

philosophy behind an ***INTEGRATIVE APPROACH***

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In pursuit of its mission, Talisman Development Services applies a multidisciplinary knowledge base, but goes far beyond multidisciplinary thinking. It's an integrative style that works through the joining of science, art and humanity. By coherently blending and harmonizing principles from multiple fields into a fresh approach to potential, fulfillment and well-being, this approach provides a unifying view of the whole client and their context.

Long before “integrative” became trendy, I was living and working that way – since the mid-1980s when I was 19 or 20. In fact, at times it was quite a struggle to study, train and operate like this for over three decades, in environments that thought and operated quite oppositely. There was often resistance, sometimes ridicule, but I always knew it was right.

Many who coin the term “integrative” don't fully appreciate what it can mean, and don't have a deep epistemology underpinning their use of it. But I have developed and refined my integrativeness over decades of ongoing study and practice, with experience that shows how effective it can be in both professional and non-professional settings.

Not all who say they're “integrative” are equally so. In my experience, some use the term as merely a slogan to appeal to a demographic in the market, while most understand and use it superficially, and very few really get it.

Because it's really about having a more profound overall philosophy and approach, and a more thorough epistemology, than what is usually meant when the word is used these days. This demands more than just a superficial belief in “wholeness;” it requires depth of experience, rigor in understanding, breadth and differentiation of knowledge, and creativity.

There is no single discipline or profession that offers a complete approach to the development of human quality; it reaches beyond the scope of any one field of knowledge. Maximizing human capacity can't be achieved through just bio-medical intervention, or mental health services, or educational systems, or vocational and economic strategies, or cultural activities, or philosophy or religion and spirituality, or the arts. Indeed, it goes beyond even the coordination and cooperation between a few selected allied professions in a specific setting. People need to benefit from the best of all these (and other) fields, in unified combination. So TDS takes a deep and broad integrative approach to its task – drawing upon and combining principles found in various fields and disciplines, then applying them in a model of service that is larger than any of those fields, or even than a coordination of them.

It starts with **MULTI-DISCIPLINARY AWARENESS** – drawing upon and innovatively combining timeless concepts and newer skills established by various fields that are each firmly rooted in scientifically-proven and/or time-honored principles, but that are not usually combined in a practice. It draws upon my/others’ experience with:

- The Physical Sciences ●Medicine ●Human Development ●Education/Learning ●Parenting
- Psychiatry, Psychology, Mental Health, Addiction Treatment ●Ethics + Moral Development
- a generic non-denominational approach to rational spirituality ●Artistic/Creative Development
- Relationships + Social Development (including aspects of sociology and social psychology) ●Social and Cultural Issues
- Organizational Systems + Community Development ●Current Events, Music, and Popular Culture
- Holistic/Integrative/Functional/Alternative Medicine/Psychiatry/Wellness ●The Study of Children in War Zones
- “Ancient Wisdom,” Philosophy, Religion – with a focus on common universal themes

Most advocates of an integrative approach don’t draw upon this many source fields. More importantly, most “integrators” stop at the point of having a limited multidisciplinary knowledge-base. They don’t take it to the next level.

But a truly integrative approach goes **BEYOND MULTIDISCIPLINARY into a NEW TYPE OF THINKING**, a new type of implication and application. This approach takes the valuable ideas from these various disciplines, removes them from the restricted theories and practices of their original fields, and distills them to their truthful essence. It relates and connects these various ideas to each other, creating a cohesive framework. It combines and reconciles these beneficial principles and embodies them into a fresh unifying view of human potential – creating a novel working model of fulfillment, well-being and change. This approach blends and harmonizes salutary truths from each of these fields without undermining their integrity, and without allowing into it any of the objectionable features and admitted flaws also found in each original field. This unified approach to human situations is larger than the sum of its parts, transcending the original fields. Therefore, a truly integrative approach benefits from all its source disciplines without being limited by them. It defines a meta-systemic thinking that is holistic but still scientific and professional – relating the best of these fields to human experiences with a new form, quality and life. It allows for both innovation and integrity that are not just theoretical, but practical and effective. It’s an ever-growing “working model” (in fact, “model” is a misnomer) – constantly evolving through frequent exploration and assimilation of knowledge from ever-expanding source-fields, and by updating and refining itself through expanding experience, in increasingly consolidated ways. The true value of this “model” is in the benefits of its application to real situations.

The various ideas within this approach have already been established by their source fields; that is the *inherited* part of TDS’s “evidence.” Instead of spending time trying to “prove” this approach “academically,” these services focus on applying such integrated principles to real living and working situations. These real-life results of application are the *acquired* part of TDS’s “evidence.”

This approach also shapes a more holistic style of engaging clients – informally, professionally, educationally, creatively. In this manner, various facets of a client’s situation are addressed and engaged, and the learning process is multi-modal in its method. In this way, more parts of a client can be reached and empowered, multiple modes of learning and experience can happen, a feeling of wholeness can be gradually fostered – cultivating new levels of self-knowledge, insight, understanding, motivation and practice. This increases the chances for people to draw upon innate qualities and strengths, develop helpful attitudes and meaningful strategies, achieve new skills and habits, raise motivation, adjust practices and activities, and revise group patterns and culture.