



# The Transformer

Inspiration and News

from the Center for Transformational Presence

Volume 1, Issue 2

[www.transformationalpresence.org](http://www.transformationalpresence.org)

October 2009

## Life Alignment for Fulfillment and Success

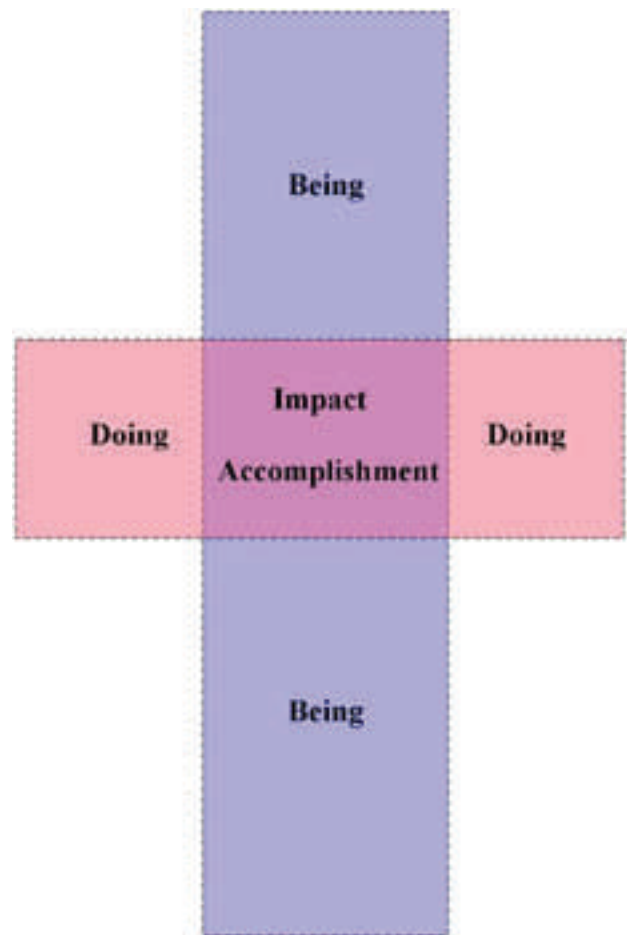
by Alan Seale



A familiar symbol in many spiritual and religious traditions is a cross. The cross is a powerful metaphor for our two fundamental orientations to living: vertical and horizontal – who we *are* in the world and what we *do*.

In the most basic terms, the vertical orientation is all about being – who we are at our essence – and alignment of all the aspects of our lives with that essence. The horizontal orientation is all about doing – action and accomplishment. Where they overlap in the center, where the “being” and “doing” are both engaged, is the area where you experience your greatest impact and accomplishments. “Being” alone ultimately lacks effectiveness. “Doing” without “being” lacks meaning and insight as well as a sense of a bigger picture, and is therefore not sustainable. However when both are engaged, extraordinary things can happen.

Our mainstream Western culture has been primarily focused on the horizontal plane. Value and worth have been measured by actions, accomplishments, skills, and productivity. Our culture offers very little support or instruction for tapping into the vertical. Self-awareness, intuitive awareness, and an ability to access a bigger vision and the unseen world of energy and potential have not been a part of our mainstream educational process or consciousness.



However, the winds are shifting and today we are witnessing a gradual awakening to the importance of the vertical connection. It is this concept of vertical alignment informing and supporting the horizontal action that helped give birth to the Center for Transformational Presence. Stepping into your most dynamic and effective presence, reaching your greatest potential, and making your greatest contribution to your world involves

making the vertical connection first – tapping into the vertical plane and letting it inform and guide your actions in the horizontal plane.

It is through the vertical plane that you get in touch with your soul and soul mission, and then bring all of the aspects of your being – your thoughts, beliefs, intentions, attitudes, perspectives – into alignment with that essence and mission. This vertical alignment brings a sense of feeling centered and grounded – a confident feeling of “having it together.” When this alignment is not in place, you may have a feeling of being “out of sorts” or “out of touch” with yourself and your place or role in situations, and even how you fit into your world. A sense of true and authentic confidence is often lacking.

As your alignment in the vertical plane grows stronger and more secure, you more fully understand who you are and why you are here. You recognize your gifts and the contributions you are here to make. You learn to trust your intuitive mind and recognize it as the greater mind of which your intellect is only a small part.

Beyond personal alignment in the vertical plane comes alignment with the bigger picture of life – a sense of connection and alignment with the evolutionary unfolding of life. From vertical plane awareness you are able to perceive a larger context through which the events of the horizontal plane are unfolding. Through the vertical plane, you can learn to sense the greater potential ready to emerge within your life or situation – to intuitively recognize “what wants to happen”.

You can learn to partner with that potential and with the greater Consciousness and be a steward for that potential to become reality. You can learn to recognize what is wanting to happen in service of the greater good through your life and your goals and dreams. And you can learn to see how your life and your goals and dreams are a part of a much larger evolutionary flow. Through the vertical plane, you can learn to tap into the evolutionary Intelligence or Consciousness and let it guide you.

As you find that vertical alignment, you then step into the horizontal plane and move into action. While work in the vertical plane is largely “inner” work and therefore often not necessarily visible to others, moving to the horizontal plane takes you into the “outer” world – the world of structure and form – the “real” world, as the mainstream culture would call it.

When you are in the horizontal plane alone with no connection to the vertical, your awareness is limited to the three-dimensional realm. You have no access to a bigger picture and sense of energy and potential. You can easily feel like you are living in a world where you must push and shove to “make things happen”. However, when your action in the horizontal plane is informed by the intuitive awareness, insight, and big picture view of the vertical plane, incredible things can be accomplished.

To a large degree, the greater the height and depth of awareness in the vertical plane and the greater your alignment between all aspects of yourself, evolutionary potential, and the Greater Consciousness that connects everything, the greater your success and impact in the horizontal plane. The more action is informed by being, the more effective and sustainable it will be.

Therefore, you reach your greatest potential by establishing the vertical alignment first, and from there widening the vertical into the horizontal so that every action in the horizontal plane is informed by the power, wisdom, and insight of the vertical plane. Through widening the vertical you in effect also expand to much greater height and depth in the horizontal, creating a large sphere of energy, impact, and accomplishment, all informed by a great vertical alignment and awareness.

In the horizontal plane, the inspiration of the vertical plane turns into action. Through that action comes further learning, which in turn inspires deeper understanding, exploration, discovery, and transformation in the vertical plane. That transformation then leads to new

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choices, actions, habits, and practices in the horizontal. In the dynamic balance between vertical and horizontal orientations of awareness, each plane continues to inform and inspire the other.

While we could continue to talk about this vertical-horizontal awareness and balance, the best way to understand these planes as they apply to our lives is to experience them. Take time for the following exercise so that you might have your own experience of these planes of orientation.

### ***Exercise: The Vertical and Horizontal Planes of Awareness***

*Stand in an open space with your feet about shoulder width apart and parallel to one another.*

*Extend your arms out from your shoulders so that the trunk of your body effectively becomes the vertical plane of being in the vertical-horizontal cross, and your extended arms and hands become the horizontal plane of doing or action. Notice the relationship of your hands to your body and how it feels to stand in this position with your body straight and arms and hands extended. Do your hands feel like they are an extension of your trunk and connected to your heart, or do they feel disconnected and separate? Are your arms energized and supported or does it take effort to hold them up? You don't need to do anything with what you are feeling or try to change or adjust anything – just notice.*

*Now gently drop your arms to your sides and rest for a moment.*

*After a brief rest, bring your hands into the prayer position in front of your heart center. Breathe into your heart and imagine a column of energy flowing up and down through the center of your body. Continue breathing into your heart center and reinforcing this energy flow in the vertical column of your body. Take your time and continue breathing and working with the column of energy until you feel a strong and vibrant column of energy from the top of your head to the soles of your feet. Notice how your energy shifts.*

*Once you are experiencing a strong vertical alignment*

*within your body, keeping your hands in the prayer position, lower them and allow your hands to turn upside down so that your fingers are pointed toward the ground. Extend your arms down as far as you can, and then bring your hands to your sides, fingers pointing down. Imagine the vertical column of energy in your body now extending down into the ground, all the way to the core of the earth. Breathe into this column of energy, allowing yourself to feel your grounding deep in the earth. Feel the column of energy extending from deep in the earth up through your body and from your body deep into the core of the earth.*

*Once this alignment is in place, slowly bring your hands back together in front of you, fingers pointing down, and then slowly raise them back up to the prayer position in front of your heart center. Again, notice how your energy shifts. Take your time to fully experience this grounding and alignment of your energy with the earth.*

*Keeping your hands in the prayer position, slowly raise your hands up above your head. Bring your hands apart forming a trough of energy from the heavens down into your body. Feel the vertical column of energy that is anchored deep in the earth flowing up through your body and extending up and out into the universe. Let your body become a bridge between heaven and earth, between Consciousness and form. Feel the column of energy flowing from out in the universe down through your body to the core of the earth, and, at the same time, flowing from the core of the earth up through your body to the far reaches of the universe. You may experience an energy shift from being a bridge between heaven and earth to becoming one with heaven and earth. Notice the alignment of energy through your being as you come into alignment with the Greater Consciousness and our planet Earth at the same time. Then slowly bring your hands back together into the prayer position above your head, and then bring them back down to rest in front of your heart center. What do you experience? What new understanding do you have about the vertical plane? Take your time here.*

*When you are ready, slowly pull your hands apart and extend your arms out to your side. Feel the vertical plane expand wide into the horizontal plane so that the energy of the vertical column now supports and informs the now supports and informs the horizontal plane.*

*Stand for a several moments with your arms and hands outstretched. What is different now about the relationship of your hands to your body compared to the beginning of the exercise? You may notice that your hands now feel more like an extension of your heart and that your outstretched arms feel more supported. Feel your vertical alignment and the powerful energy of the widened vertical plane as it flows into the horizontal plane. Take time to notice how your energy has shifted again.*

*Now it is time to move from a two-dimensional sense of these planes of orientation into a three-dimensional experience. While standing in place with your arms outstretched, vertical supporting the horizontal, slowly begin turning in place, making a 360-degree turn. As you begin turning, slowly raise your arms from their extended position to above your head, fingers pointing up. As you raise your arms, feel the horizontal plane extending up through the vertical plane. As your hands reach high above your head, turn your palms out and slowly lower your outstretched arms down to your sides, feeling the horizontal plane extending down through the vertical plane. All the while you continue turning in place. You may even want to slowly raise and lower your arms several times as you turn, continuing to reinforce the vertical and horizontal planes coming together for greatest effect. Feel free to improvise on these movements, playing with all of the positions or steps you have experienced. Create your own dance of the vertical informing and supporting the horizontal, and the horizontal inviting the vertical to be its inspiration and guide.*

*When the exercise feels complete for you, take time to write in your journal about your insights and deeper understanding of how life works.*

As you go through your day, become aware of when you are focused in the vertical plane and when you are in the horizontal. Notice to which plane you naturally gravitate – where you are most comfortable in your daily life – and take the necessary steps to create balance between the two that will most effectively support your visions, dreams, and the gifts you have to share.

Many blessings,

Alan

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# Transformational Presence Coach Profile— David Robinson: The Art of Transformation

by Johnathon Pape



In one form or another, art has always been a significant part of David Robinson's life. From the time he was a child he has always painted and drawn, working in oils, occasionally watercolors, and lately acrylics, as well as filling up a

mountain of sketch books. David was gradually drawn to the theatre and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the College of Santa Fe, which led to extensive work as both an actor and a director. Over the years, his artistic endeavors have expanded into numerous modes of expression, but they have increasingly developed as a response to his deep understanding of the transformative power of art.

"Since I was a little kid," he explains, "I always understood art as being something different from the way people around me understood it. It wasn't the disembodied or silo-ed thing, always separate and removed, that was taught in school. I believed that art played a really important function in a culture. It was a path to explore the human condition. When I grew up and started to run theater companies, I became aware that a lot of what I was doing in rehearsals was helping people become better persons, not just better artists. If I could get through to the actors and help them see their own humanity it opened them to something bigger - to presence - which allowed the audience to be transformed."

As David opened to "something bigger" in his own life, he grew to understand the the transformative

qualities that he had always experienced in his various expressions of art were part of a much bigger field of potential. He left the theatre and went back to school for a master's degree in systems that focused on the very nature of this transformative process. He then moved into consulting and coaching with businesses and schools, frequently using the power of story as an experiential tool for understanding and transformation.

A few years ago, David was hired to co-lead a workshop with Alan for public school teachers in the San Francisco Bay Area. "It was an extraordinary experience. We had a really magical time bringing the work that Alan does and the work that I had been doing together." The 2-day workshop led David and Alan to other collaborations and an ongoing friendship. Last year David decided to take Alan's Transformational Presence Coach Training, and the result was so powerful that David has joined Alan to teach the next cohort of that training program.

"This particular way of coaching is so profound in that it challenges some really basic assumptions about how life works. I think we have a cultural tendency to pathologize almost everything, to proceed from a stance that something needs to be fixed. Many people are living under the assumption that they are broken, but we show them there is a capacity for wholeness that is available to them right now. It's a matter of stepping into who you really are. The work is involved in really understanding our 'being' and letting that transform our 'doing.' It's a huge revelation to people and completely flips the pathology."

*Johnathon Pape: Thank you for being our very first Transformational Presence Coach Profile.*

*I've been doing profiles on people and their soul missions for a few years now, but this adds another layer to the power of this transformative work. Being an artist myself, I really love how your many expressions of art led you to this bigger sense of how to bring your gifts to the world. Can you tell me more about that journey?*

**David Robinson:** When I painted, I would often listen to lectures to engage the left side of my brain, and one of my favorite people to listen to was Joseph Campbell. He said that when a culture's mythology dies the culture falls apart. I think that's part of the reason why I left the theatre - the work there had an impact but it didn't last. People would see the show and then in a couple of days they were back to their usual routine. I wanted the change to be bigger and longer lasting.

*JP: This was when you decided to go back to school?*

**DR:** Yes. Antioch University in Seattle had an individualized program so I got to design a course of study that was of particular interest to me. The degree was in systems design, but I focused on cultural mythology and transformational art as a system. In many ways it was the ideal preparation for Transformational Presence Coaching. Quantum theory was central to the required course work and through my individual pursuit I was able to align the required material with the Hermetic Laws, the chakra system, and was fortunate to spend time with healers from other (relational) cultures. Here in the Northwestern United States there are many native tribes and through the schools I had limited access to dancers, storytellers, shamans, etc. Initially they were very distrustful of Anglos, but their art really spoke to my own childhood understanding of art as something more.

Eventually, my pursuit took me to Bali and it was there that "the penny dropped." In Bali the arts are not separate from anything - the dances are religious ceremonies, a celebration of the sacred images created that are deeply significant to the people who perform and watch them. I spent a lot of time there with a lot of healers, and every one was some sort of artist too. There was no separation between the arts

and healing, worship, life. Everybody was an artist. And in that, their mythology was intact.

*JP: Joseph Campbell again...*

**DR:** Yes. Their journey through life was really informed by the stories they told. I got to be "in it" in a way that made all the pieces fit, that made all these things that I had been grasping at my whole life come into focus. I really understood how the identity function of a culture is carried forward through its art.

*JP: And what happened after you finished your graduate study?*

**DR:** When I left school, I sort of stepped back into the world as a consultant and a coach, and in a parallel track continued my work in theatre and art. Before grad school they were very separate things; afterwards, they were much more the same. Coaching someone or working with an actor or an organization is really all the same action for me now. Those rehearsal process ideas permeated everything I did outside the theatre or the art studio. It was all about opening people up to a bigger sense of themselves. To understand what it was to be present with each other. Those processes just translated so beautifully.

*JP: What are your thoughts about the difference between transformation and change and how they affect our lives?*

**DR:** Transformation is an inner process; change is something we experience externally. I believe all relevant change processes begin with internal transformation. We're steeped in a cause-and-effect culture and oriented to the belief that change is something you "do" which often leads to the illusion of change (rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic). There is a term I like that applies to this: 1st and 2nd order change. . 1st order change is a superficial change - like trimming a tree - the shape changes but the fundamental nature of the tree remains the same. order change refers to transformation; ; the fundamental nature is changed and expresses in the

world as a whole, new organism. Transformational Presence Coaching is distinct from other forms of coaching because it deals with the essential; if you want to experience true change you have first to transform your “being”.

*JP: How has doing the Transformational Presence Coach Training impacted your coaching?*

**DR:** Within the context of organizational and arts work, I’ve been coaching for 15 years or more. But I was reticent to claim myself as a coach because most of the coaches I knew or coaching relationships I saw were invested in “fixing,” dealing with a circumstance, or a form of forced accountability. My work was not that – so although I was coaching individuals, teams, and artists I never identified myself as a coach. Transformational Presence Coaching popped open my idea of what a coaching relationship could be and has rooted me into a tradition, which is now affording me a greater focus and clarity in my coaching.

*JP: And how has your work with Transformational Presence Coaching transformed your own life?*

**DR:** I am attending to my energy field instead of trying to change myself. (It is true that we teach what we most need to know!) In many ways I am more present in my life (as opposed to moving through it), and I am definitely listening more closely to my intuitive voice. I am “calling forth” instead of “seeking”.

*JP: What Transformational Presence Coaching tool have you found particularly helpful in your work and/or life?*

**DR:** The 4 Levels of Coaching was and continues to be an epicenter. I had for many years been helping people distinguish between being driven by circumstance or driven by intention, but the 4 Levels gave immediate coherence and a tangibility to something that was abstract. I have used the 4 Levels with individuals and very large groups and there is an immediate recognition and application (move beyond the story and the need to blame, move beyond situation and the need to “fix” anything –

and move into choice). It has provided a simple language that clients mirror back to me. They’ll say, “I was caught in the story and realized I was looking for someone to blame. And then I let that go and stepped into choice and....” It is a fast-track to empowerment.

*JP: I know that story is incredibly important to you, not only as a “Joseph Campbell cultural adhesive,” but also as part of your soul mission. Can you tell us how that mission has informed your work as a Transformational Presence Coach?*

**DR:** My soul mission - *I awaken people to the riches of their story* - gives my work a “spine,” it serves as a guide star for every action, every conversation.

*JP: And because of your unique gifts and talents, story becomes such a powerful transformational tool for you.*

**DR:** When I was just getting out of school, there was a woman who was an athlete and had been struck down by multiple sclerosis. She was asked to tell her story at a conference of doctors. She had terrible stage fright, and they hired me to help her work through that. To do so, we created a parallel story. And in the process, I realized that doctors were able to say things through story that they couldn’t normally say. So I was hired for about 3 years to create and tell stories at conferences of doctors and health care professionals. I got to see what it was like back in the beginnings of theatre in its purest form, where the story itself becomes the metaphor for the people’s lives. It would pop open huge doors for them, provide cohesion, and give them an excitement to come back.

At one of these conferences a composer named Duncan Nielson came up to me and said that he had been working on these symphonies built on a narrative arc and he was having difficulty writing the stories, and he wanted me to write the stories for them. So we worked out this symphony with a story weaving through it. It is called *The Heart*

of the Wild, and it premiered in 2007. So here I was – a single actor with a symphony and images behind me, and it did exactly the same thing about creating mythology. The music informed and opened space for the story. Since then I've written and performed the narrative for a Beethoven ballet, *The Creatures of Prometheus*.

**JP:** *How does your understanding of the principles of manifestation – especially the Manifestation Wheel – help with the process of helping a client transform a challenge, realize a goal, or get clarity around an issue?*

**DR:** I am relatively new at working with the Wheel with clients and am in the process of integrating it into my work. The two thoughts that come to mind are: 1) movement through the houses is predicated on being at peace with the previous house, and 2) moving into form comes late in the process. So, peace is essential to forward movement, and it is important to remain open to many possible forms of expression. These are great gifts to clients who are locked into the idea that they need to be “there” already. It drops them into the present.

**JP:** *What are you currently manifesting in your own life?*

**DR:** Abundance in all things. I don't mean simple cash flow; I mean abundance as a way of being. I have been surprised and sometimes overwhelmed to discover how I used to orient myself according to what I didn't have or what I needed. I am manifesting a new set of eyes: the man I am and know myself to be stands firmly in abundance.

**JP:** *What is the most important thing you've learned about yourself since becoming a Transformational Presence Coach?*

**DR:** I have learned how much I rely on my intuitive voice in my work and my life – I always have. Becoming a Transformational Presence Coach has brought to my consciousness how necessary and clear my intuitive guidance has always been and how available it is to me (or I am to it).

**JP:** *What has been your greatest challenge to living your full authentic Presence of Being?*

**DR:** I had a revelation several months ago about this. My old pattern was (and sometimes is) to push or try and force things into existence. My old belief was that *resistance* is deeply encoded in my system. My revelation came at a retreat last April. It hit me like a thunder bolt: stillness is not the absence of action. To live my full authentic Presence, to live fully and in the present, I have to cultivate stillness in my actions. Stillness - this has been my greatest challenge.

**JP:** *And how have you managed to transform that challenge?*

**DR:** Through a daily practice. I start my day in stillness and carry it forward into the actions of my day. If I become “busy”, I stop my action until I regain my stillness.

**JP:** *What would you say to someone who is considering working with or becoming a Transformational Presence Coach?*

**DR:** Traditional coaching relationships can be very transactional and often function at the level of “fixing” or “achieving”. The relationship is one of simple strategy and accountability. Transformational Presence Coaching relationships are always transformational because the work calls forward into the present moment the greatness of the client. The work of a Transformational Presence Coaching relationship includes the “being” as well as the “doing”.