

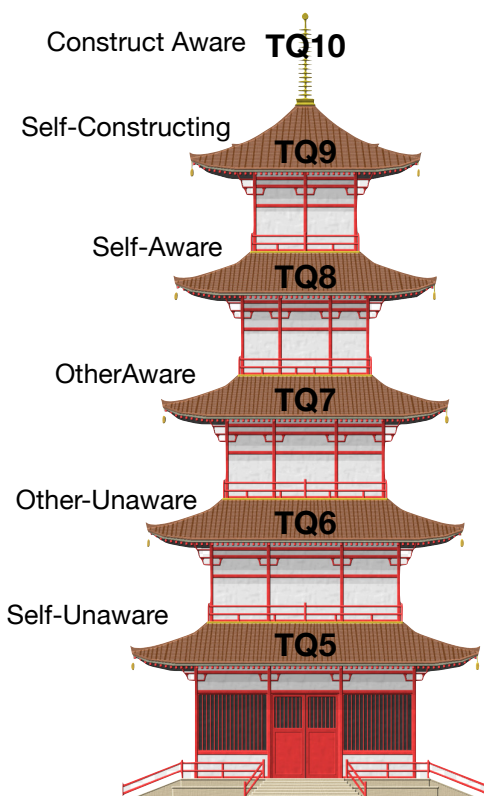
# Constructed Development Theory

## A new approach to Adult Development

CDT emerged from the doctoral research of Dr Darren Stevens. It is the idea that every moment, we construct our thinking based on cognitive shortcuts that have become habits over time. We do this based on how we constructed ourselves yesterday. This ensures we remain consistent over time and it also avoids cognitive dissonance.

Dr Stevens determined that how we think and behave is simply a collection of constructed habituated thoughts that emerge from childhood. Importantly, we seldom get an opportunity to question these constructs. If we did, then we could influence our thinking in the moment. It is implied in Constructed Development Theory that we are not necessarily *who* we think we are, but *how* we think we are.

CDT questions our construction of self by investigating the unique combination of fifty heuristics called Cognitive Intentions, that form our individual Thinking Style. Only by bringing to consciousness the **Intention, Awareness, Choice** and **Response** of our thinking are we really in a position to grow our self-awareness and complexity. These are called the Four Pillars of Constructed Development.

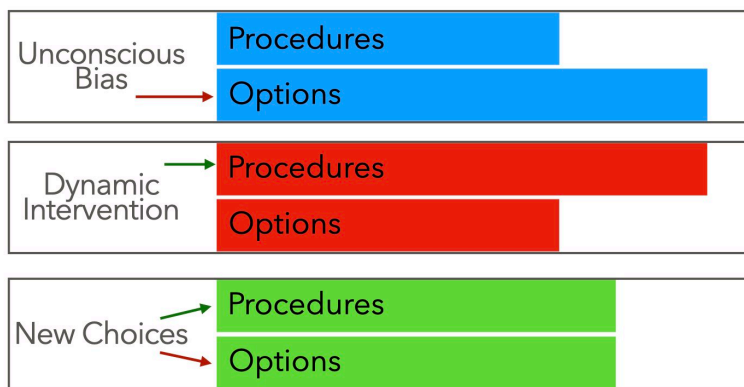


The theory of Constructed Development is more holistic than traditional stage development theories in that the changes achieved in one's level of awareness will not only impact a business environment, but also other environments, as our **Thinking Style** changes across contexts. It is essentially the bridge between domain-general and domain-specific thinking.



## Cognitive Intentions

A **Cognitive Intention** is a shortcut in our thinking. It is a heuristic we have developed over time that has habituated and become an unconscious bias. Jean Piaget called them 'schemata' and others used different words to emphasise how we construct biases that help us to navigate our thinking.



For example: if I were to ask you if you liked to cook, and you do, I would then ask if you also followed the recipe, or if you liked to tweak it a little, perhaps to spice things up. Depending on the level of how strictly you adhered to the recipe (Procedures) or the flair with which you changed the recipe (Options), I could ascertain your Cognitive Intention. But more importantly, depending on *how aware* you are of this intention will determine the level of Choice you have in your Response

in the moment: more nutmeg or less nutmeg! Note that it is not the amount of nutmeg that is important here: it is your Awareness of your Choice to change the Intention (taste), not the change itself. To take this one step further, it is your Awareness of the relationship between 'Options' and 'Procedures' that is the measure of your Dynamic Intelligence. Knowing this gives us a firm foundation for your Dynamic Intelligence development.

So, the next time you add some salt to a dish, ask yourself if you did it with Awareness of the Choice, or if you did it solely based on taste, which would then be an automatic (habituated) Intention.

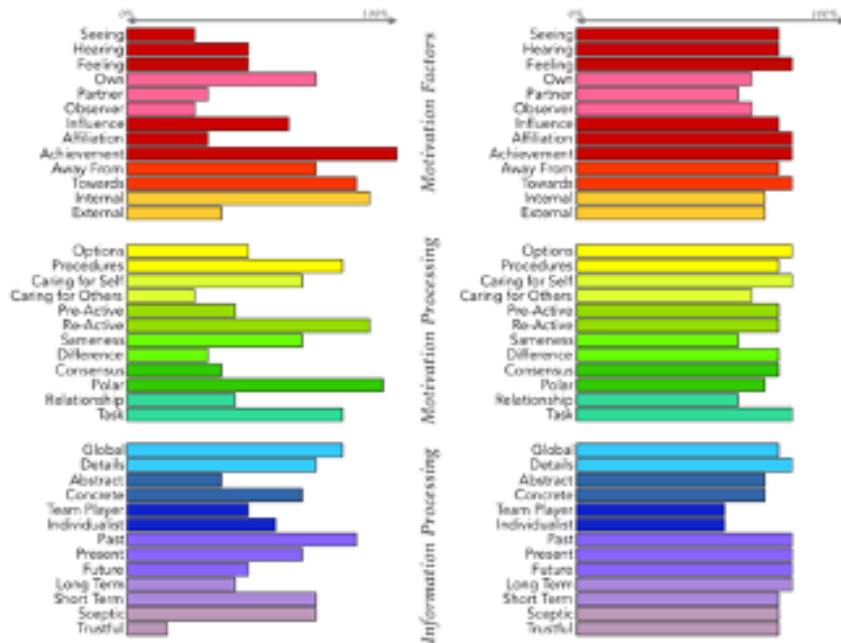
There are fifty of these **Cognitive Intentions** uncovered in the research, and each pertains to an unconscious, habituated shortcut in your thinking. The question is: how aware are you of them?



# Thinking Styles

The image here shows two profiles. The profile on the left is at a lower AQ level than that on the right. Notice the difference in balance between the Cognitive Intention pairs on the left and the greater balance on the right. This balance infers choice in their response, which the left-hand profile is lacking.

It was found in the research (of over 8,000 profiles) that the two profiles in this image are essentially different Thinking Styles. The left-hand profile is limited by its focus on Achievement, Internal, Procedures, Polar and Past. These limitations will produce a behaviour that is out of awareness due to the relationships between the Cognitive Intention pairs (e.g. Sceptic/Trustful). Their thinking will be biased towards Scepticism which will produce a different thinking and behavioural response than if they were equally trusting and sceptical, as per the right-hand profile.



As the ultimate goal of Constructed Development Theory is awareness and balance in one's thinking, and choice in one's behaving, the intervention would be to bring to awareness their lack of capacity to respond in the moment (to trust a person), and to offer the choice going forward. Ultimately, they will have the choice between the two, thus producing a different behavioural outcome in the future. Finally, their level of awareness of their capacity to respond can be measured using the **Awareness Quotient™** tool.

## The Awareness Quotient

The **AQ** was developed as part of the research to benchmark the participants' thinking.

It allowed Dr Stevens to assign a score to the two profiles in the above picture based on their Cognitive Intention awareness. The image has an **AQ5** profile on the left, and an **AQ8** profile on the right.



This means that should the person on the left use a coach or mentor, they would require a completely different relationship to the person on the right, as they have a different relationship with, and awareness of their **Cognitive Intention** use than the other, or in other words: a different **construction** of self.

An important aspect of their thinking is apparent in their Abstract/Concrete scores. Profile 1 is only looking for the '*who, where, what, why, when and how*' of the interaction. They want to know what you are doing, how are you doing it and when will you finish it. The second profile is balanced in this regard and can offer the principles and ideas behind the required actions, which will seem unimportant and far too abstract (obviously) to profile 1's owner.

Thus, were you to encounter both in your team, their approach to a group project would be completely different. Can you see how knowing this would benefit your organisation?

## Finally...



The combination of **Constructed Development Theory**, the awareness of one's **Dynamic Intelligent** as measured by the **Awareness Quotient™** tool and the increased capacity to respond in the moment via the four pillars - **Intention, Awareness, Choice and Response™** - creates a brand new approach to individual and organisational development that forms the foundation for a more robust method of vertical development.

CDT facilitates self-awareness and cognitive growth. This is what we need in today's complex and expanding world!

Get in touch today for a brief chat about requirements and how we can help you grow your employees in a vertical direction.

