

Jeff Salzman:

Hello, everybody. Jeff Salzman here and welcome to The Daily Evolver, where we look at politics and culture and spirituality, all of it, through the lens of integral theory. Of course, integral theory shows us that culture and consciousness or individual consciousness, are both evolving into ever-increasing stages of goodness, truth and beauty. How's that for an opener in the age of Trump? Who, don't worry, we will get to.

Before we do, I want to note that here we are at the end of December and I'd like to wish you a warm and happy whatever it is, doesn't offend you. I got that in a card the other day. I thought it was funny. It is. I'm looking out on a beautiful snowy Boulder. I'm feeling all warm and Christmasy. Yeah, it reminds me to bring joy to the world and to do my part to bring peace and good will to all people and all living things.

All right, so now that we have that out of the way, let's talk about Trump. Oh, Lord. Yeah, here we are. We are closing out 2016, which has been an astonishing year. Certainly, in terms of American politics and, more broadly speaking, politics throughout the world, but we're going to focus here on America for now.

I thought we would take a little walk through some of the things that I've learned and maybe we've learned in 2016 that will help us be friendlier to reality in 2017 and move into the New Year with a clear head, whole heart, and loins girded because that's what I think it's going to take. I don't think we've seen nothing yet, folks.

All right, let's look at what we've learned in 2017. First of all, I'll start with something I've learned, and that is the value of my Buddhist training in "Don't Know Mind." A year ago, I thought I knew something, like almost everybody else, I knew that Donald Trump could never win the Republican nomination, much less win the Presidency. I was sure of it. Yet, here we are. Donald J. Trump, yes, that Donald Trump, is going to be the President of the United States, which is something I have to re-wrap my head around every morning.

There is something about being so wrong that's actually a tonic. It's funny, during the Election, I talked about how Trump and Trumpism had to be soundly defeated because defeat is a tonic. Once people's worldview gets smashed against the rocks, you tend to look for a major adjustment, if not a new world view. I talked about how good that would be for the Red Amber Right that was supporting Trump and that it would move them along their evolutionary path where they would become bigger and better and brighter.

What I didn't realize was that that path of failure, defeat and humility is going to have to be walked by my team. The Trump? You've got to be kidding, people. I see it. I see it in myself and I see it in many other people,

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most everybody, because most everybody thought Hilary would win. It's just a deep reassessment of what we thought we knew. It turns out we didn't know. Thus, the value of the teachings of "Don't Know Mind."

The teachings, in practice really, of "Don't Know Mind" lead us to realize that we don't know things, at least not in the way that we thought we did and thought we had to. Part of the practice, of course, is watching your mind wanting to know. Just watch it grip on an idea, an opinion, a scenario, some unfolding of what the future's going to be. Then, drop it. Get real with this bigger truth, which is that we don't know. Not only that, we can't know.

Apparently, we're not supposed to know what's going to happen. There's a liberation in that. This is somehow really easy to do with Donald Trump because he's such a wild card. I can watch myself trying to figure him out, trying to know and extrapolate into the future. Which one is he? Is he the semi-reasonable guy who has an intelligent conversation with Chris Wallace in their extended interview? The show man/con man that we see still at these rallies? Or, is he the Donald Trump who seems a little unhinged in his early morning tweets?

This morning, he tweeted that China should just keep that drone that they stole. I mean, what? So, again, here we are. I thought I knew, but I didn't. Now, I know I don't. The move, once again, we've talked about this before, the move from unconscious incompetence to conscious incompetence, now I know I don't know. That's progress and a relief, in a way, because my old mental models have been demolished demonstratively.

That opens up new possibilities, a new world, universe of what's possible, because if Donald Trump could be President, wow! All these other things that I thought were impossible are suddenly under fresh consideration. I think this is true for the culture at large. I think we'll look back on this transition period before the Trump inauguration as one of the most unmoored, unsettled periods in our political lifetime. Certainly mine, and I've been a political junkie since the 60s.

Let's go forward in our analysis of where we are as the year ends with the fruit of this "Don't Know Mind," this liberated mind that is paradoxically less effortful and more fruitful. Let's turn our attention as it appears to be ... One of the columnist said that, "It is now legally mandated that all conversations must eventually lead to Trump." We will follow the law here and look at, "What have we learned about this guy who's going to be so consequential?"

It was so easy to think that he was going to lose to Hilary and would be relegated to Trump TV. Now, all TV is Trump TV. We have to take this new President of the United States, the new leader of the free world seriously.

We have to be good citizens in that way, if nothing else, which leads me to, "What do I think I know about Trump now that I didn't know before?"

Much of what I see in the post-election Trump, I find kind of interesting and encouraging. I've got to confess, and I think I actually talked about it in some past podcasts, but I so wanted to run the Trump simulation. I mean, just as an anthropologist, I wanted to see what would actually happen if this guy got elected. Now, of course, I knew he wasn't going to win, Hilary was. I didn't want him to win, but I couldn't help, just as an anthropologist, to think, "Damn! I wonder what would happen if this guy, this 1,000 pound gorilla, actually made it down to Washington and started busting things up?"

TO the degree that my thoughts create my reality, I apologize, because it has apparently created yours as well. It's like the simulation has escaped the laboratory and we're all in it.

What do are seeing now in the post-election Trump? I'd start by saying that, unfortunately, we're seeing a lot of what we saw before. Allow me to reiterate some of my ongoing critique of Trump, the fuller version of which is in many previous podcasts, but particularly, one I did a couple of weeks before the Election called, "Trump the Terrible, the boy who would be King."

The title gets to the thesis of my critique and that is from an integral or developmental way of looking at Trump, one of the best ways to understand him is that he is arrested in important lines of development, including the moral and interpersonal lines. He is arrested in these lines at what we would call, somewhere around "Red Amber." Red being the stage of development that we've been talking about. It's the stage of about a 4 to 8-year-old. It's magical. It's egocentric.

That gets mixed with the next stage, which is the "Amber Stage" or the "more mythic" stage. This is the level of development of a typical say, 6 to 11, 12-year-old. Kids at this stage generally accept what they're taught. The world view of their parents, of their teachers. In the case of Donald Trump, the world view of apparently, a very tough father, and a very tough military school. Two systems in which, for whatever karmic reason, Donald Trump thrived and deeply absorbed their lessons.

Are people at that stage curious about other world views? No. Becoming curious about other people's points-of-view and self-critical of your own is something that happens later in your development, provided you get there. Some people, alas, never do. What does this look like in an adult? Say, a 70-year-old President-elect? Something like narcissism mixed with ADD.

It's actually a somewhat magical world where there's all kinds of things happening and they all revolve around you. It's important in this world that you get your way. That's more important than other people getting their way. It's more important than the facts or reality or the truth, which actually hasn't really come on line yet.

We talk about Donald Trump being post-truth. He's actually pre-truth. He's in that Red Amber world where things are so "If we say so, and make them so." Now, of course, this can be a great attribute of a leader because it provides a clear uncomplicated vision for people to follow. We all have a Red Amber strata in us and it resonates with people who act like they know where they're going.

While the qualities we're talking about seem to be central to Trump's psyche, they're not the whole of it. I just did a really interesting conversation with one of my favorite developmentalists, Bina Sharma, who talked about how most people in our contemporary world, are tri-level. That is, they're operating at three levels of development simultaneously.

This is, I think, certainly true of Trump, who we see operating at the Red Amber level, as we just talked about, but also at Orange, which is the level of modern consciousness, that sees systems, and sees how systems work, and actually has the beginnings of a world centric view, particularly in the exteriors. That is, they're able to see the systems of the world, if not the interiors, the cultures of the world. They don't have a lot of receptors for that, but they know how things work, and they know how to get other people to do what they want and even want to do what they want.

They've got this triple whammy thing going. They're willing to fight. They've got the Red. Most people aren't willing to fight and so they win every time there. Two, they are always 100% sure of themselves. That Amber thing, always being right. Three, they're transactional. It's nothing personal. My enemy one day could be my friend the next. Now, this ability to set aside a grudge or even selectively set aside a grudge, this is a modern impulse and something we're seeing over-and-over with Trump and something that I find actually most encouraging.

I saw an article in The New York Times the other day where they were trying to find the patterns of the people that Trump is appointing to these various positions. Is it all billionaires? Rich people? No. It is all his friends and cronies and loyalists? No. In fact, many of the, Rudy Giuliani, Chris Christie and more aren't getting anything. In fact, he's playing nice with Mitt Romney, who called him "a con man" and Rick Perry, who said he was a "cancer on conservatism." Bob Gates, who said he was "unqualified" to be President.

Now, working with people like this is not the behavior of your typical garden-variety dictator or tyrant who never forgets a slight or an enemy. In this way, Trump's Orange, his modern sensibility, is providing a more civilized, reasonable container to hold his Amber and Red, but still folks, lots of Red, lots of Amber. I think that this is really where the common denominator of his appointments so far really comes together and we can see a pattern. That is, all of these people are in one way or the other, they're to disrupt things.

If we think about polarity theory, it's like most of Trump's picks are coming at the agencies they're about to manage from the polar opposite perspective. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it's really striking in its consistency. We have Betsy DeVos heading up the Department of Education, who is a big proponent of school vouchers, which is a major step towards privatizing education. We have Rick Perry at the Department of Energy, a department he vowed to eliminate, when, remember, in that one debate. It was so funny. Poor guy.

Scott Pruitt, at EPA, who is currently suing the EPA as the Attorney General of Oklahoma. Jeff Sessions as the big US Attorney General. I don't know how states' rights he's going to be when it comes to marijuana creeping out into the legal arena. Maybe, bye, bye, Bud Masters in Boulder. Very sad.

Another pattern I think we see in Donald Trump's picks, is that they're all winners. Sometimes in politics, but mostly outside of politics. This too, is a bright Orange modernist value. Remember, Red, the warrior stage of development, separates the world into predator and prey. You want to be the predator.

The Amber stage of development, the traditional stage of development, separates the world into saints and sinners, or in the secular version, true believers and heretics. In Orange, we divide the world into winners and losers. Now, winning is clearly a key value for Donald Trump. You might say, "the key value."

I got a kick out of what he said about the Generals that he's appointing, including to the Department of Defense, is the Secretary of Defense, is a General. That's typically scrupulously a civilian. Trump said, "I like Generals. I think Generals are terrific. They go through schools and they end up at the top of the pyramid. It's like a test. They pass the test of life." You know? There's something to that.

There is a sorting system, particularly in modernity, where the meritocracy does reward talent. It richly rewards great talent. I mean, there are professional basketball players and they're all great, and there's LeBron

James or Michael Jordan. There are countless great entertainers, and then there's Michael Jackson or Barbara Streisand or Adele. There are people like this in business. Donald Trump sees himself as one of them. He wants to surround himself with fellow and sister superstars.

Most conspicuous of the bunch, of course, is our new Chief Diplomat, our new, if he's confirmed, Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, who, up until now, has never spent a day in public service, but has spent his entire career in two organizations. Exxon and the Boy Scouts. These two are so fun to think about in terms of cultural development because the Boy Scouts, of course, are bright Amber traditionalists. Exxon is just as Orange as Orange can be. This guy, Rex Tillerson, is apparently very comfortable in both.

As I was thinking about this, I was thinking about when I was a Boy Scout, and the Boy Scout oath. Here I am, 62, so whatever that is, 40 years later. I've thought of it maybe once or twice, it's right there. "I pledge to do my best, to do my duty, to God and country." Now, is that traditional or what?

I just love the mid-belly warmth of that. Of course, as integralists, we want to find that in ourselves and reclaim that in ourselves in a healthy way, because a lot of us have antibodies to that patriotism and nationalism and religion. It's a pledge to the patriarchy basically. As integralists, we want to find the appropriate place and expression for that and not just in ourselves, but in the culture at large.

As I often point out, this is the scene of the culture war. The culture war in America and apparently throughout the West, is a struggle between the three predominant development levels that are online in these cultures. That's Amber traditionalism, Orange modernism, and Green post-modernism. Those three levels don't like each other very much, which is where integral comes in.

Integral grows out of Green and is the stage of development that sees that every stage has something to offer, something unique and precious. Something that when it emerged, it was the first time in human history and maybe cosmic history. Integral consciousness develops a simpatico to each of these world views and sees what each has to offer and what each is missing. Integral puts it all on the table or invites it all in and integrates it. It doesn't just add it up or mix it together. It integrates it in the way of evolution, which includes all of the proceeding component parts and transcends them into a new emergent with new qualities, again, unseen in all of at least human time and space.

We have a new integral stage of not only consciousness, but culture that is as different from any the previous stages, as they are from each other. That's

saying a lot. Integral consciousness and culture is just emerging so we don't know all of the shapes that it will take. It's going to be, I'm sure, endlessly creative.

We can see that structurally, it's basically a larger space of consciousness, both collective and individual, that is able to accommodate multiple perceptives, which means you're not gripped by any one, but have a flex flow ability to move around. It's basically when you have that space, when you inhale that space as Whitman would say, then the rest of it takes care of itself. Wisdom is just there because you have so much more to work with.

Part of the integral project is to see things through the eyes of everybody, not perfectly of course, but adequately, which means we not only have to re-wrap our heads around Trump and Trumpism every morning, but also our hearts, the best we can and our muscles, our hands, our ability to act, our resistance, our acquiescence, our support.

I'm willing to do all of them. I'm still a "Don't Know Mind" here. I assume I'll have to do all of them. I want to be able to fight the good fight when it's called for. I want to be able to be happy and excited when things go well. I mean, I am an evolutionary. I see that things change and grow, not because we want them to or because we're pulling the strings, or even in power.

Integral consciousness realizes that something bigger is in charge, if you can call it that. That is the wild thrust of Eros, the evolutionary urge to greater complexity and intelligence and love and embrace. The engine that powers that is the polarity between creation and destruction. Evolution just loves disruption. It loves disruptors. Viola! We're back to Trump.

Let me finish up with Tillerson as well, because well, he's just not a voice guy. He is also the CEO of one of the five or six largest corporations on the planet, Exxon, and has been for ten years. In that role, has been an exemplary diplomat for the Orange. Exxon is in over 200 countries, I think. The US State Department is in 150. He is, by all accounts, a superstar at doing deals and doing deals with all kinds of people from Democrats to autocrats to dictators and getting the job done for him and his partners.

I think this is very much the orientation that Donald Trump wants to take in terms of foreign policy. Actually folks, this is a simulation that I'm actually really interested to see run. I'm a little weary of the post-World War II era with its great clash of ideologies of fascists and communism and democratic capitalism.

One of the things that we've learned and I think it's an integral insight that's being adopted by the leads, the intelligencia, if you will, the leaders. Is that

different countries, at different stages of development, need different kinds of government. Democracy is clearly problematic at Orange/Green where America is. For countries at Amber or even Red, they may need something a little more orderly.

I mean, the Chinese Communist Party hasn't done too badly for China. With this kind of thinking, every country just simply gets to be who they are. It's like integral. It's like everybody is at the stage of development that they're at, they can more-or-less healthy at the stage that they're at, and, of course, we want them to be healthy and maybe we'll even help them. Mainly, we want to live together.

We want to solve the global problems, not least of which is this re-emergence of brutal Red with romantic Islamic militarism, whether ISIS or the lone inspired terrorist. We have global economic challenges. We have global climate challenges. I think Trump would be delighted to "solve the climate crisis." I don't think his meetings with Al Gore and Leonardo DiCaprio were ruses.

Donald Trump talks to everyone, even the President of Taiwan. He's rethinking a lot of America's automatic enemies. I like that too. Not every move on the game board has to be checked. "You want that drone, China? Keep it.? A response, which I imagine actually spooked them more than if he had done the typical, formerly, a diplomatic outrage.

We've talked about how Trump can operate out of Red. Capricious, thin-skinned, pre-truth, kind of like a war lord or a 5-year-old. We notice that he can operate skillfully out of Amber traditionalism with this sort of patriotic, a little bit xenophobic, nationalistic, militaristic vibe that he has, love for the Generals and so forth. Then, he can also operate out of Orange, where he understands the systems of the world and how to get things done, which leads us to the question, "How is he with Green?"

Clearly, a hallmark of Trump and Trumpism is a frontal assault against the political correctness of the Green me. I've talked a lot about that in past podcasts and will continue to because this is a major movement in culture that's going on right now. I mean, one of the great things about disruptions in evolution is that they foster generally a warp speed evolution in their wave. This is ongoing.

There are also some very important ways that Donald Trump has, I think, integrated some healthy Green. I actually think he really wants to help people. I think he realizes that the greater glory of Donald Trump, which of course is his overriding life's mission, will be achieved by the success of the

country and of the problems that he solves. In government, success is measured by the number of people you help and lives you improve.

Many a leader and certainly Presidents have not suffered from a lack of ego. Although, you've got to say this guy does take the cake. Anyway, there is no doubt an extreme of the left, which through this exquisite sensitive political correctness has put a lid of wet blanket on culture, particularly for the people who are resonating at that Red/Amber stage. This has to be reckoned with.

This, as they say in the cartoons, "This is a job for integral." A lot of people in the integral world are addressing it. I think, thinking fruitful thoughts, and having good conversations and perhaps a new kind of activism that can actually help solve the problem.

I want to point out a terrific essay that Ken Wilber wrote that I saw. He went out an advance copy a couple of days ago. I'll be publishing it on my Daily Evolver site, where he talks about this, what I sometimes refer to as "The Alt Left," in which Ken refers to as "The Mean Green Mime," which with all good intentions in a way, and I support the impulse of Green political correctness to see all of the aspects of hidden oppression in our psyches.

It has been wielded as a weapon and used to vilify a large part of our population. Trump is their primal scream or as Samantha Bee says, "America's burst appendix." I don't know. I'm telling you people, I don't know. I'm in "Don't Know Mind." I think that's the only sane place to be right now. I think that's where I'm going to end this podcast.

There will be more to come, God willing. We will do our best to sort it all out. Thank you folks, as always, for listening. It really is so gratifying to me to be able to do this work and know that it helps people. I love hearing from you. If you want to send me an email, I'm at jeff@dailyevolver.com. If you go to the site, dailyevolver.com, you'll also see an orange button at the top, which is basically a voice mail. I love hearing from you.

All right, everybody. Thanks again. Jeff Salzman signing off.