

The Wave Theory of Type Dynamics and Development™

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Playing with my eighteen-month-old granddaughter, Mary Margaret, has caused me to revisit Type development, which I have always found fascinating and complex, and integrate it in to my ongoing research into *Levels of Consciousness*. There are many disparate hypotheses about how Type develops across the lifespan. This may be due in part to Jung's waning interest in psychological type as he dug deeper into the exploration of the psyche. His brief descriptions left us with a starting point (birth) and a few check points (e.g., mid-life) along the path to individuation. Students of Jung's work (e.g., von Franz, Meier, Bennet, Stein, Beebe) have tried to fill the gaps and present a coherent developmental model. Isabel Myers and her followers have also attempted to create a plausible model.

Another cause of the many variations of models of Type development may be that there are at least two primary focuses of development: psychological Type (the Myers school of Type preferences) and the psyche (a higher level model that encompasses psychological Type). These represent two very different starting points, with one (Type) being a subsystem of the other (psyche). For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on psychological Type, a microcosm of my much larger and encompassing developmental model of consciousness.

The complexity and visualization of *Type Development Space™* and the corresponding *fitness landscape* (Kauffman, 1995) at each Level is well beyond the scope of what can be presented here, so I will only attempt to give an overview of the model. I realize that an overview of such a comprehensive model is bound to generate more questions than it answers, so I encourage those who find the model of interest to contact me. I will include a few concrete examples to support the hypotheses of the model.

As stated in previous articles (Thompson, 1998a-c), I view psychological Type as a living system and as such, it is much greater than the sum of its parts. ENFJ is not just E+N+F+J. Each of the sixteen Types contains both attitudes (E & I) and the eight function-attitudes (Se, Si, Ne, Ni, Te, Ti, Fe, Fi). Psychological Type is a component of the much larger and complex psyche system (Thompson, 1996). The model that follows incorporates Jung's key concepts with the latest research and human developmental psychology schools of thought. The journey that follows begins on a well traveled road (easy to accept) and quickly moves into a here-to-fore uncharted landscape (will make you think). Some of the languaging is drawn from key developmental thinkers of today (e.g., Ken Wilber, Jenny Wade, David Bohm, David Bjorklund, Lev Vygotsky, Clare Graves, Robert Kegan) and presents Type development as a noetic process of the enfolding of nonlinear, non-sequential *waves* (stages or levels) of development composed of hierarchical *streams* (E-I, function-attitude pairs, individual functions) and *currents* (parents, environment, life

events, age, gender, ethnicity, health, etc.) in multidimensional hyperspace (and beyond). Clare Graves (Beck & Cowan, 1999, p. 50) said:

The psychology of the mature human being is an unfolding, emergent, oscillating spiraling process marked by progressive subordination of older, lower-order behavior systems to newer, higher-order behavior systems to newer, higher-order systems as an individual's existential problems change. Each successive stage, wave, or level of existence is a state through which people pass on their way to other states of being. . . . [there is] a psychology particular to that state.

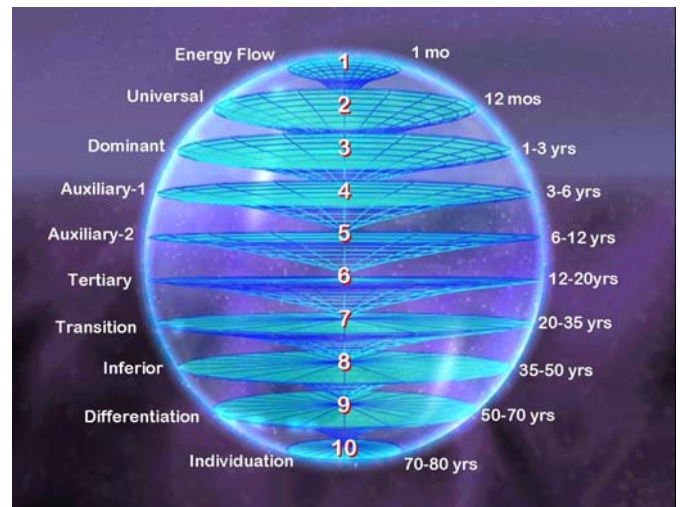


Figure 1
Waves of Development

In *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Jung speaks of the concept *unus mundus*, a singularity, a single starting point of all existence. At this point we are all alike. This is the starting point for the *Wave Theory of Type Dynamics and Development™* (see Figure 1). From this point, the individual's Type begins to unfold in a continuous, nonlinear fashion at the macro-level, but discontinuous and somewhat linear at the stream Level. Numerous streams and currents run through each wave that push and pull the individual in various directions during her life's journey. For example, the overall development of a person with ENFJ preferences is nonlinear—no two ENFJ's are alike. They share a similar Type pattern, but are very much individuals.

They have been acted upon by the waves, streams and currents in different ways resulting in each ENFJ being a unique person. Jung (1976, p. 516) said:

Every individual is an exception to the rule. Hence one can never give a description of a type, no matter how complete, that would apply to more than one individual, despite the fact that in some ways it aptly characterizes thousands of others. Conformity is one side of man, uniqueness is the other.

The individual begins each wave in the center of the wave's Developmental Space and is pulled horizontally toward an *attractor basin* based on her "true" Type. At the same time, however, life's currents begin influencing the individual's path through the Developmental Space, creating a different life experience for each person. As the person nears the periphery of the Developmental Space, she comes under the *attraction* of the next wave, and if developmentally ready, is pulled through a type of *wormhole* in the fabric of developmental space and expelled in the center of the next wave (see Figure 1). Life transitions again and the person emerges at the new Level with a new set of abilities and a new landscape to navigate.

Shifting life conditions and different neurological development at each Level trigger or activate new streams that set the stage for continuing development. The model allows for streams to exist at different Levels of development—which fits Jung's model of functions at varying levels of consciousness (development). When a wave is first encountered, an awakening takes place and development continues to a peak for the wave. Then an attraction from the next higher wave begins to pull on the person resulting in a fading influence of the current wave.

We all start out alike at **Level One**, the *Energy Flow Wave*. Here the focus is on differentiating energy flow, that is, extraverting or introverting. Attitudes and functions are enmeshed in an undifferentiated entanglement. During the infant's first month, energy flow (E-I) becomes differentiated, stable and observable. Jung (von Franz & Hillman, 1971, p.5) said, *The differentiation of type starts in very early childhood. For instance, the two attitudes--extravert and introvert--can actually be seen in a child of one or one-and-a-half, though perhaps not always very clearly.*

Elizabeth Murphy (1990, p.30) states, "The characteristics of extraversion/introversion and judging/perceiving not only seem to be evident in children from a very young age, but these characteristics also seem to be less flexible."

June Singer (1972) tells of twin girls whose father told her:

. . . just after the twins were born he had spent many hours watching them from outside the glass window-wall of the hospital nursery. From the first moment he saw Colette, she was wriggling about in her crib, flailing her arms and legs. . . squalling until a nurse would come and attend to her. . . while Colleen lay peacefully in her crib; if she moved, she moved rather

slowly and tentatively. (p.324)

An infant who will eventually develop Type preferences for ENFJ, for example, will begin to display extraverted behaviors very early.

Currents operating in this Wave, include reflex activity, the amount and quality of attention the infant receives, health (full-term, premature, congenital disease, etc.). These currents will influence development of E-I.

Level Two is the *Universal Functional Wave*, which lasts approximately 10-12 months. It is universal to all Types and begins the development of the function-attitudes in the following sequence; Se/Si (interacting with the environment and building memory ability), Fe/Fi (smiling, forming attachment to the caretaker and other frequent visitors), Ne/Ni (anticipating future events, thinking ahead) and Te/Ti (logical decisionmaking and naming). Type preferences are not developed at this Level, just a primitive ability to use the various functions for survival and early socialization. The extraverted behaviors of the evolving ENFJ child become more visible and distinguished during this period. Some of the currents operating in this Wave include circular reactions, schema development, the senses (taste, smell, touch, hearing and sight), human interaction, stimulation, sensorimotor skills and culture.

Level Three is the *Dominant Functional Wave* and begins around the age of twelve months with the emergence of the dominant function with the auxiliary function attached. For example, the child with ENFJ preferences will begin developing dominant Fe with Ni attached as the auxiliary function. Her preferred function, Fe, will become visible, standing out against the backdrop of the other functions. (Until Level nine the functions tend to operate as function-attitude pairs, the amino acids of *personality DNA*, e.g., NiFe.) Currents operating in this Wave include symbolic problem solving, inner experimentation, delayed imitation, object permanence, language, locomotion, symbolic thought, culture and socialization.

Level Four is the *Auxiliary-1 Functional Wave* and begins around the age of three with the development of the auxiliary-1 functional pair. For example, the child with ENFJ preferences will begin developing the auxiliary Ni with Fe attached. At some point during this period of auxiliary (Ni) development, the ENFJ child may take on introverted characteristics and appear more like a child with INFJ preferences (see Table 1). This does not mean she has INFJ preferences, just that she exhibits INFJ characteristics, especially introversion. This could confuse parents on the child's J-P dimension, and, sometimes, the E-I dimension. Currents operating in this Wave include a continuation of the ones in Level three plus, egocentrism, pre-school and expanded interpersonal interaction.

Level Five is the *Auxiliary-2 Functional Wave* and begins around the age of six with the development of the auxiliary-2 functional pair, the opposite function-attitude pair of the dominant. For an ENFJ with a dominant function-attitude pair of NiFe, auxiliary-2 would be NeFi. This allows the other "half" of the dominant and auxiliary to develop. Once again this can be

confusing to the parent because at some point during this period the ENFJ child might begin to take on the characteristics of ENFP preferences, exhibiting much more of an Ne preference. Currents operating in this wave include the ones above plus concrete operational thought and grade school.

Level Six is the *Tertiary Functional Wave* and begins around the age of twelve with the emergence of the first tertiary function-attitude pair. For the ENFJ child this would be SiFe followed by SeFi. During the first part of this wave the child might take on some of the characteristics of ESFJ and then transition to the characteristics of ESFP. These changes may add to the confusion of adolescence and the difficulties of surviving the teenage years. Currents operating in this wave include the ones above plus formal operational thought, puberty, expanded socialization, dating and interpersonal relationships.

Level Seven is the *Transitional Wave* and begins around the age of twenty with the emergence of the first transitional function-attitude pair and continues until the second transitional function-attitude pair has been developed. For the ENFJ child this would be NiTe followed by NeTi. During the first part of this wave the child might take on some of the characteristics of ENTJ and then transition to the characteristics of ENTP. This wave begins as the person is midway through college or early in their work career. Currents operating in this wave include the ones above plus leaving home, work, college, marriage, children and independence.

Level Eight is the *Inferior Functional Wave* and begins around the age of thirty-five, marks the beginning of mid-life with the emergence of the first inferior function-attitude pair and continues through the development of the second inferior function-attitude pair, both operating in the auxiliary attitude. For the ENFJ, the first pair to develop would be the opposite of the dominant-auxiliary pair, SiTe. Along with this phase of the wave comes a strong tendency toward the characteristics of ISTJ. This is followed by the development of the actual inferior function-attitude pair, SeTi, and the assumption of ISTP characteristics. For some people, the multitude of currents in this wave prove to be very traumatic. Other people seem to move through with joy over the new found landscape. Currents operating in this wave include the ones above plus mid-life, career change, the shadow, letting go of the ego and empty nest.

Completion of this wave frees the conscious personality from the functions, allowing for psychic mobility and greater, controlled development. Von Franz (1983, p. 63) says:

The problem of the functions is no longer relevant. The functions have become instruments of a consciousness which is no

longer rooted in them or driven by them.

Level Nine is the *Differentiation Functional Wave*. This wave occurs around the age of fifty and marks a major step in Type development. The ego is no longer the center of the personality. Thus, functions can now be freely developed. During this wave the mature, experienced person has an opportunity to develop each function-attitude to its deepest Level. This normally occurs in a specific sequence for each Type, for example, an ENFJ might proceed in the sequence of FeFi, NiNe, SeSi and TiTe until each individual function-attitude is fully differentiated and integrated. Grant, et al., (1983, p.24) states that:

Might this [development after age 50] not suggest a more positive view of "second childhood" than is generally entertained? Both young children and senior citizens range through the varieties of human behavior; the difference is in the realm of consciousness and freedom of choice.

Currents operating include the ones above plus health changes, loss of parents, grandchildren and retirement.

Level Ten is the *Individuation Wave* and represents the final step in the journey to wholeness. Jung states (CW 12, para. 330) "In the last analysis, every life is the realization of a whole, that is, of a Self, for which reason this realization can also be called 'individuation'. Those who make it to this Level may reach what Jung called "true personality."

Personality is the supreme realization of the innate idiosyncrasy of a living being. It is an act of high courage flung in the face of life, the absolute affirmation of all that constitutes the individual, the most successful adaptation to the universal conditions of existence coupled with the greatest possible freedom for self-determination. (CW 17, para. 289).

Jung also believed that not everyone reached this Level. He said,:

Only the chosen few have embarked upon this strange adventure. . . .For the ordinary man the outstanding personality is something 'supernatural'. . . .True personality is always a vocation. . . anyone with a vocation hears the voice of the inner man: he is called." (CW 17, para. 298 & 300)

. To reach this Level one must successfully battle many currents throughout the waves of development.

Wave	W-2	W-3	W-4	W-5	W-6	W-7	W-8	W-9	W-10
When	1-12 mos	1-3 yrs	3-6 yrs	6-12 yrs	12-20 yrs	20-35 yrs	35-50 yrs	50-70 yrs	70-80 yrs
Focus	EI	Dom	Aux-1	Aux-2	Tertiary	Transition	Inferior	Differentiation	Individuation
ENFJ	E	NiFe	NiFe	NeFi	SiFe SeFi	NiTe NeTi	SiTe SeTi	F, N, S, T	Wholeness
Resembles	E	ENFJ	INFJ	ENFP	ESFJ ESFP	ENTJ ENTP	ISTJ ISTP		??

Table 1
Type Stream Development Sequence

Table 1 shows an example of how a person with ENFJ preferences might navigate the Developmental Space of the various waves. Note that the time horizons represent averages and will vary significantly from person to person depending on the impact of currents within waves.

This model has obvious implications on how we understand Type development across the lifespan. Some of these are:

- Extraverting or introverting behavior may appear very early in a child’s development.
- The dominant function may be visible by age three.
- The auxiliary function and, consequently, Type may be visible by age six.
- The tertiary function-attitude pair may be developed around the age of twenty.
- There is a transition phase between tertiary development and the beginning of inferior development.
- The greatest difference among Types occurs around the age of twenty with completion of tertiary development. After this wave, Types begin to move closer together in their behavior.
- The inferior function (evil twin “Skippy”) does not appear as a single function-attitude, but as a function-attitude pair, e.g., SeTi for an ENFJ (Thompson, 2000).
- Actual differentiation of the functions occurs *after* development of the inferior function-attitude pair.
- We can expect wide variation in how and to what Level a person develops.

As I stated in the beginning, this is a thumbnail sketch of an elaborate and detailed model. My intention here is to stimulate thought, research and “other” ways of looking at Type development. There is still much research to be done by people like Elizabeth Murphy, Martha Alcock and other Type practitioners with the desire to ferret out some of the complexities of Type development.

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The Wave Theory of Type Dynamics and Development

Henry L. Thompson, Ph.D.

General Principles

1. **Energy Flow Wave:** The Extraverting-Introverting attitude is innate, observable during the first month of birth and is influenced very little by the environment.
2. **Universal Functional Wave:** Occurs during the first 12 months, is universal to all Types and begins the development of the S and F functions in the following sequence; Se/Si → Fe/Fi → Ne/Ni → Te/Ti.
3. **Dominant Functional Wave:** Begins around the age of 1 year with the emergence of the dominant function with the auxiliary function attached.
4. **Auxiliary-1 Functional Wave:** Begins around the age of 3 years with the development of the auxiliary-1 functional pair.
5. **Auxiliary-2 Functional Wave:** Begins around the age of 6 years with the development of the auxiliary-2 functional pair and the temporary emergence and development of the auxiliary attitude.
6. **Tertiary Functional Wave:** Begins around the age of 12 years with the emergence of the tertiary functional pair.
7. **Transitional Wave:** Begins around the age of 20 years with the emergence of the first transitional functional pair and continues until the second transitional functional pair has been developed.
8. **Inferior Functional Wave:** Begins around the age of 35 years with the emergence of the first inferior functional pair and continues through the second inferior functional pair, both operating in the auxiliary attitude.
9. **Differentiation Functional Waves:** These function specific waves, four in all, follow the Inferior Functional Wave (around the age of 50) and proceed in a Type/person specific sequence until each function is fully differentiated.
10. **Individuation Wave:** This wave occurs around the age of seventy and marks the transition to the last stage of type development described by Jung, the full individuation of the psychic.

Dr. Thompson's Abbreviated Bio

Henry L. (Dick) Thompson, Ph.D., M.S., M.A., is president and CEO of High Performing Systems Inc., an international management consulting and training firm he founded in 1984 to help leaders, teams, and organizations achieve high performance. He is an internationally recognized consultant, educator, speaker, and author. Emotional intelligence, FIRO, and psychological type theory are integral parts of Dr. Thompson's work and ongoing research. The Leadership Potential Equation™ and The CommunicationWheel® are just two of many tools he developed to facilitate leader and organizational development. He is a recipient of the Mary McCaulley Lifetime Achievement Award for work with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument. ([Expanded bio](#))

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