback from the market. Moreover, they are keen to learn, to improve, to fulfil their potential... The caveat is that their environment must approve of such development; its value is context dependent. Therefore, learning and growth needs to have a "point" to it: A successful outcome.

Although not yet attuned to the radical differences in different folks' world views, these leaders have an intuitive sense of how the team's pace and ability to shift pace are paramount to success. They are alert to, and practiced in, the arts of delegation, coaching and team building; but they are often painfully short of time and their work-life balance is a trial.

Conventional success in all fields requires a high-performing Achiever action-logic still pumping strongly. After Warren Buffett made the first twenty years of his fortune from Expert investing, he transformed his way of doing business from "at-a-distance" to "teaming-up" ... taking a more Achiever approach. (In spite of his continued success in conventional terms, Buffett later transformed himself and his business approach three more times.)

Redefining. *Redefining* reasoning in action is most readily aligned with movements such as Postmodernism and Sustainability as it brings into focus the realization that there is an accepted (unconscious) way of the world; that this "way" is, inevitably, flawed; and that one way of correcting the flaws is to look more carefully at our own and our organizations' effects on others and the wider environment.

Leaders at this action-logic stand back and observe...they notice that they are in an environment that has form; a culture with accepted practices and sets of priorities. They observe that culture influences the policies and behaviors of the individual, team and

organization, often in ways that constrain creativity. And they look out to other cultures in society and to other organizations—keen to observe the differences and to spot changes over time.

At this action-logic, for the first time, curiosity trumps acceptance, change rules stability, difference holds more potential than sameness. Often, **Redefining** persons will make creative contributions of strategic value to their companies, churches, hospitals, etc.

Unsurprisingly, individuals at this action-logic question the activities, processes and values of the organization and society. Sometimes they do so vocally and, at other times, quietly, internally. They begin questioning their own values as well...what are they working towards and why? Are their own actions truly in tune with their inner beliefs? This can be a confusing time as these individuals often lose a sense of surety in themselves and with the organizations processes and structures.

The sense of confusion can extend beyond the individual into the wider organization. Colleagues may pay more attention to such individuals' non-conformity than their innovative contributions, and may question their passion, commitment and drive. At the same time, the individual challenging the established ways of doing business in the organization may hold it accountable for confusion—*the organization is to blame for my predicament!* The developmental edge for the individual grounded in **Redefining** is to bridge the world of the rational, relatively stable, pre-constituted culture with more creative, collaborative, and transformational worlds they are beginning to discover.

Transforming. **Transforming** reasoning in action aligns well with an evolutionary theory of developing a more conscious type of enterprise management. Such “conscious capitalism” recognizes that the abilities to discover empty niches, to transform strategies and practices, and to co-operate and collaborate within and across enterprise boundaries are critical to competing sustainably in the wider political economy.\

American billionaire investor Warren Buffett gradually shifted in the mid-1980s from making “cigar butt” investments, intended to wrestle some short-term value from decaying companies, to a much more long-term, mutual approach. This approach entailed buying well-managed companies that he intended to maintain within the Berkshire-Hathaway portfolio indefinitely, based on a mutual relationship between himself and the company's ongoing management. In so doing, he continued his own transformation from **Expert** investor to **Transforming** leader. For the past quarter century, Buffett and Berkshire-Hathaway have exemplified the advantages of “conscious capitalism” over “unconscious capitalism.” The latter relies only on the incremental, single-loop feedback of the market to correct one's own or a company's direction. By contrast, conscious capitalism seeks both incremental (single-loop) and transformational (double-loop) feedback.

What forms of political-economic organization can generate timely actions that are at once integral, mutual, and sustainable, and that are influenced by single-, double-, and triple-loop feedback? This kind of complex question, that is not merely abstract but culminates in the most practical possible outcomes (timely actions), is the kind of question about which **Transforming** leaders become passionate.

In personal terms, **Transforming** reasoning brings into light different aspects of one's being. At this action logic leaders readily explore the different parts of their personality, their values, history and principles. They do so out of general curiosity and an interest in power, contribution, legacy and principled action.

A principal new feature of the **Transforming** action-logic is self-and-other awareness, not just in reflection, but in action. The **Transforming** leader intuitively recognizes that all action is either facilitating or inhibiting ongoing transformational change of personal, familial, corporate, or national action-logics. And s/he is drawn to action that facilitates transformational change.

This means that the **Transforming** leader or leadership team is also beginning to appreciate and learn to exercise new kinds of mutuality-enhancing power —

- The *visionary power* to generate alternative scenarios,
- The *praxis power* to actually enact the vision in challenging situations, and

the vulnerable and alert *mutually-transforming power* to enter a transformational current with others that is as likely to transform you as them.

Alchemical. An extremely small proportion (1–3%) of our larger samples score at the **Alchemical** action-logic. Movement toward the Early **Alchemical** is a movement from the categorical (and therefore typifiable) to the unique (and therefore untypifiable). When we realize that each complex social situation is a unique combination of personal and organizational developmental trajectories at this particular time, then we wish to respond in a uniquely timely way and to develop the moment-to-moment receptive attention necessary for so doing.

In short, in moving toward this action-logic, you are engaged at a relatively lonely frontier of human evolution. While you no doubt welcome whatever non-possessive spiritual/subtle guidance and friendship you can find, you also very likely have a deep sense of being alone; in some difficult-to-understand sense, *necessarily* alone; one, in a way no one else possibly can be. Paradoxically, you also feel intimately connected to the entire human and more-than-human *field*.

You frequently feel fragmented, different at different times, and with strikingly different qualities of experience — sometimes a slugabed, at others a dynamo; sometimes fiercely concentrated, at others simultaneously engaged and disengaged from the play through you and around you.

The movement from a Transforming orientation to an *Alchemical* orientation is the longest jump and the slowest dance you've ever yet experienced. In moving from the Transforming orientation, you are moving from the closest approximation that thought can come to a fluid, evolutionary thought process, interweaving with your actions in a mutually-corrective way.

As you have probably realized though – through many a self-initiated adventure – you are seeking an attention more receptive, more penetrating, and more constant than the swirl of thought, feeling, action, and consequences that you have inhabited till now. You already feel this post-conceptual attention in occasional flashes, or in melancholic reflections, or in the intuitively-right-move-at-the-right-time of which you are occasionally capable. You also feel it in the sharper suffering with which your conscience occasionally visits you. Whether the issue be your relation to nature, to social justice, to sexual intimacy, or to the divine: somehow your beliefs about yourself and the world no longer protect you well from different, more direct experiencings. Sometimes, these tastes feel more intimate and wonderful than ever. At other times, these powerful tastes communicate incongruities within yourself, in the larger world, or in your effects on others that can feel agonizing. Digesting such powerful impressions acceptingly, without judgment – rather than grasping them greedily or reacting in order to escape from them – is a profound challenge.

You need comrades in the search for this new kind of simultaneous attentiveness to thought, feeling, and action – friends committed to waking you up and walking alongside. If possible, you would like to meet senior friends – friends longer-practiced and more-mutual than you in first-person, second-person, and third-person action-inquiry disciplines that lead to a truly free, self-transforming, friendship-making, and other-liberating attention. You feel a need for a deeper spiritual/subtle discipline, engaged with others in a true community of inquiry, where the primary commitment is: not to any ideology of redemption, but rather to a practice of timely and mutually-transforming action inquiry – to the practice of a material, social, and spiritual alchemy – in your everyday encounters.

The spirit of inquiry, embodied in mortal life, continually (and often uncomfortably at first) listens into the dark of pre- and post-verbal experience, thereby overcoming itself, awakening to its own presuppositions, while also attuning itself to others' assumptions, to underlying historical developmental rhythms, and to the chaos of anarchic possibility. Such listening into the dark can lead us to appreciate simultaneously both the absurdity and the common sense of a situation, whether within oneself, within one's family or work team, or within some broader institution. Such deep inner and outer listening can also uncover a motivating challenge which, when articulated, can create an intra-psychic and social jiu-jitsu. Just as disintegration is threatening, the situation becomes fluid, and vulnerable power acts with surprising vigor and resolve.

The ***Alchemical*** leader requires no official role, but rather takes the executive role of responsibility for oneself, one's relationships, and the whole that is open to anyone, regardless of outwardly-designated role.

The ***Alchemical*** leader does not imagine herself or himself as on the side of good, intent upon ridding the world of evil. Rather, s/he begins to recognize that the very polarization between good and evil, victory and defeat, the sacred and the profane, us and them, I and Thou... is recreated at each moment by our relatively fixed and one-sided perspectives on ourselves and the world.

How are good and evil engaged with one another in our experience at each moment? When and how and why to blend passion, dispassion, and compassion in our listening and action? These are questions that increasingly confront the Alchemical action-logic.