

# Logical Level Loops of Learning

By Joe Cheal

## Introduction

The Logical Level Loops of Learning (4L) Model is a diagrammatic representation of how learning (and hence change) takes place. It could apply to an individual or an organisation, but for this exercise we are looking at an organisation. The 'logical levels' referred to here are from Dilts' framework (1990).

The model helps to show:

- the difference between temporary change and permanent change,
- where and how learning might get blocked.

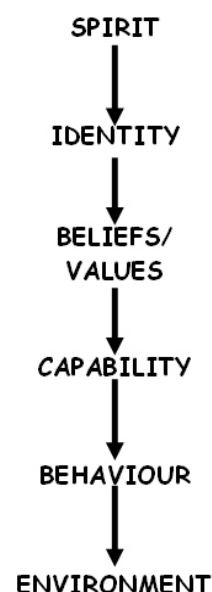
There are two phases in this model, Re-evaluation and Revolution. The first phase is the realisation that change is desired and then motivation gathered to create the change. The second phase is the actual process of embedding learning (and hence more permanent change).

## Phase 1: Re-Evaluation

The Re-evaluation Phase occurs when there is a desire to be different from the current state. It may begin at Spirit, Identity or Beliefs/Values. The desire will tend to be stronger and the learning/change more likely when the process begins higher up the logical levels. There is then a drive through the other logical levels down to Environment.

In the context of organisational change, this would be the time for defining, planning, informing, briefing and involving.

This phase alone, without phase 2, will lead only to surface level, short term readiness for change and learning. If this is not followed up quickly by phase two, the motivation will wane and the process will be considered 'lip service'/without substance.



## Key Questions

Once the desire has been established, there is a flow from top to bottom, where the following questions need to be asked and answered:

- Identity: Who do we want to be? How do we want to be different?  
 Beliefs/Values: Why do we want to be that? What needs to be more important to us? What beliefs will help us?  
 Capability: How will we achieve that? What skills/knowledge do we need?  
 Behaviour: What do we need to do to get those skills?  
 Environment: Where/when will we do this?

It would also be wise to do an ecology check at each level. A useful model to use here would be the 7S framework (Peters & Waterman 1990). At each logical level, what would be the impact on: Structure, Strategy, Systems, Skills, Staff, Style and Shared Values.

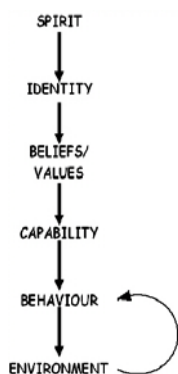
## Possible Blocks at Re-evaluation Phase

The learning/change is likely to fail if:

- the desire or will is not really strong enough to drive all the way down to the Environment level,
- the ecology is unsound leading to negative reactions systemically. This could be for example, people/parts resisting or a contradiction created with other parts of the system.

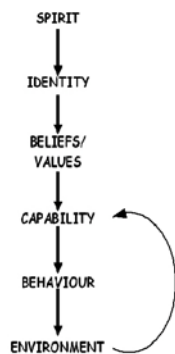
## **Phase 2: Revolution**

The Revolution Phase consists of a number of loops that progress back up the logical levels. Each loop may need to be repeated a number of times in order for the learning to take place. In order for the looping to take place, there needs to be some motivation. This motivation usually comes from a sense of purpose, values, benefits or consequences of not learning. It could be said that the process needs to be driven by the higher logical levels.



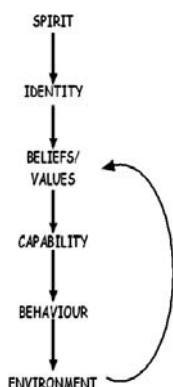
### Loop 1: Practicing

- This loop entails action that affects the surroundings in some way. The result of the action provides feedback which reinforces success and allows correction of errors. This stage correlates to 'conscious incompetence'.
- The process of going round this loop is called *practicing*.
- This process can be accelerated by time/opportunity to practice, effective instruction, direction, training/coaching and verbal feedback.



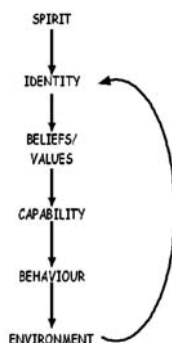
### Loop 2: Developing Ability

- This loop entails using the practiced behaviours in such an elegant way that it is now considered a skill. The behaviours now become unconscious, though there is still consciousness of learning. This stage correlates to 'conscious competence'.
- The process of going round this loop is called *developing ability*.
- This process can be accelerated by time/opportunity to develop the ability, management/trainer support, feedback and coaching.



### Loop 3: Building Belief

- This loop entails the ability becoming effective enough that the internal belief grows. This may be belief in oneself, the organisation, the learning or the change. The learning also develops true value and becomes a part of the culture. Capability becomes unconscious leading to 'unconscious competence'.
- The process of going round this loop is called *building belief*.
- This process can be accelerated by time/opportunity to build the belief, effective hands off coaching and support.



### Loop 4: Integrating

- This loop entails the beliefs and culture embedding to the point where it becomes inseparable from the organisation. The learning/change is no longer considered external as it is part of the system.
- The process of going round this loop is called *integrating*.
- This process can be accelerated by time/opportunity for integration, continued support and encouragement.

This model works for both active/applied/kinaesthetic skill development and passive/visual/auditory knowledge development. Knowledge development still goes through the same loops, where data (environment) becomes information (internal processing/behaviour) becomes knowledge (capability). Knowledge, in this context, would also include learning the unseen/unwritten culture/social rules of an environment. Sometimes skill learning comes before knowledge learning and sometimes vice versa. This will depend on the individuals/organizations learning styles and metaprograms.

### Possible Blocks at Revolution Phase

The learning/change is likely to fail if:

- There is poor training/coaching or lack of support/resources provided,
- There is a negative experience in a loop that is strong enough to halt progress,

- There is a break or too great a delay in a loop.

## Conclusion

The Logical Level Loops of Learning (4L) model is a dynamic model designed to show the movement necessary for learning to take place. Learning and change require motivation and the 4L model should give the practitioner a tool to prepare and promote such learning and change.

## About the Author

Joe Cheal has been working with NLP since 1993. As well as being a licensed trainer of NLP, he holds an MSc in Organisational Development and NLT, a degree in Philosophy and Psychology, and diplomas in Coaching and in Ericksonian Hypnotherapy, Psychotherapy and NLP. He is also a licensed EI practitioner.

Joe is a partner in the GWiz Learning Partnership ([www.gwiztraining.com](http://www.gwiztraining.com)), working as a Management & Organisational Development Specialist, focusing over 14 years training, coaching and consultancy experience into the business environment.

## References

- Dilts, R. (1990) "Changing Belief Systems with NLP", Meta Publications.
- Peters, T. and Waterman. R. (1990) "In Search of Excellence" Harper & Row Pub.: London.