

Political correctness and the evolution of culture

Jeff: Hello folks. Jeff Salzman here and welcome to The Daily Evolver Live. It's Wednesday, January 13th and this is the first episode of our winter 2016 season. I'm coming to you as always from beautiful Boulder, Colorado and I'm here with our trusty Daily Evolver producer, Brett Walker. Hey, Brett, say hello to the folks.

Brett: Oh, man. I tried to be trusty, but gosh, there are a lot of knobs here to turn.

Jeff: That's for sure.

Brett: Hi, everyone. It's good to be here.

Jeff: It's good to be back. Tonight, I want to focus on a topic that I think integral theory really has a lot to say about, and which has been very much in the news, particularly in our presidential elections here in the United States. And that's the topic of political correctness. Now that we've all returned heroically from another war on Christmas -- did you have a good war on Christmas, Brett? -- we can lick our wounds and look at some of the other things that are arising, such as speech codes on campus, gay wedding cakes, black lives matter, microaggressions, and the increasing emphasis that we see culturally regarding sensitivity and sex and race and gender and all of it.

Obama's last State of the Union address

Before we get to that I want to make a couple observations about President Obama's last State of the Union Address last night. I'm a big Obama fan and I loved the speech as I generally do with Obama. But, I have to say, I got an email from one of our listeners this morning who I think may even have loved it more than me.

I'll read from this email. It's short. It's from our listener, Dexter. He writes, *"I experienced this SOTU as an amazing and uplifting historic event! I think it's probably the most evolutionarily advanced political speech ever given on this planet. It shows how far ahead, more integrally developed, President Obama as a person and the United States as a nation are in leading planetary progress."*

I have a deep resonance of heartfelt appreciation for the intellectual clarity and spiritual optimism which the President exudes; his speech is a supremely integrated manifestation of unarmed truth and unconditional love." He signs it, *"Peace and Love, Dexter."* I love that: peace and love. It reminds me of Ringo.

I think Dexter is right basically. I do think that Obama has a lot of qualities of integral consciousness. I've made that case before and will, again, especially in this last year of his presidency, which I am trying to remember to savor, because I don't know if we'll see the likes of him again in that position any time soon. At any rate speech came closest to his integral manifesto. He made a point of articulating a bigger than what is normally done in the State of the Union. In fact, at the beginning of the speech he said, "I don't want to just talk about next year. I want to focus on the next 5 years, the next 10 years and beyond." He talked about change as being a force, which feels integral to me. It evokes the *procreant urge of the world*, as Walt Whitman said.

He talked about how change as "reshaping the way we live, the way we work, our planet, our place in the world." I don't want to get too much in the weeds on this, but using "planet and place in the world" ... these words have a special resonance for people who are post-modern, and remember, integral includes postmodernity. That *planetary* reference point represents a world centric view. Everybody can talk about the world in terms of travel and trade and globalization, et cetera ... but the word *planet* implies that feeling of one thing, that one thing we Green "citizens of the world" all have in common. This is a progressive view.

We can contrast this kind of change-positive view with Donald Trump's slogan, "Make America great again." This more Republican view seeks to restore us to our past glory. But that's not what Obama is doing.

I would also note that the rhetorical structure of the State of the Union speech was set up as a series of polarities. From an integral perspective, polarities are essential to cosmic evolution. It's shows how thesis and antithesis, one thing and its opposite, generates a new synthesis or a new integration. Again, to quote Whitman, "Out of the dimness opposite equals advance." Obama's whole speech was built around this. He talked about "it's change that promises amazing medical breakthroughs, but also economic disruptions that strain working families. Change promises education for girls in the most remote villages, but also connects terrorists plotting an ocean away. It's change that can broaden opportunity or widen inequality." He formulated the big polarities in the form of questions, two of which he really emphasized and that is first, "How do we give everyone a fair shot at opportunity and also security in this new economy?" That is just integrally phrased if you asked me. Also, second, he says, "How do we keep America safe and lead the world, without becoming its policeman?"

He specifically and explicitly fought back against the fear meme that affects so much of the media and, of course, the Republicans, because they want to create a sense that the world is on fire. When actually, and Obama makes this case, the American economy is the strongest and most resilient in the world at least in this era. And that we are safe, in the sense that there's nothing that really creates an existential danger to America, as we had in the '70s with Soviet Union with its nuclear arsenal aimed at us, and so forth through history, the World Wars, the Civil War, and so forth. I don't know if Obama has ever heard of integral theory, but I do think he thinks integrally. Just a little bit beside the point, but we do know actually that Bill and Hillary Clinton and Al Gore have all quoted Ken Wilber publicly.

Integral consciousness doesn't have to be self-aware as being integral. That's for sure. It's just the natural stage of development that arises out of Green consciousness. It has certain characteristics. It is change positive. It sees the potency of polarities; it doesn't think that the conflict and tension between polarities is a bad thing, but a good thing. It is also able to take the perspective of other. Those are 3 markers that I see over and over in this extraordinary man who is our president.

Political correctness: What are we to make of it?

I do want to get to this next topic, and that is the culture wars, particularly he skirmishes arising out of political correctness and speech code and microaggressions and all of that sort of thing.

It's something that we see as really hit a cord in the presidential elections. Donald Trump is famous for offending and his excuse is "I don't have time for political correctness". He's gotten a whole lot more support than I or a lot other people ever thought he would. I saw a poll out of the Fairleigh Dickinson University that show that 72% of people think that political correctness is the big problem. Even 61% of African-Americans and Hispanics describe political correctness as a big problem.

What really kicked off me wanting to do this, talk about this on this episode is I got an email question from one of our listeners, Chris in San Francisco. He wrote to me, "I've been fascinated and a bit confused by the recent activity at Yale University," which is one of our leading universities here in the states. He said, "There's a lot going on there regarding race, discrimination, free speech, developmental stages, safety, vilification of those who disagree, entitlement technology, et cetera, and I would love to hear your thoughts. I love The Daily Evolver's real world application of the integral model and it is tremendously helpful in allowing me to identify my own blind spots."

And that is indeed what integral theory helps us do. It indexes reality so that we make sure that we look in places that we might not normally look with our habitual minds.

Anyway, to explain this Yale University story: It started with a controversy over Halloween on campus as to whether students needed to be more sensitive to the potential cultural and racial offense that their Halloween costumes might evoke. One of the dorm masters, Erika Christakis wrote an email defending halloweeners rights, "Is there no room anymore for a child or young person to be a little bit obnoxious, a little bit inappropriate or provocative or yes, offensive? American universities were once a safe space, not only for maturation, but also for a certain regressive, or even transgressive experience. Increasingly, however, it seems universities have become places of censure and prohibition."

Now, her email set off a ruckus that was countered by a letter in opposition to Christakis that also got a lot of attention. It was published in the Yale University Newspaper by a young black student who wrote, "To argue that Halloween costumes are free speech fails to acknowledge the hurt and pain that a large part of the community feels. They ..." and she is referring to Erika Christakis and her husband Nicholas, who had defended his wife. "They have shown again and again that they are committed to an ideal of free speech, not to the university community." Notice how she sets up "free speech versus community" as a polarity. There's some truth to that.

She goes on and she writes, "Today, when a group of us organized by the Black Student Alliance at Yale spoke with Nicholas Christakis in the Silliman Courtyard, his response once again disappointed many of us. When students try to tell him about their painful personal experiences as students of color on campus, he responded by making more arguments for free speech. He seems to lack the ability, quite frankly, to put aside his opinions long enough to listen to the very real hurt that the community feels. He doesn't get it. And I don't want to debate. I want to talk about my pain."

I'll repeat those last two lines because they became a point of outrage for the other side. The two lines again are "*I don't want to debate. I want to talk about my pain.*" That created tons of blow back in social media, such as, "What a bunch of babies. Debate is a fundamental process in education. Whatever happened to dissenting opinions and open dialogue? Free speech means the freedom to offend" and so on. These represent the counter argument.

The media went crazy with -- because we are interested. People want to read about this stuff. Bill Maher and Jerry Seinfeld and Chris Rock all talked about how they don't like to go to college campuses anymore with their comedy acts because the students are too sensitive and can't take a joke.

The most extreme example, is from an article you sent me, Brett, from the Atlantic Magazine that was called "The Coddling of the American Mind". They said, "In April, at Brandeis University, the Asian American Student Association sought to raise awareness of microaggressions against Asians through an installation on the steps of an academic hall. The installation gave examples of microaggression such as 'Aren't you supposed to be good at math?' Or 'I'm color blind. I don't see race.' But a backlash arose among other Asian American students who felt that the display itself was a microaggression. The association removed the installation and its president wrote an email to the entire student body apologizing to anyone who was 'triggered' or hurt by the contents of the microaggressions."

Anyway, let's see if we can use integral theory to help us navigate some of this. For those of you who are not experts at integral, I would recommend that you pull up our chart on the [Levels of Development](#). It really helps because what we are talking about are these predictable stages of human development that humanity goes through as a whole as well as each of us as individuals.

Every stage of development has a speech code

When we look at the various stages of human development through human history, we can see that every stage has a speech code. They have things that you can or can't say and they have sensibilities that you have to be very careful not to offend. What we're witnessing now — at Yale and elsewhere — is an increased level of Green postmodern political correctness, which is the natural outcome of the continued growth of Green postmodern consciousness in the culture.

Again, there's political correctness at every stage. Just to go back a couple stages to Amber or traditionalism; this is the stage of fundamentalist religion and nationalism. At this stage, they call prohibited speech *blasphemy*, which is any speech that is seen as going against God or the religion. It's prohibited.

If these cultures are skewing to include a little bit of the Red level, then we have that unholy mix of Red and Amber that creates holy warriors. At this state blasphemy is not just decried, it's a capital crime -- as we see that today with the ISIS holy warriors who are happy to cut off your head if you speak out against the Prophet. Or commit apostasy -- you literally can't leave Islam alive. Of course, this was also true of Christianity 500 and 700 years ago. That's the nature of political correctness at Red and Amber. By the way, that there are today thriving subcultures of Amber and Red within our more Orange modern culture. For instance, you wouldn't go to a VFW Hall, that's the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and rip up an American flag. While that may be legal, it is against the veterans speech codes, and you would be asking for trouble if you did something like that.

Those of you who surf the internet like I do may have run into an anachronistic throwback of a story out of Thailand, where they arrested this poor Bangkok factory worker and charged him over a sarcastic post on Facebook concerning Tongdaeng, the King of Thailand's dog. It's so sad for this poor man, but he's been charged with a sedition and insulting the king, and could be imprisoned for 37 years. That's political correctness at that stage of development.

Then, we move to Orange, modernity. At this stage of the game, culture becomes secular and completely out of the blue the whole thing flips on its head. So political correctness at Orange is that all of a sudden the prohibited speech is anything that looks like religion or prayer. If you think I'm overstating that, I would just ask you to do a little experiment. The next time you and your colleagues at work go out for lunch, when the food is served, invite everyone to hold hands while you say grace. Just see how that goes over. Saying grace is weird and embarrassing in that context. And it's not just bad manners -- it's literally illegal in schools or public space to have any kind of government sanctioned religious worship at Orange. It's really astonishing. Ken Wilber pointed out that in one stage of development -- from Amber to Orange -- "we moved from a world where God is everywhere to a world where God is nowhere."

And of course political correctness continues to evolve. When we move into the Green postmodern stage another completely unimaginable evolutionary move takes place. We see that out of a couple hundred thousand year history of tribal, racial and sectarian warfare ending in the conflagration of the first half of the 20th century with two World Wars, hundreds of millions dead, concentration camps and nuclear holocaust, we, as humans, enter into a most unexpected new phase. We become nice. We become nice! It's amazing. That is one of the key markers of Green, although Green is not always nice. They're not nice in the service of being nice.

3 Key markers of green: Sensitivity, care for victims, non-discrimination

There are a few markers of Green and the main one is we become sensitized. We become sensitized to feelings in our self and in other people. From an integral perspective using [the quadrant chart](#), we see that we become interested in our interiors and the world that exists *within* us in a way that people in earlier stages literally didn't have access to.

I think that is often misunderstood as narcissism. There's an integral critique that we call Boomeritis (because it first started happening with the baby-boomers) which says that this idea of being sensitized to our own feelings is really an act of narcissism. But I don't think so. I think it's just that we become aware of our interiors and we get very interested in them. I think it's evolutionary right on schedule and very potent, but it's different for sure. To the degree that we are more and more Green in all lines of development is the degree that we become ever more sensitized. Now, there's a full monty Green and there's an adequate Green. We'll get to that in a second.

I want to point out one of the other main markers of Green that really play into this. That is that we become oriented at Green to people who have been left behind or been the victims of the previous stages.

We talk about how Red, the warrior stage, divides the world between predator and prey. Green wants to rehabilitate the prey, to bring him or her back into the system. We are talking about the oppressed, racial minorities, women, gays, even now animals. That's the Green project regarding the red victim.

Then Amber divides the world between saints and sinners. People who are good and going to heaven or nirvana and people who are going to stay in suffering or hell. Green, on the other hand celebrates those who are transgressors. Green brought on the sexual revolution. David Bowie who we just lost this week, is a great exemplar of how Green really challenges these hard Amber categories of good and bad and right and wrong, even masculine and feminine.

Then, in Orange ... Orange divides the world between the winners and the losers. Green wants to take on the losers, the poor people who are left out of this globalized monetary system. It's so focused on money. We have Green bringing in safety nets and socialized healthcare and basically the Bernie Sanders agenda which is caught fire on the left in this country. Again, a topic for another night, but, wow! Go Bernie!

Green also wants to see everyone as equal with no discrimination. But again, we are coming out of a world where not everybody is Green. For people who are at Amber, "Nondiscrimination? Are you kidding me? You're supposed to discriminate," at Amber. Also, at warrior red and tribal magenta, the whole project is to cleanse oneself and one community of impurity, of the infidels. Who's right and who's wrong? Who is going to heaven and who isn't? There are still a lot of people doing that in the world and there are a lot of cultures doing that in the world. They are in the news. That's the project of Amber.

In Orange modernity, discrimination is ... well it's outlawed. There is equality under the law. There's no discrimination in the exteriors. Race, creed, color, all of that, everybody is equal. All laws support that and it's illegal to discriminate. Those are more or less imperfectly written and implemented, but that's the center of gravity of morality at Orange. It doesn't all happen in lockstep. It's not like people or cultures go from Amber to Orange in one jump. There are mixes of levels and lines of development that are just part of the evolutionary mess, if you will. Here's an example: an email that was written to a gay organization in 2012 during the height of the gay marriage debates. I thought it was really interesting because this was written by a really clearly an intelligent person whose intelligence and political understanding is at Orange, but their moral and heart understanding is still at Amber.

I'll read it. He writes, "Once again, aberrant groups like you homosexuals are complaining that you don't have a golden cup and seat at the table. Listen, in America, you are allowed to exist without persecution." See that's legal in the exteriors. You are allowed to exist without persecution. He goes on and he says, "Any other right that you request is just another step towards the hedonistic values that contributed to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The closer America gets as a society to honoring your seat at the table is yet another step towards the decline of western civilization and deep down, you know it. You are deviants." I must say that cut close to the vest with me, but I appreciate the sharpness of that blade. You're in. We are not going to persecute you, but honoring your seat at the table, forget it. That's the move from Amber as Orange continues to consolidate until we finally get to Green.

The project of Green in terms of discrimination piece is to eradicate discrimination in the *interiors*, in people's attitudes and feelings, in the endless cascade of social interactions that we have all day long in hiring, firing and how we greet each other and how we live in neighborhoods and our children and all of it, culture, music, arts who's allowed to play who in the movies. Green wants you to notice the ways you may perfectly legally and even unconsciously choose John's resume over Juan's or Jamal's. How you might be subtly turned off or not so subtly turned off by the idea of gay sex. How accepted symbols in our society which are just background noise to most of us such as the Confederate flag or the Redskins football team ... How those bring upset to a substantial number of our fellow citizens? Green wants you to really feel that.

Green basically wants you to do therapy over it whether you want to or not. That's just what we are dealing with. That's what's Green supposed to do. That's Green's job. Some people go all the way and some people don't. It's just a foundational principle in couples counseling or restorative justice. The whole therapeutic culture is a function of Green consciousness.

Let's say there's one person being victimized by another. It's a cheating spouse or it's a community that was oppressed by another politically. Marshall Rosenberg and the folks at Nonviolent Communication have done these amazing processes in the Balkans, or between the Palestinians and Israelis, or in South Africa. The purpose is for real perpetrators, people who have hurt and killed their neighbors to see the pain and suffering they cause by listening to the testimony of their victims or the surviving victims.

Victims really need to be seen for carrying their wounds. We don't want to have them minimized or explained or interpreted in any way. This is evolution at work as we see deeper and deeper into each other. Green has the understanding that true intimacy in community comes from witnessing and as best we can feeling each other's pain.

In this spirit, I'm going to share a little piece of performance art that I wrote about 15 years ago. This is a bit of a script that I wrote for a colloquium that I had with my fellow and sister students in the Masters of Divinity Program that I was in Naropa University. The purpose of the project was to surface the marginalized voices in society. This is very much a Green project and we wanted to find these voices on ourselves and express these voices in the culture.

I'm gay, but I've always seen myself as reasonably well-adjusted to the idea. I have always accepted the limits that put on me. Growing up in the '70s in the Steel Valley wasn't easy, but I didn't suffer too much. I accommodated it. I was always grateful that I've been able to build a life where I was able to live openly at least as an adult. The invitation of this class was to find that marginalized, victimized voice that each of us carry, that touches the pain of the larger group and indeed humanity itself. I found that once I gave myself permission to do that, I found that inside of me there was a sub-personality that was deeply hurt about his lot in life and who was sitting on a cauldron of anger about how he had been stunted in a homophobic society. I created this bit of performance theater that expresses that.

There are really 2 parts to it.

The first part is a trigger warning, which I gave to my classmates. I had never heard of a trigger warning, but I said to my audience that my performance might be unpleasant, "so if you want to leave, please do. I don't want to hurt you". It just sort of came naturally so I'm going to start with that. Brett, why don't you create the new space with a gong sound and we'll take it from there.

So here I am, Jeff, in front of the class 15 years ago and I begin.

In this presentation, I expect to channel some wrath and anger and while it will come at you, I asked you to receive it in your role as the collective and not to take it personally. Regardless, some of this may feel intense and confrontational. If you just don't want to go into that kind of space in this moment, for whatever reason, then please I ask you to just bow out of this performance. No hard feelings. I ask you to consider this carefully because I want to be able to fully manifest these voices and not worry about hurting anyone. I don't want to hold back. With that said, I will assume that you are here and will experiment with me.

Okay, here I am surfacing the voice of the marginalized and persecuted gay men.

The other night, I was talking to a young friend of mine in his mid-20s who had just returned from a couple of years studying in Barcelona. He was telling me about his time there, but the story wasn't about his studies. It was about his mad love affair with a young Spanish man ... and the passion and the drama. The story he told me puts any soap opera to shame. Intrigue, betrayal, crazy misunderstandings and elaborate recriminations. He told me of the scene on a subway platform where he and his lover stood screaming at each other, tears flowing down their faces in the middle of the crowd that had gathered around them. He told me of one of them breaking away through the crowd, running off, the other chasing him, calling his name into the rainy night.

How beautiful that story was to me, how incredibly heartening. I'm so proud of these young warriors, these fearless warriors out there chopping off the head of ignorance. The big stupid logey head of ignorance who just can't be bothered to see us. Do you see us? Do you see me? Did you know that we "homosexuals" have soap operas too? What did you think? That we are confused? That we are kidding ourselves? You think we are just doing this to annoy you, to make you uncomfortable, to make a political statement? You think we are just playing house? Now, hear this, we are not. We gay people are following the callings of our heart and the obsessions of our minds and the juice of our genitals just like you. Of course, how could you know that. Aside from being on the right Barcelona subway platform at the right time, where would you ever see it?

Maybe the ever so occasional lesbian couple will walk hand and hand through the downtown Boulder mall and I honored deeply my fierce warrior sisters who can do that. Have you ever seen two men do that? Walk in public hand in hand, smooch over a table in a restaurant, call each other honey in a grocery store? No, you haven't. Have you ever wondered why? I'll tell you why. The reason you don't see un-neutered gay men in public is really simple. We'd be badly hurt. Sure, the children's eyes would be averted and we'll get obscene cat-calls which would be bad enough, but I also guarantee you, it wouldn't be long before we were hurt physically. It might take a day or a couple of days, but it would happen -- even here in the People's Republic of Boulder. Because those are the norms of society and there are many, many people who would consider it their sacred duty to enforce them.

Have you ever given this 5 minutes thought? But again, why would you? The fog of ignorance is so very thick. That's why out of the hundreds of characters that appear on primetime TV, only 7 are gay and they are either sexless or caricatures. That's why out of the thousands of romantic movies that have been made, approximately a 100% of them are about straight people. And I ask you to see that. I ask you to see and

feel my anger. The anger that I feel when I go to the movies and I sit there and it happens again. I think if I have to sit through one more goddamn heterosexual love scene, I'm going to stand on my seat in the middle of this theater and start shouting in protest. How about my love? Look at me. My love is real. My love is here. My love is holy. Me and my gay sisters and brothers love and hate and hurt and break just like you do. Just like Meg fucking Ryan does. And Ben fucking Affleck.

Okay, everybody, I'm back. That was real. That was authentic. That was in me. I had my story that I was good and happy, and all of that is all true. But this anger in me was true too. For me to express it is a real challenge, not only to me, but to the person I'm expressing it to. How can you possibly respond to that? What's your response to what I just read? How do any of us respond when someone comes at us with that kind of pain and anger and were complicit? We can defend ourselves and say that we don't really deserve it. I can say I haven't done or thought any of those things. I could argue that I didn't have it so easy either, that nobody gave me anything or I can point out that things are better than ever. Look at the progress gays have made. It is interesting to see the progress because I wouldn't write this now. That was 15 years ago, but culture has changed, I mean, gay marriage, the media. The evolution of culture can be astonishing.

But explaining these things in the face of this kind of anger doesn't really move the ball very much. In that piece, I was like the young black student at Yale: *I don't want to debate this. I want you to feel my pain.* That's legitimate. That's one of the projects of Green. The one thing we can do is to bear witness. This is a wonderful Buddhist teaching: the best thing we can do with other people's suffering if we can't alleviate it directly is to bear witness to it. To just see that person and drink them up and their pain and their historical karma. We aren't just here on our own. We trail the karma of our ancestors. Noticing that is one of the practices of Green that is such a gift, and something that we want to preserve. It's the Green that we want to take forward into integral and post-integral stages.

Does Green go too far? Yes. There's all of these microaggressions and the speech codes. One of my readers wrote to me and I thought he really summed it up well. We had exchanged a couple of emails and he said he was from Western Pennsylvania which I am too. I asked him where he was from in Western Pennsylvania. He wrote back as if he was offended by that question. He wrote, he said, *"Whoever states that they are offended has the right to be deferred to regarding all future interactions. So, if I say to you that I did not like the you ask where I was from in 'Western Pennsylvania' as opposed to Southwestern Pennsylvania, you are not allowed to inquire as to why I am offended. You are not permitted to make any arguments regarding the correctness of Western Pennsylvania. You are only permitted to use Southwestern Pennsylvania in all future discussions. Otherwise, you are operating from a power over position and/or creating an unsafe space."*

The victim has become the new oppressor. But I don't worry too much about it. Green's job is to be sensitized and maybe even ultra-sensitized. As to whether or not they overdo it, I would respond by saying, do the Amish overdo it? Do people who ran marathons overdo it? How about monastics who spend hours a day in prayer and meditation? Do they overdo it? Is there some aspect of your life where you overdo it?

In the defense of these Green warriors who are out to uncover every microaggression, they are doing what human beings are wired to do which is overdo it. We are wired to go as far as we can in absolutely every direction. It's an amazing aspect of evolution. We want to know what our capacities are, how far our passions can take us. If we are lucky, we get hooked by something that takes us somewhere that very few people ever get to inhabit.

Our inhabiting this territory actually clears the brush and creates a bigger world-space for all of us and contributes to the education of humanity and the expansion of the collective consciousness of humanity. These college campuses is sort of this intensified container where a lot of really smart, overeducated, exquisitely sensitized people get to work out at the capacities of Green. I don't think we are in any danger of them overwhelming us.

In fact, the backlash even feels welcome to me. I really do feel like it's time to loosen things up a bit. This is all happening in real time. I'm just asking us to notice it. Let's always continue to push ourselves out of our comfort zones and into the world of other people and look through their eyes and walk in their moccasins. These are very, very powerful integral practices.

And the fruit of these practices is that we develop a higher Integral capacities, we get to do it all. When grandma invites us say grace at a holiday dinner table, we can do it with a authenticity.

We can hang out with the rednecks and not have to spend too much time being offended by their racial and cultural insensitivity. Because, gadzooks, we realize people at an ethnocentric stage of development ... are ethnocentric!

When we're with Orange materialists, we can be logical and secular, and steer clear of the woo-woo.

When we're dealing with the Green warriors for social justice, we can ... check our privilege (I was asked to do it often in my days at Naropa — it's not altogether a bad thing), we can sharpen our sensitivity to their feelings, be kinder and more sympathetic. We can bear witness to their pain, which goes some distance toward healing it, and healing the larger, karmic pain of human history.

And by doing this we are gaining our footing in the integral stage, the stage which is multi-perspectival, which means it can take the perspective of the previous mono-perspectival stages. We are the universal donors.

Just one last thought which is a line from Clare Graves, who is one of the original researchers that did work in developmental theory and identified the integral stage of development. He wrote this wonderful pithy line. He said, "Green sensitivity makes us worthy of becoming integral." That means at Green we finally get sensitized to the pain and hurt of people that we may want to minimize. And that is a practice.

I think that it for tonight. We're going to close with a song by David Bowie who we lost this week and who is really a great artist in terms of gender fluidity and just fluidity of identity in general, which feels like a real integral contribution as an artist. He was really big in my life. Ziggy Stardust came out when I was a freshman in college, the year I came out of the closet. David Bowie was a great, great friend to me and inspiration. This is from his latest album that was released 3 days before he died, actually, and this is the song called Lazarus.

See you next week!