



# Ken Wilber

SHAMBHALA  
Publications 

ONLINE

[HOME](#)

[NEW](#)

[RECENT](#)

[INTERVIEWS](#)

[INTERACTIVE](#)

[ARCHIVE](#)

## Foreword to *The Spirit of Conscious Business*, Fred Kofman

By Ken Wilber

Conscious, Business, Spirit. Three interesting words, yes?

Words not often put together in one sentence, let alone an entire book. I wonder what they could all mean, hooked together like that?

Business, let's start there. Business means... business. The dictionary definition, dry and prosaic, is "occupation, work, trade, commerce; serious, rightful, proper endeavor." Sounds serious.

Conscious means "having an awareness of one's inner and outer worlds; mentally perceptive, awake, mindful."

So "conscious business" might mean, engaging in an occupation, work, or trade in a mindful, awake fashion. This implies, of course, that many people do not do so. In my experience, that is often the case. So I would definitely be in favor of conscious business; or conscious anything, for that matter.

Spirit is trickier; it's a big, complicated, loaded term. "The vital principle or animating force in living beings; incorporeal consciousness; supernatural being." I don't like any of those definitions; I don't think Fred does, either. Another definition, farther down the list, is "essence," which seems a bit closer.

So "the spirit of conscious business" might mean "the essence of awake or mindful work."

That starts to sound interesting. Still, I wonder exactly what "conscious" or "mindful" might mean, especially since under "conscious" we found the provocative phrase, "aware of inner and outer worlds." Just how many worlds are there, and do I have to be conscious of all of them in order to be... really conscious?

Here, I think, is where the entire idea of conscious business—not to mention, the spirit of conscious business—starts to become truly interesting. Worlds, terrains, landscapes, environments—it's a big world, and the better we understand that world—both inner and

outer—the better our navigation of that world will be.

A map of the outer world would help; so would a map of the inner world. Together they would provide a tool that would dramatically improve my navigation through any environment, any world, including the world of business. A comprehensive map that combined the latest knowledge of both inner and outer worlds would provide an extraordinary means for fulfilling any goals that I might have. It would also provide the key to being conscious of both inner and outer worlds. Conscious business—in fact, conscious living—would start to become a very real possibility.

### *Big World, Big Map*

A map, of course, is not the territory, and we definitely do not want to confuse any map, no matter how comprehensive, with the territory itself. At the same time, we don't want to have an inadequate, partial, broken map, either. The fact is, most human endeavors, including most business practices, operate with incomplete and often misleading maps of human potentials. These partial and fractured maps of inner and outer realities consistently lead to failures in both personal and professional endeavors.

In the past few decades, there has been, for the first time in history, a concerted effort to take all of the known maps of human potentials, both inner and outer, and combine them into a more comprehensive, inclusive, and accurate map of reality. This “big map”—sometimes called an Integral Map—represents the most comprehensive and balanced overview to date, and as such offers an unparalleled navigational aid in defining and fulfilling virtually any goals, personal or professional.

How comprehensive is this Big Map? It started with an exhaustive cross-cultural comparison of all the known interior maps offered by the world's major cultures, including psychological maps from Freud to Jung to Piaget; Eastern maps including those offered by yoga, Buddhism, and Taoism; the extensive results of cognitive science, neurobiology, and evolutionary psychology; typologies from the enneagram to Myers-Briggs; transformation tools from ancient shamans to postmodern sages. The idea was simple: what psychological map or model could account for, and include, all of those possibilities? Because human beings have in fact proposed all of those various schools and systems, there must be a model comprehensive enough to account for all of them, and the Integral Model, as far as we can tell, does exactly that.

The result, on the interior domains, is that there appears to be a spectrum of consciousness available to men and women. This spectrum ranges from body to mind to spirit; from pre-rational to rational to trans-rational; from subconscious to self-conscious to superconscious; from emotional to ethical to spiritual. The point is that all of those potentials—body to mind to spirit—are important for a comprehensive approach to any situation, personal to professional,

because those realities are in fact operating in all humans in any event, and you either take them into conscious account or they will subconsciously sabotage your efforts at every turn. This is true in any human endeavor, from marriage to business to education to recreation.

In addition to these interior or psychological realities, the Integral Model also includes the most recent maps of the outer world, maps offered by widely respected empirical sciences from dynamic systems theory to complexity and chaos theories. Combined with interior maps, the result is indeed an Integral Map of inner and outer worlds—a Map that therefore is the measure of what it means to be... really conscious.

Complex as this Integral Map sounds (and is), it actually shakes down into a handful of fairly simple factors that can be quickly mastered. The easiest way to summarize the Integral Map is that it covers a spectrum of consciousness operating in both inner and outer worlds: *the Integral Approach includes body, mind, and spirit in self, culture, and nature.*

We have already briefly examined the first part of that equation—namely, “body, mind, and spirit”—which we saw as the spectrum of consciousness that constitutes the interior realities or worlds. The second half of the integral equation—“in self, culture, and nature”—represents the three most important worlds themselves; that is, the three most fundamental environments, realities, or landscapes through which the spectrum of consciousness operates.

“Self” simply refers to my own interior world or subjective realities, which can be accessed by introspection, meditation, and self-reflection. “Culture” refers to the world of shared values, mutual understanding, and common meanings that you and I might exchange, such as a common language, an interest in business, a love of classical music, or any shared meaning or value. This is not subjective but intersubjective, a world accessed by interpretation and mutual understanding. And “nature” refers to the exterior world of objective facts, environments, and events, including exterior human nature and its products and artifacts. If the human organism is a part of nature, and it is, then the products of human organisms, such as automobiles, are products of nature and can be approached with natural sciences such as systems theory and complexity theory.

These three major landscapes—self, culture, and world—are often called the Beautiful, the Good, and the True. Or Art, Morals, and Science. Or simply I, We, and It. They are also sometimes called “the Big Three,” so fundamental and important are these three worlds in which human beings are always operating. Conscious living—and certainly conscious business—would therefore necessarily take these three worlds into account when planning any activity, because, again, these worlds exist in any event, and you will either take them into conscious account or they will subconsciously sabotage your every move.

### *Integral Business*

Conscious business—business that is conscious of inner and outer worlds—would therefore be business that takes into account body, mind, and spirit in self, culture, and nature. Put differently, conscious business would be mindful of the way that the spectrum of consciousness operates in the Big Three worlds of self and culture and nature. This means very specifically that integral business leadership would use the tools that have been developed to best navigate and master self, culture, and world.

It's not surprising, then, that business management theories break down into three large categories covering the Big Three landscapes: approaches that focus on exterior objective systems, flow patterns, and quality control; those that focus on individual motivation; and those that emphasize corporate culture and values. The whole point is that integral business leadership would use the tools of all of them in a coordinated and integrated fashion for maximum results, or settle for less than optimal.

For example, integral business leadership would use systems theory to understand the dynamic patterns of the exterior world. The systems approach to business has been made popular by writers such as Meg Wheatley and Michael C. Jackson, among literally hundreds of others. The systems approach is also widely used to track business cycles, as in the ground-breaking work of Clayton Christensen on disruptive technologies.

But integral business leadership would also use the tools of the interior spectrum of consciousness in individuals—tools such as emotional intelligence, made popular by Daniel Goleman; Myers-Briggs, already widely used as a management aid; and personal motivational tools, from Tony Robbins to Franklin Covey.

But integral business leadership would not stop with self and world. It would also draw on the extensive knowledge that we now have of corporate culture, shared values, and company motivation. Not only does every company have a culture, specific business cycles seem to be most effectively navigated by different types of corporate cultures, as suggested by the important research of Geoffrey Moore, for example, or the empirical research of Jim Collins, both of which point to the over-riding importance of corporate values and intersubjective factors in long-term success, a fact that any integral leadership would want to take into account if it wanted to be mindful and awake in the world of corporate values and maximum effectiveness.

In other words, all of those major theories of business management and leadership—from systems theory to emotional intelligence to corporate-culture management, covering the big Three Landscapes faced by all humans—have an important place in a truly Integral Model of conscious business. Although this might at first seem too complicated, the now undeniable fact is that any approach

less-than-integral is doomed to failure. In today's world, nobody can afford to be less than integral, because the guaranteed costs are otherwise much too high. Body and mind and spirit—and self and culture and nature—are all there, all exerting an influence, all actively shaping events, and you either *consciously* take them into account in any human endeavor, or stand back and watch the roadkill.

### *Big Map, Big Mind*

I have attempted to give a simple summary of this overall approach to business in *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality*. But perhaps the best place to begin with an integral approach to business is with... oneself. In the Big Three of self, culture, and world, integral mastery starts with self. How do body and mind and spirit operate in me? How does that necessarily impact my role in the world of business? And how can I become more conscious of these already-operating realities in myself and in others?

This is the great value of Fred Kofman's *The Spirit of Conscious Business*, the third and concluding volume of *Conscious Business*. Integral mastery begins with mastery of self, at an emotional level, a mental-ethical level, and a spiritual level. Anything more than that is not needed; anything less than that, disastrous.

Fred Kofman is a living example of what he preaches, a man of sensitivity, impeccability, and keen consciousness. It's not just that this makes him a better, more effective, more successful businessperson, but that it makes him a more admirable human being, whom I am proud to call friend. I highly recommend you take the following journey with Fred, learning to transform body, mind, and spirit as prelude to transforming self, culture, and world. And in that integral embrace, neither you nor the world will ever be the same.

◀Back | ⬆Top



©2006 [Shambhala Publications](#)

For More Information Send Email to: [editors@shambhala.com](mailto:editors@shambhala.com)

Created and Maintained by [Mandala Designs](#)

Conscious Business: How to Build Value Through Values by Fred Kofman. I have about half a chapter left in Fred's Kofman's and can already definitively say that it's one of those rare books that I will read more than once. In this book Fred paints a very compelling picture on how values-driven mindsets and behaviors can transform workplace culture. The book starts off covering three key mindsets. Starting with the "responsible" mindset, (which he calls the "player" mindset) this book provides the best description I've seen to the "victim" vs. "responsible" distinction which I covered here. Conscious Business - Fred Kofman. Foreword. by Peter Senge. The past ten years has seen an explosion of how-to management books. Fred Kofman argues that a conscious organization starts with what matters most to us: a commitment to achieving a vision that exceeds any individual capacities, a vision that connects people in a common effort with genuine meaning. Such commitment is grounded in people taking unconditional responsibility for their situation and for their ways of responding to it. Read recommendations on "Conscious Business" Fred Kofman. Find out the opinions of other readers. 2020. [What book should every business executive read?] "Conscious Business: How to Build Value Through Values," by Fred Kofman, had a profound effect on my career and life. I think about his lessons almost every day "the importance of authentic communication, impeccable commitments, being a player not a victim, and taking responsibility. See all. Open FLIIST.