



## THE TWO PRIMARY APPROACHES TO VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT

Vertical development involves upgrading your internal operating system so that you:

1. Make meaning of your world in more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated ways
2. Adopt higher-ordered needs and desires
  - Upgrading from Mind 1.0 to Mind 2.0 to Mind 3.0
    - Mind 1.0
      - Needs: Safety, Comfort, & Belonging
      - Fears: Being unsafe, Being uncomfortable, & Not belonging
    - Mind 2.0
      - Needs: Standing out, Advancing, & Getting ahead
      - Fears: Being redundant, Failing or Feeling stuck, & Falling behind
    - Mind 3.0
      - Needs: Contributing, Adding value, & Lifting others
      - Fears: Not being of value, Taking from, & Limiting others
  - Examples of Vertical Development
    - [Going from Mind 1.0 to Mind 2.0](#)
    - [Stuck in Mind 2.0](#)
    - [Going from Mind 2.0 to Mind 3.0](#)
    - [Stepping into Mind 3.0](#)
3. Spend a greater percentage of your time in Mind 3.0 ([Elevate your Center of Gravity](#))

At a foundational level, upgrading our internal operating system via vertical development requires:

- Working through and elevating above your fears and insecurities
  - For more on this, see this article: [Vertical Development: Elevating Above Your Insecurities](#)
- Healing from past trauma
  - For more on this, see this article series: [Trauma & Leadership](#)

[It helps to understand that our vertical altitude is deeply connected to the quality of our body's nervous system.](#)

## THE TWO APPROACHES TO VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT

When we vertically develop, we are improving our body's nervous system (specifically, our stress response system). As we improve our body's nervous system, we are widening our window of tolerance and elevating our capacity to more effectively manage our cognitions and emotions.

*For example, in order to level up from Mind 1.0 to Mind 2.0, our body's nervous system shifts from needing to be safe, comfortable, and belong to being ok being unsafe, uncomfortable, and not belonging in order to reach our goals and ambitions.*

There are two primary approaches to improving our body's nervous system:

- Top-down approaches – These start with a focus on our cognition, moving down into our emotions, and then further down into the feelings in our body
- Bottom-up approaches – These start with a focus on the feelings in our body, moving up into our emotions, and then further up into our cognitions

Both of these approaches strengthen our mind-body connection, and in the process, heals and strengthens our body's nervous system.

## THE BEST TOP-DOWN APPROACH TO VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT – FOCUS ON YOUR MINDSETS

If vertical development is about elevating our ability to *make meaning* of our world in more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated ways, then it stands to reason that if we want to vertically develop, we need to focus on our “meaning makers.”

What are our “meaning makers?” They are our mindsets.

Both psychologists and neurologists have independently verified that our mindsets are the most foundational aspect for why we do what we do. How we see and interpret our world shapes how we think, learn, and behave.



As we awaken to our mindsets (cognition), dive into the emotions behind them (e.g., fears and insecurities), and where they show up in our body, we are doing the work of rewiring our nervous system's circuit board.

For directions on how to create a [Top-Down Personal Vertical Development Plan](#), see [this resource](#). This is where I recommend you start on your vertical development journey.

## **BOTTOM-UP APPROACHES TO VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Interoception is our capacity to understand and feel what is going on inside our body.

If I were to ask 100 people if they have a strong ability to understand and feel what is going on inside their body, I believe almost all would say, "Yes."

But, in reality there will be great variability in interoceptive ability across those 100 people, just as there would be great variability in height and weight. Some have poor interoceptive abilities, some have moderate interoceptive abilities, and some have high interoceptive abilities. Regardless of actual interoceptive abilities, almost all believe that they have strong interoceptive abilities.

This is because:

1. They have never experienced what is like to possess stronger interoceptive abilities
2. It is difficult to personally assess the strength of our personal interoceptive abilities

Bottom-Up Approaches to vertical development are specifically designed to improve our interoceptive abilities.

See here for: [Recommendations for Bottom-Up Vertical Development Efforts](#)