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TRANSFORMING THE PRESENCING SELF:

A Threefold Developmental Movement

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Abstract: This article introduces a new phenomenological movement that deepens and transforms the presencing self through developmental shifts in awareness and being. Central to this inquiry is the *mesa-turn*, an embodied ontological shift that extends Robert Kegan's subject-object theory of development. Whereas Kegan's *meta-shift* emphasizes transformation in one's self understanding through cognitive decentering and perspectival awareness, the *mesa-turn* invites practitioners into reclaiming deeper levels of ontological embodiment as a basis for presencing mastery. Drawing from Dynamic Presencing (DP) (Gunnlaugson, 2020-2025), this inward reorientation cultivates direct, somatic contact with the presencing self. This deepening unfolds through the *Threefold Developmental Movement*: 1) the *meta-shift*, which uncovers the presencing self through a perspective-taking process; 2) the *mesa-turn*, which re-roots practitioners in the embodied depths of their presencing nature; and 3) *unitive resting*, which anchors them in a deeper integrative state of being presence. Together, these three movements reconfigure one's relationship with their presencing self by guiding a progression from dis-identification (meta-shift) to embodied re-identification (mesa-turn) to a re-configured, integrative identification within presence itself (unitive resting). This framework opens new developmental horizons for presencing leaders, coaches, and practitioners by shifting presencing beyond a way of knowing into a generative and sustained way of being.

Key words: presencing, ontological, epistemological, adult development, embodiment, meta, mesa

I. Introduction

“The opposite of meta? The opposite of above, about or beyond is inside and within. The Greek word for this is mesa.” (Anderson, 2021)

Robert Kegan’s (1998) subject-object theory has become a cornerstone in adult developmental psychology, mapping how individuals evolve through increasingly complex ways of meaning making and mind. Central to his model is the *meta-shift*: a movement of stepping outside one’s current perspective in order to witness it, reflect on it and grow beyond it. Kegan (1998, p. 34) describes this process as “transforming our epistemologies, liberating ourselves from that in which we were embedded, making what was subject into object so that we can “have it” rather than “be had by it.”” Through the integration of meta-awareness and perspective-taking, his orders of consciousness framework offers a useful developmental path that illuminates the expanding complexity of how individuals know and relate to their experience. For the purposes of this article, Kegan’s subject–object shift brings into relief a deeper inquiry: what aspects of our becoming are left unattended when development is framed primarily through a lens of epistemological transformation? In the work with Dynamic Presencing¹ (DP) (Gunnlaugson, 2020-2025), this inquiry opens the possibility for a complementary axis of development, one grounded in presence itself and oriented through direct, embodied, ontological contact.

It also points toward an overlooked orientation—one that deepens the movement of perspective-taking by drawing practitioners into ontological contact with their ground of presence. In this way, Kegan’s meta-shift becomes the initiating gesture of a deeper journey that gives rise to what I call the *mesa-turn*: a reversal that redirects development from cognitive decentering toward somatic rooting in the inner terrain of presence, where one’s presencing self is no longer observed but directly inhabited. While the meta-shift clarifies the presencing self through decentering and dis-identification, the mesa-turn initiates a movement of *embodied re-subjectification*, engaging the felt, ontological depths of one’s presencing experience. This shift serves as a pivotal gesture within the *Threefold Developmental Movement*, which begins with the meta-shift, deepens through the mesa-turn, and culminates in unitive resting—an embodied integration of presencing knowing and being, sourced from the felt depths of one’s presencing nature.

This inward reorientation invites a re-examination of how existing accounts of presencing

¹ This article introduces the theoretical foundations of the Dynamic Presencing Method. An applied expression of this approach is currently being developed as *Dynamic Presencing Coaching* (Gunnlaugson, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2025), a transformational coaching approach grounded in the ontological principles outlined here.

are framed and practiced within the broader field. Much of the current literature remains embedded within an epistemological orientation. Scharmer's Theory U (2007) based approach to presencing and subsequent extensions (Saldana, 2019; Peschl & Fundneider, 2014; Lewis, 2017) emphasize shifts in attention, perception, and awareness at the bottom of the U, where dis-identification from habitual structures opens space for new seeing, noting that "Theory U is an attention-based view that is grounded in Varela's later work, i.e., in an epistemological turn" (Scharmer, 2020).

These contributions have advanced valuable practices for cultivating awareness, yet again the ontological dimension of how presencing is contacted, embodied and sustained remains largely unaddressed. In contrast, the work of Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2020-2025; Gunnlaugson & Brendel, 2019, 2020, 2021) evolves presencing as a way of knowing from the emerging future into a transformative approach to presencing as a way of being. Through apprenticing with the Five Level-Depths of Presence (Gunnlaugson, 2024, 2025) (Figure 1), practitioners enter and explore a series of lifeworlds that deepen both meta-based awareness and mesa-based embodiment, cultivating a more integrated and unitive presencing way of being.

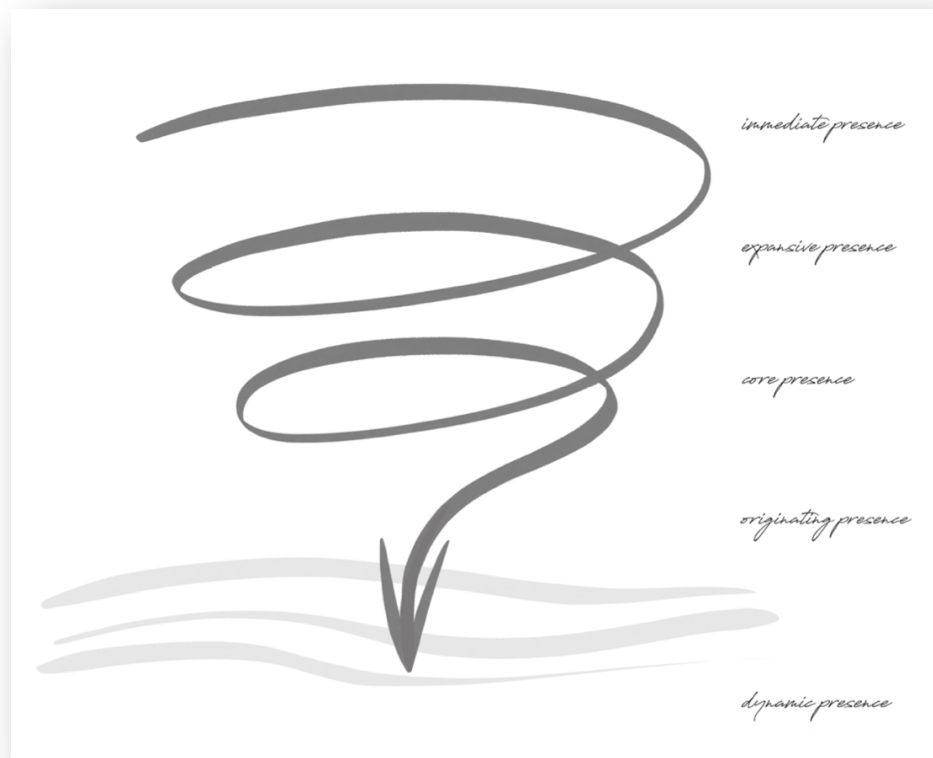


Figure 1.0: The Five Level-Depths of Presence in Dynamic Presencing

For the purposes of this article, the mesa-shift reversal of Kegan's subject-object theory

involves enfolded into the subtle, inner level-depths of presence and presencing awareness that constitute our presencing nature. The inward movement from holding one's perspective as object to re-inhabiting it as a felt subjectivity marks a long-overdue ontological reversal. It initiates an involutionary trajectory that complements the upward arc of evolution by grounding development in the descending movement of embodied presence (Wilber, 2000).

While it builds on the contributions of the evolutionary-developmental meta-drive, grounded in epistemological expansion, the mesa-shift redirects this impulse inward. While Kegan's subject-object theory and Scharmer's epistemological view of presencing emphasize the reorganization of perspective, the mesa-shift introduces a return to presence through embodied inhabitation and a reversal from object to subject. It transitions from the cognitive act of perspective-taking to a felt, embodied awareness that no longer stands apart from experience, but roots awareness in the living immediacy of presence itself. Instead of continuing along a trajectory of transcendence, the mesa-turn opens a new developmental axis that deepens presence through ontological and somatic inhabitation rather than awareness-based transcendence and epistemological suspension. This orientation facilitates a downward re-organization of the presencing self, cultivating a richer interior complexity of embodiment that is ontologically re-constituted. Instead of folding out of embeddedness and going meta, the developmental gesture becomes one of turning inward and downward, inviting an embodied dimensional way of engaging experience. The mesa-turn is essential for advancing a mastery path that deepens the development and integration of the presencing self as the primary vehicle for presencing as a way of being.

Where epistemological forms are *trans-form-ed* through structurally reorganization along upward adult developmental trajectories, ontological forms are engaged through a different mode—direct, embodied and sensed contact. As each level-depth is uncovered and progressively embodied, one's presencing nature begins to awaken and take form. This descent into the ontological dimensions of the presencing self opens a distinct pathway into the creative, non-determinative depths of consciousness as they are actualized through embodied presence.

II. The Threefold Developmental Movement of Presencing

The Threefold Developmental Movement works with three interrelated gestures: the meta-shift, the mesa-turn, and unitive resting. These gestures create a developmental sequence that transitions from reflective awareness, to embodied engagement, and finally into a unitive integration

of being presence. This progression provides a transformative pathway for reconstituting the presencing self as an embodied locus of knowing, being, and overall generative responsiveness.

The meta-shift introduces the first turn in the Threefold Developmental Movement, cultivating the capacity to step outside the embedded frameworks of the ordinary self. This gesture orients practitioners toward recognizing the presencing self as distinct from conditioned ways of seeing and being, creating space for a more expansive awareness of presence. By reframing the habitual structures of thought and perception as objects of awareness, begin to disembody from conditioned ways of seeing. This epistemological reorganization opens a first recognition of the presencing self as a subtle presence emerging within and beneath experience. Yet the reflective and cognitive nature of the meta-shift remains partial. It cannot bring the practitioner into the embodied depths of presencing itself. This creates the necessity for a second turn.

The mesa-turn deepens the work of the meta-shift by redirecting attention inward, engaging the presencing self through embodied awareness. This gesture marks a shift from reflective insight into a direct, ontological grounding in presence, where practitioners encounter their presencing self as a felt, lived reality. Within the Five Level-Depths of Presence model (Gunnlaugson 2024, 2025), the mesa-turn unfolds progressively, enabling practitioners to integrate the lifeworlds of *Being Real*, *Being Witness*, *Being Essence*, *Being Source*, and *Being Presence*. Through this process, the presencing self is gradually reconstituted through the integration of presence across each lifeworld depth. This inward turn not only deepens the practitioner's relationship with their presencing self but also prepares the ground for the culminating integration of unitive resting.

Unitive resting completes the Threefold Developmental Movement by dissolving the distinctions of subject and object and integrating presence into a unitive state of coherence. In this evolutionary dynamic (Merry, 2024), development is no longer oriented towards transcendent ascent (evolutionary) or descent (involutionary) but emerges as a self-stabilizing coherence that integrates prior movements into an integrated whole. Presence, in this final gesture, becomes a regenerative source of interior alignment. Unlike the epistemological reorganization of the meta-shift or the ontological grounding of the mesa-turn, unitive resting arises from the stabilized depths of one's embodied level-depth of presence. This final gesture enables a seamless integration of being and becoming. The Threefold Developmental Movement, with its progressive integration of reflective, embodied, and unitive dimensions of presence, offers practitioners a clear path for evolving the presencing self into a dynamic, generative force that shapes how practitioners engage with themselves, others, and the world.

III. From *Meta* to *Mesa*: A Reversal of Perspective

In Dynamic Presencing, the path to presencing mastery unfolds through a downward movement, an involutionary descent into the embodied depths of one's presencing nature. This stands in contrast to the upward evolutionary ascent emphasized in Kegan's model and other adult developmental frameworks. Here, the descent involves apprenticing with each level-depth of presence through a process of re-embodiment and re-rooting into more primary dimensions of presence, being, and consciousness. In this downward, embodied mesa-turn, the task shifts from taking perspective on experience to re-integrating and re-living what was previously held as object in the presencing process. Attention moves from observing inner experience through reflective awareness to entering it more directly—sensing its textures, rhythms, and meanings from within the inner presencing body. This shift invites a more intimate encounter with presence, where what was once seen becomes felt as a lived dimension of who we are becoming.

By reversing and deepening the epistemological gesture introduced in approaches such as Theory U, this pathway reframes how we view, engage with, and integrate our presencing self. The mesa-shift opens a more embodied, ontological axis of development that deepens and complements the awareness-based foundations of presencing practice. These foundations include the ability to notice, name, and take perspective on inner experience by disidentifying from reactive patterns, recognizing conditioned ways of seeing, and shifting awareness toward emerging possibilities. The mesa-shift carries these perceptual capacities further. By redirecting attention inward toward the felt-sense of being itself, the practitioner begins to source their knowing from a more grounded contact with presence. The emphasis moves from observing experience to inhabiting it, from discerning meaning to embodying it as a living expression of one's presencing nature.

What shifts when Robert Kegan's evolutionary truism is reversed and deepened? In the context of presencing, what has been made object is now engaged anew as *subject*. This re-subjectification does not signal a return to earlier identifications or developmental forms. It invites a more intimate ontological participation, where an embodied inhabiting of presence takes place through renewed contact with aspects of experience that had been suspended by reflective awareness. What was once viewed through the lens of insight is now entered through the felt-sense, allowing the practitioner to meet experience from within, rather than observing it as a pattern or content to be observed.

Conversations with leaders and presencing practitioners suggest that when Kegan's subject-

object move is recontextualized as an initiating gesture within a larger developmental process, new meaningful horizons of practice emerge. Presencing begins to pivot from a process of epistemological disidentification, marked by suspending habitual attention and redirecting perception and awareness, toward a deeper re-inhabiting of one's presencing nature. While suspending, redirecting, and letting go create conditions for new presencing seeing, this approach often emphasizes how we perceive reality more than how we embody it. In contrast, the mesa-shift initiates a descent into presence itself, grounding awareness in the living immediacy of being. This is the stage of Deep Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2025), where the emerging future is accessed through embodied contact with the deeper ontological ground of presence. Through this turn, the next stage of development becomes less about taking perspectives and more about reintegrating our presencing nature. This shift initiates a process of embodied wisdom, where development is supported by a deepening intimacy with one's presencing nature.

To clarify what takes place in this reversal, the intent is neither to return to earlier forms of self-identification, nor to reify our presencing nature. The emphasis instead is on suspending habitual identification patterns in order to create space for embodied contact with the deeper ground of our being. This contact becomes the basis for a more immediate presenced seeing and relational responsiveness. As a process-based phenomenon, the presencing self is not organized around the fixed identity structures of the conventional separate self, which orient from image and construct. Instead, it comes alive through a subtle movement of *re-subjectification*, *re-imbedding within*, and *re-embodiment* one's felt connection within presence. Where the emerging developmental self unfolds through epistemological stages that prioritize meta-awareness and differentiation, the emerging presencing self awakens through a more immersive and ontological embodiment that is lived and felt rather than observed or constructed.

Learning to let go of viewing our presencing nature as object, and instead stepping fully into it phenomenologically as subject, marks a key gesture of the mesa-path. While approaches like Theory U guide practitioners toward greater openness and stillness at the threshold of emergence, the mesa-turn extends the presencing movement inwardly and into depth, initiating a more direct inhabiting of presence through the inner presencing body. This reorients us toward a more immersive form of presencing. The object-subject reversal transforms how embodiment is experienced, allowing us to contact our presencing self by inhabiting it from within.

While developmental thinking typically prioritizes epistemology over ontology, and focuses on evolving developmental structures more than cultivating embodied wisdom, it nonetheless

prepares important conditions for this deeper turn. The act of making what was once subject into object refines our perception of reality as it is, strengthening discernment and insight. In this perceptual clarity, a second gesture becomes possible by re-inhabiting what was once made object, now encountered through the felt sense as a center of lived presence. This movement restores connection with the dynamic ground of presence and invites a renewed intimacy with the depths of our presencing nature.

At a deeper level of our humanity, there is an intrinsic pull into this presencing movement, an inner gravity that draws us towards the felt coherence of what perennial wisdom traditions describe as the true, the good and the beautiful. Yet, this natural movement is often resisted. Cultural norms, institutional habits and identity-based conditioning tend to pull us outward, reinforcing patterns that keep us disconnected from the unconditioned ground of presence. In the work of Dynamic Presencing, a gradual process of re-synchronization and re-embodiment unfolds through a gesture of enfoldment. This involves turning inward to reestablish contact with the inner wisdom dimensions that, though obscured by cultural conditioning, remain accessible within us. Through the mesa-turn, practitioners begin to access these subtle strata—inner terrains of being that hold both ancestral resonance and emergent potential. As each layer is re-contacted and integrated, the DP Practitioner reclaims a fuller range of responsiveness. Over time, this enables a more stable, coherent, and generative embodiment of presencing capacity.

V. Making the *Mesa-Shift* inside our Presencing Nature

The constructive developmental paradigm (Kegan, 1982; Wilber, 1979; Cook-Greuter, 2004) broadly privileges the meta-perspectival move of stepping back from the self in order to transcend embedded limitations. While each author approaches this differently, they share a common interest in the developmental gains that come from cultivating reflexive awareness and perspectival differentiation. At its core, this shift involves loosening identification with the self as subject and learning to witness the self as object—those inner structures we were once embedded in and unable to see. By developing this stance, practitioners gain a more objective perspective that helps free them from the interpretive colorings of habitual experience and creates space for deeper transformation. It is a powerful and liberating move, well supported by research and the lived experiences of practitioners engaged in active developmental work. Foundational practices such as meditation strengthen and refine this capacity to observe, reflect upon, and become aware of the self-sense we are outgrowing, while also attuning to the pull of the emerging self we are growing

into.

This meaning-making process, grounded in the shift from subject to object, enables us to consciously engage with and transcend outdated mental structures, patterned responses, and self-identification that inhibit growth. By engaging these developmental drivers, we cultivate discernment in how we disembody from patterned self-structures and begin sensing the early contours of our emerging presencing self. As development unfolds, the balance between subject and object gradually shifts. Constructive developmental thought emphasizes this reorganization, learning to behold the self-system as object, rather than remaining imbedded within it. This capacity for sustained witnessed seeing becomes a kind of medicine for the soul. It releases perception from the bindings of unconscious identification and opens new space for deeper knowing and more fluid ways of becoming.

At the same time, this meta-movement tends to cast a subtle shadow over a complementary developmental gesture: the mesa-turn, which invites consciously re-inhabit and re-embody experience at deeper felt levels. The impulse to transcend experience by making it object can unintentionally obscure the wisdom of re-subjectification as an inward turn to presence through embodied inhabitation. While Kegan's epistemological re-orientation is undoubtedly transformative, the broader trajectory of developmental theory has often overlooked this deeper, inward apprenticeship with being.

Taken together, the epistemological and ontological movements inform a larger unfolding path toward presencing mastery. Kegan's epistemological move empowers heightened levels of presenced seeing, while the ontological object-subject move deepens consciousness into subtler levels of embodied presenced being. When integrated, these complementary drives enhance one another, creating a synergy that strengthens both. This integration opens new possibilities for advancing presencing mastery by uniting these dimensions of seeing and being into a coherent and transformative whole.

Without the complementary mesa-shift, which functions as an interior, embodied practice and the ontological orientation of the object-subject move, presencing practices risks becoming ungrounded. In particular, they may bypass the subtle, somatic dimensions of presence that are accessed through the inner presencing body. When this occurs, the center of gravity in presencing can drift upward, becoming predominantly cognitively led or awareness-based. Left unchecked, this tendency creates barriers to accessing presence as a direct, lived experience rather than a state observed or managed from a distance. In *Dynamic Presencing* (Gunnlaugson 2024, 2025),

reclaiming the Five Level-Depths of Presence is central to cultivating a grounded and stable presencing embodiment. By contrast, when the presencing field is treated as the primary source, as often seen in Theory U-based presencing, challenges can arise. Without sufficient integration of the practitioner's inner presencing body and being, this orientation may subtly externalize source—casting it as something beyond or outside oneself, often projected into the presencing field. Such a bypass reflects a deeper projective tendency shaped by the epistemological conditioning of Kegan's subject–object developmental logic.

To counterbalance this tendency and deepen presencing practices toward embodied mastery, it becomes essential to cultivate an interior orientation that prioritizes residing within the practitioner's presencing nature. This involves engaging directly with the inner work of establishing one's presencing self-sense in presence. When this integration matures, the practitioner's inner presencing body becomes a trusted sensing medium, an embodied channel through which our presencing nature can connect synergistically with the presencing field. This underscores the significance of the DPC enfoldment process, which grounds presence as the presencing perception. Through inner, embodied seeing, practitioners apprentice with each of the Five Level-Depths of Presence (Gunnlaugson, 2024), preparing themselves to serve as deeper instruments and conduits for presencing.

At this stage, Dynamic Presencing emphasizes reconnecting with the source of presence through stillness in the inner presencing body, re-establishing the ontological rooting of presencing awareness. The mesa-turn integrates presencing awareness in the inner presencing body, being, and physiology, enabling a reversal of the subject-object dynamic. This re-integration brings practitioners back into their presencing nature at a more profound level. Not a return to embeddedness; more a re-embedding of awareness ontologically through the inner presencing body. This reversal grounds our presencing nature in a more direct, embodied experience of presencing.

The mesa-turn initiates a process of reclaiming the Five Level Depths of Presence that constitute the full dimensionality of our presencing nature. This turn restores felt-embodied contact with the deeper regions of presence, creating the energetic and ontological conditions for a full activation of one's presencing self. As each level-depth is re-inhabited and integrated into embodied awareness, DP Practitioners begin to cultivate the energetic capacity and embodied wisdom needed to deepen, sustain, and ultimately transform their presencing practice. Through this descent, the Five Level-Depths—*immediate presence*, *expansive presence*, *core presence*, *originating presence*, and *dynamic presence*—are progressively re-embodied. As these dimensions become stabilized within the practitioner, a

more continuous and resilient access to our presencing nature emerges within one's way of being.

Reclaiming each level-depth of presence is both an integrative and participatory process. As the DP Practitioner's presence is unearthed and embodied, their presencing nature enters into fuller participation with the immediacy of the arising world. Each mesa-turn invites a more immersive way of engaging our presencing nature, fostering deeper connections with oneself, with others, and life itself. By accessing and embodying the core conditions of presence, practitioners begin to support the emergence of embodied presencing relating. Each level-depth of presence can be understood as distinct yet interrelated dimensions of our presencing nature. *Immediate Presence* refers to the existential experience of being here. *Expansive Presence* opens into a broader witnessing awareness. *Core Presence* offers deepened connection with our soul nature. *Originating Presence* connects us to the underlying generative source. Finally, *Dynamic Presence* integrates and flows through all prior grounds, embodying a responsive fluidity that moves in real time with the unfolding of life. Together, these level-depths encompass an embodied reconnect with the living depths of our presencing nature.

V. Dissolving from the *Mesa-Shift* into *Unitive Resting*

Within the Threefold Developmental Movement, the mesa-shift gradually dissolves the subject-object polarity, culminating in a deeper integration and activation of one's presencing nature. At this stage, presence itself becomes the locus of experience, moving beyond conceptual understanding and dualistic frameworks. This final gesture invites a shift into unitive holding and beholding, where practitioners come into direct contact with being presence and the ground of presence itself. This ontological re-routing serves to anchor the meta-view, which otherwise risks remaining abstracted rather than embodied. While it is possible to cultivate a subtly embodied meta-view, the nature of the meta-gesture tends to privilege witnessing over being and felt-sense making. In the shift from witnessing to felt embodiment, practitioners begin a descent into reclaiming their presencing nature by re-connecting with the underlying level-depths of presence.

Within the Five Level-Depths, this process unfolds as practitioners engage progressively with each level-depth of presence, transitioning from immediate to expansive, core, and originating presence, before arriving into dynamic presence. This journey prepares the conditions for the final stage: dissolving into unitive holding through unitive resting. At this point, the dissolution of the object-subject polarity allows practitioners to rest deeply from source, where presence is no longer witnessed or acted upon but is received. The transition to unitive resting (Figure 2.0 below) from the mesa-shift carries practitioners beyond the dualistic interplay of subject and object into an integrated

experience of being presence. This resting draws from an active, regenerative stillness that holds the potential for profound insight, renewal, and alignment with the deeper ground of presence as a unitive experience and way of being in the world.

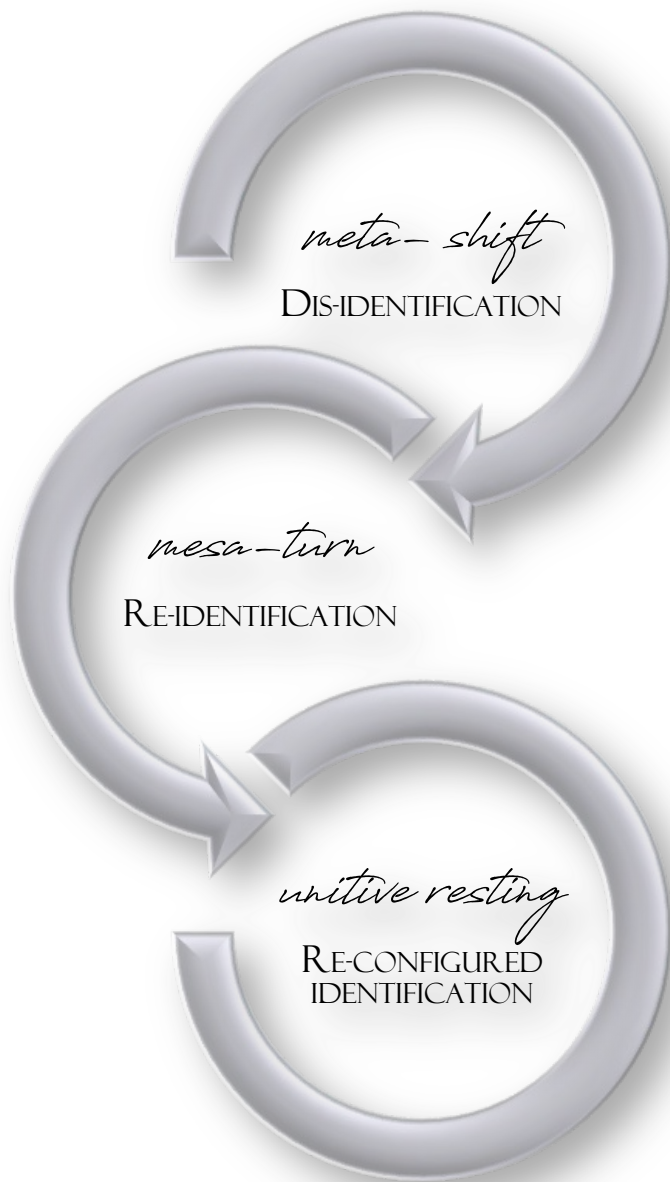


Figure 2.0: The Threefold Developmental Movement of Presencing

Unitive resting can be understood as an expression of the volitional drive, a dynamic that contrasts with the evolutionary ascent and involutory descent movements of the earlier gestures in the Threefold Developmental Movement. Evolutionary movement, as expressed in the meta-

shift, follows an upward trajectory that expands cognitive and perceptual capacities to transcend the limitations of the ordinary self. Involutionary movement, central to the mesa-turn, follows a downward and inward descent into the embodied depths of the presencing self, reconnecting practitioners to the immanent ground of presence. By contrast, volitional dynamics tend to be integrative. They embody a holistic, regenerative coherence that rests in the unitive field of presence. Drawing on Merry's (2024) articulation, the volitional drive expresses a return to the self as a dynamic source, where being and action, stillness and generativity, flow together as one. Unitive resting reflects this volitional coherence by dissolving all remaining polarities and allowing the practitioner to embody presence as a lived and ever-renewing state. Through this final movement, presencing mastery transcends both the cognitive expansions of the meta-shift and the embodied depth of the mesa-turn, anchoring practitioners in a self-sustaining ground of dynamic presence.

The meta-shift, as a catalyst for development, prepares practitioners for the object-subject reversal into the next level down. It is important to emphasize this distinction, as development is often conceptualized as moving to the next level up through a spiral or meta-level trajectory. By contrast, the Threefold Developmental Movement initiates a path that first dis-embeds from the ordinary, separate self, and then pivots downward into the presencing self-sense. These two encompassing gestures guide the practitioner into the third: a deeper unitive holding and unitive resting. This final gesture provides the necessary conditions for integrating our presencing nature directly from being.

Through the ontological grounding of presencing awareness in the source depths of presence, it becomes possible to re-yoke knowing to being, allowing presenced knowing to emerge as an expression of presenced being. This arises from an inner-connected state of unitive holding and unitive resting. By returning to this ground, the presencing practitioner creates the conditions in the third stage for a deeper integration of their presencing nature in real time, laying the foundation for advancing to later stages of presencing mastery. This deepening movement can be understood through the Three Rotations of Consciousness. In the first rotation, what was previously subject becomes object, initiating a contemplative inside-out turn. In the second rotation, what was previously object becomes subject, enabling an outside-in embodiment turn. In the third rotation, consciousness drops into unitive resting within our presencing nature, establishing embodied contact with source.

While this final gesture of unitive resting may appear to echo classical non-dual descriptions of realization, it is important to clarify that Dynamic Presencing is not a return to timeless awareness

or the negation of form. Where non-dual traditions often prioritize dis-identification and the dissolution of the personal self into pure awareness, the mesa-turn reorients practitioners into a deeper intimacy with their presencing nature, unfolded through the Five Level-Depths of Presence and grounded in the inner presencing body. Unitive Resting becomes a generative ground from which new ways of presenced knowing, being, and relating come alive in the world.

This integrated, unitive state of being presence gives rise to a new quality of experiential coherence—one that is neither static nor transcendent, but alive, embodied, and vibratory in nature. In this third phase of unitive resting, where presence is no longer divided into subject and object but explored as a unified field, there arises the possibility of what Gavin and Todres (2011) describe as grounded vibrancy. Emerging from a felt sense of non-separateness, this state allows practitioners to hold both movements simultaneously: subject giving way to object, and object returning into subject. Within this unitive holding, a deeper foundation of integration becomes accessible, an embodied coherence that anchors and renews presencing practice. Gavin and Todres characterize grounded vibrancy as containing both a sense of renewal and emergent possibility, as well as the deep continuity that comes from feeling at one with oneself and the world.

Within the presencing journey, the becoming aspect of consciousness first appears through the initial subject–object pivot, which can be likened to an out-breath, an expansive movement that brings us into contact with our presencing self. The second rotation, from object back into subject, mirrors an in-breath, drawing us inward toward the underlying ground of presence that supports and sustains this presencing self. The third movement, unitive holding, arises as an integration of both prior gestures. It invites the simultaneous inhabiting of both the out-breath and in-breath, an embodied awareness that holds the fullness of becoming and being together through the inner presencing body.

Les Todres and Kathleen Galvin (2011), drawing from Heidegger's later works, describe this simultaneity as *dwelling-mobility*—a mode of being that rests with things as they are while, on a subtle inner level, moves with things as they become what they can. This quality of embodied simultaneity offers a dynamic way of engaging with and from the presencing self. It animates the third rotation of unitive holding as a lived expression of a larger unfolding wholeness. Through this integrative movement, the source ground from which our presencing nature arises begins to reveal itself. The first two rotations—the out-breath and the in-breath—prepare the way for both unitive resting and the generative flow of expression from our presencing nature. Unitive holding, grounded in this source, becomes a synthesis of stillness and movement, a coherent unfolding of presence and

presencing in real time.

The multidimensionality of this process unfolds dynamically, yet it remains anchored in the resting that arises within and from unitive holding. This holding provides the spaciousness necessary for fluid movement across each rotation. As practitioners deepen into this subtle, embodied unfolding of their presencing nature, they develop the capacity to work with subject–object reversals while simultaneously resting within the ground of unitive holding. This living dynamism emerging from the stillness and fullness of being enables a way of being that is both alive and evolving, while also foundational and at rest.

VI. Closing Remarks

This article has recontextualized Robert Kegan’s subject-object theory within the ontological territory of presencing, proposing a multidimensional developmental pathway toward presencing mastery. While Kegan’s meta-shift catalyzes the essential movement of perspective-taking, it is the mesa-shift that initiates a deeper descent, drawing practitioners inward and downward into the depths of their presencing nature. This embodied, ontological turn marks a pivotal reversal of conventional developmental logic, redirecting growth from cognitive complexity to somatic inhabitation. Culminating in unitive resting, the Threefold Developmental Movement offers a comprehensive framework for transforming the presencing self.

Kegan’s meta-shift remains an essential entry point into awareness-based development through perspective-taking. Yet without deeper embodiment, this awareness can remain subtly disembodied or abstract. The mesa-shift addresses this by re-embedding awareness into the ontological depths of the inner presencing body, enabling presencing practitioners to reclaim presence as lived being. By reclaiming the Five Level-Depths of Presence, practitioners can awaken the dimensional fullness of their presencing nature.

The final phase, unitive resting, softens the everyday duality of subject and object through a deepening integration of being presence. This phase marks a new accolade where presence emerges as both the foundation and the flow of one’s presencing awareness. Presence is no longer approached as a state to achieve or a level-depth to access. Instead, it is connected with as an extension of who we are. From this deepened re-orientation, DP practitioners begin to draw their presencing knowing directly from the aliveness of their presencing being. This unitive source grounding opens new pathways for presencing, enabling practitioners to engage with the subtleties of their inner being and the broader dimensions of reality in a unified, relational way.

Taken together, these developmental gestures trace a fuller expression of presencing that begins in perceptual clarity, deepens through embodied inhabitation, and integrates into a generative coherence that can be lived and practiced in real time. In doing so, this article has introduced the Threefold Developmental Movement as a transformative developmental framework for cultivating presencing as a way of being. By rooting presencing awareness in the subtle dynamism of the inner presencing body, it maps a practitioner's apprenticeship into a dimensional mode of knowing and generativity sourced directly from their presencing nature. Ultimately, this article articulates a path for presencing as a transformational way of becoming where our presencing nature emerges as a living expression of one's deepest wisdom, attuned to the unfolding coherence of life within and around us.

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His current research in Dynamic Presencing explores how presence- and presencing-based mastery approaches support leaders and coaches in uncovering their signature way of being and cultivating resilient forms of thriving in today's destabilized and rapidly shifting world. Dynamic Presencing introduces a presence-sourced, presencing-guided, and field-attuned approach to leadership, coaching, and life as a whole. His latest book offers an accessible introduction to this emerging presencing approach, with two forthcoming volumes offering deeper guidance into its core practices and developmental frameworks.

To date, Olen has authored or co-authored over 55 peer-reviewed articles and chapters and 15 edited, authored, or forthcoming books, including the recent three-volume series *Advances in Presencing*, which showcases interdisciplinary research and applications from the global presencing community. A passionate educator, he has received five major faculty awards for excellence in teaching in both Canada and the United States. At Université Laval and other institutions internationally, he mentors MBA and PhD candidates in pioneering research across the evolving frontiers of presencing leadership and coaching.

He is the founding Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Presencing Leadership & Coaching*, a peer-reviewed, open-access journal that bridges emerging scholarship and practice in the fields of presencing-based leadership and coaching.

In parallel, Olen is the founder of Dynamic Presencing Coaching (DPC), a transformative coaching approach and living lineage of practice. As his principal focus of applied research, DPC integrates his teaching, coaching, and presencing-related scholarship into a unified body of work that has continued to evolve over the past five years through his engagement within global MBA classrooms and international communities of practice.

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[Google Scholar](#), [ResearchGate](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Amazon Author page](#), [Faculty Page](#)