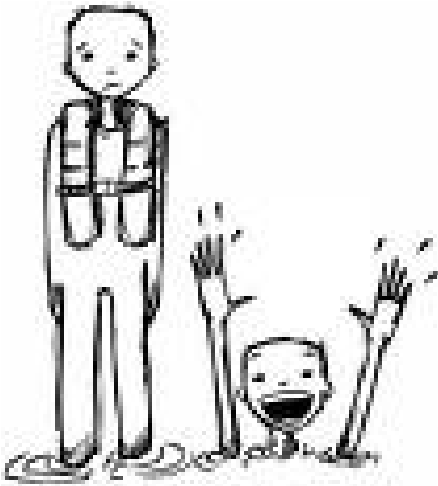


Final Insight...

We have to **quit blaming** consumers, quit calling them unethical and immoral, quit criticizing them for lack of: effort, knowledge, or compassion. We have to start appreciating that they **cannot be held morally responsible for what is beyond their current mental capacity.**



Most people are **in WAY over their heads** when it comes to moral consumer decisions. They are not mentally prepared for the reasoning and complexity inherent in judging the morality, ethics and sustainability of purchases in the global market - they **are not “adult consumers”**, even if they are all grown-up.



The **orders of consumer adulthood construct** challenges us to completely **rethink our approaches** to consumer education and education *around* sustainability. We have to change our assumptions, **move outside the box.**

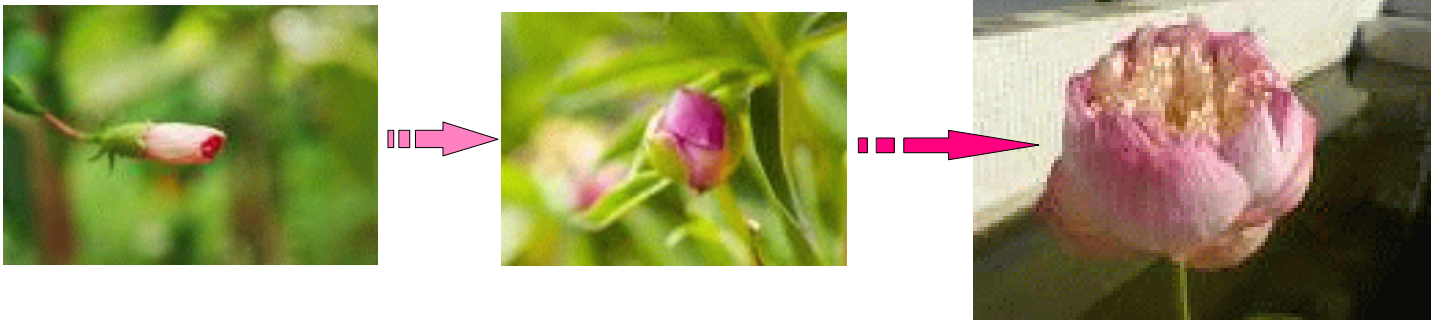


The concept of orders of consciousness (**complexity of the mind**) brings a powerful perspective to bear on sustainable consumer behaviour, and moral agency.

Kegan¹ views mental and moral development as a form of complex transformation through five levels, rather than moving in a straight line, through predictable stages (like climbing a ladder).



Not like ladder



Mental moral development is like **a bud opening into a flower**.... Development does not occur all of a sudden... it is a process. Also, people do not lose insights as they progress - their thinking just becomes more complex:

1. people initially construct knowledge in such a way that it **fits their current level** of consciousness (their ability to process complex information and assess moral implications);
2. they **build a bridge** to the next order of consciousness by constructing meaning in two ways, at the same time;
3. they come to **prefer one way** over the other; and
4. they **cross the bridge, moving beyond** an earlier moral order to the next, larger frame of mental complexity.

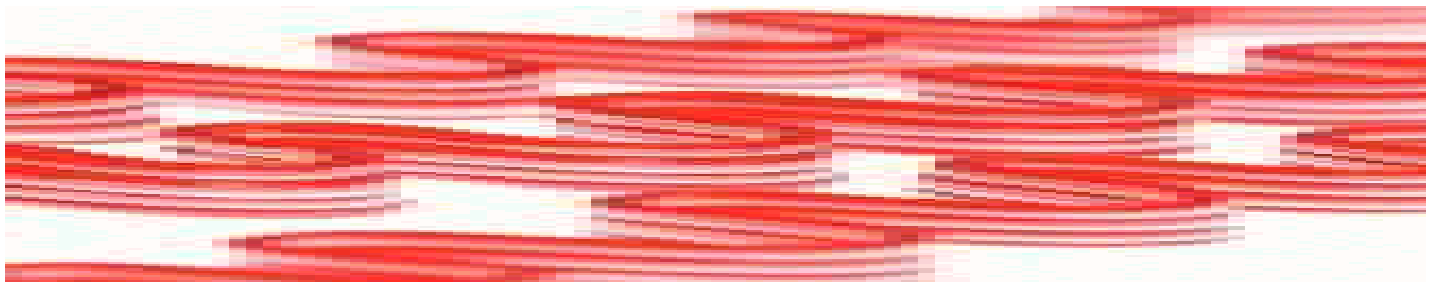
¹R Kegan, *The evolving of self*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
R Kegan, *In over our heads*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Five Orders of Consumer Adulthood

Five Progressive Frames of Mental Complexity
 People Gain Competence, Care and Concern
 as Mental Complexity (Consciousness) Increases



1 st Order ME	2 nd Order ME	3 rd Order US (PEERS)	4 th Order ALL OF US	5 th Order OTHER-GLOBAL
IMPULSE EMOTIONS	IMPERIAL SELF	INTER- PERSONAL	INTERNALIZE D SELF-AUTHORED	INTEGRAL CONNECTIONS
NO SENSE OF CONSUMER SELF	CONSUMER SELF- CENTERED	CONSUMER SELF IS DEFINED BY OTHERS	CREATE AND SUSTAIN A CONSUMER SELF	CONSUMER SELF IS A SYSTEM IN FORMATION WITH OTHER SYSTEMS
EGOCENTRI C	MYOPIC	SOCIALIZE D	AUTONOMOUS	TRANSFORM
INCAPABLE OF MORAL SENSIBILITY	NOT MORALLY CONNECTED TO SOCIETY	MORALLY DEPENDENT ON OTHERS	STRIVING FOR STRONG MORAL SENSIBILITY	MORALLY RESPONSIBLE TO WORLD AND ALL LIFE



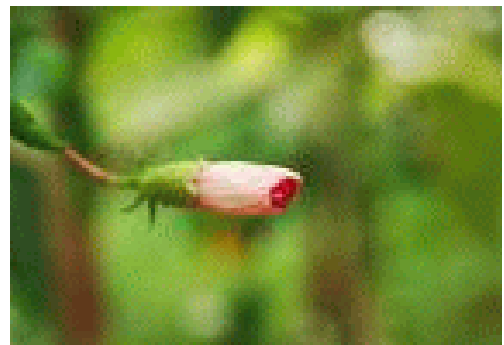
Sustainability is better ensured when people operate at higher orders of consumer adulthood, because their focus is on the world and interconnections.

First Order Consumer Adulthood

- **What they cannot see, does not exist (people and species)**
- **Cannot resist consumer impulses - they MUST buy**
- **Incapable of malice (do not intend to harm)**
- **Incapable of sensing right and wrong, good or bad**
- **Self-interest is paramount**
- **Cannot connect cause and effect - THEREFORE - cannot accept responsibility for their actions**
- **Cannot differentiate between self and others**
- **Cannot place others' needs before their own**
- **See everything in terms of their own feelings**
- **Cannot hold rules in their minds (need constant supervision)**
- **Cannot see things as being in relationships**



***“Shopping is not good,
Shopping is not bad,
Shopping just IS.”***

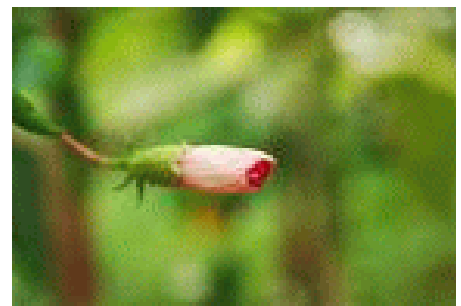


Second Order Consumer Adulthood

- spending is seen as a mandate in a consumer society, so not spending is seen as breaking the rules
- “they want what they want, when they want it” - they see no problem with spending money to get it
- can appreciate that their actions have consequences, but they only worry that someone will catch them
- cannot admit they made a mistake or were wrong
- because they are incapable of identifying with ‘the other’, they cannot make connections with invisible labourers, and cannot identify with their plight
- they cannot feel compassion for the unfortunate
- they connect to others only to be able to manipulate them to meet personal needs (especially through consumption)
- they view the earth as there for the taking
- they act as they do because it is *the only way they know how* (don't make consumer *choices*, per se)



“Consumers are concerned for themselves and not for others; they want what they want, when they want it - it ‘s all about **ME.**”

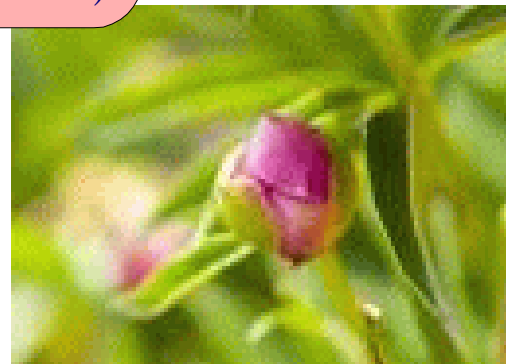


Third Order Consumer Adulthood

- **Their sense of self and identity is tied to being a consumer**
- **accept the values of a consumer society (competition, profit, wealth, progress, scarcity, work to spend)**
- **crave the approval and acceptance of other consumers to boost their self-esteem**
- **very easily influenced by advertisers and marketers (insecure, need someone to tell them what to do)**
- **because being different is perceived as a threat, they buy what others are buying (brands, logos)**
- **comments about their consumer lifestyle are perceived as a threat - spend to lessen their fear**
- **they **can** take actions to benefit others but only if their consumer peers also are doing it**
- **they rely on others to make hard choices for them (they *will* follow rules and laws to be a good citizen)**
- **hardly ever assume responsibilities for their consumer actions; feel justified denying others' their rights**



“We were ‘born to shop’ - the need to be a consumer is steeped deep in our bones - we are like sheep (consumerism worldview).”

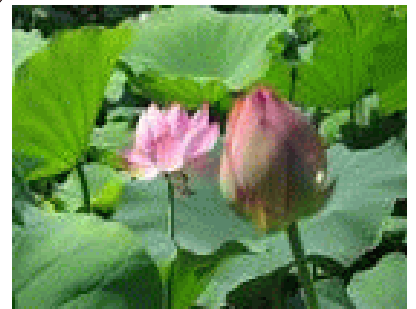


Fourth Order Consumer Adulthood

- **ethical consumers, green consumers, voluntary simplicity, and advocates of anti-consumerism**
- **have shed the value systems imposed on them by the consumer society and created their own belief system, which they take great pains to sustain**
- **see self in relationships with like-minded people**
- **actively strive for a higher order of moral sensibility**
- **able and willing to assume responsibility for difficult moral judgements about their consumer decisions and that of the larger society**
- **intentionally choose their future, often shaped by life-affirming principles.**
- **feel deep empathy with the plight of off-shore labourers and the environmental impacts of consuming - often social activists**
- **can become so convinced of their ideological consumer stance that others feel they are pushing their values onto them**



“These consumers are secure in their identifies as ethical and green consumers. They value voluntary simplicity, and many challenge the consumerism worldview.”

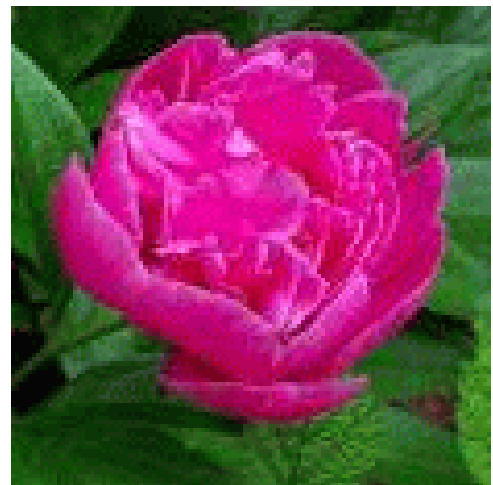


Fifth Order Consumer Adulthood

- **concerned with the common good in the face of global marketplace complexity**
- **They see themselves as consumer-citizens, part of a wider, deeper community of humanity**
- **constantly engaged in inner and outer dialogue about the import of a consumer society and its impact on sustainability**
- **easily see the link between their consumption decisions and the human and labour rights of distant labourers, and the import on the natural environment**
- **being self-critical is a rich act of being socially responsible**
- **see contradictions in their consumer life as chances to grow and learn more about their synergistic role as a global consumer-citizen**
- **consumer morality is predicated on compassion, justice, peace, security, non-violence and love**



“These global consumer-citizens deeply value consumption that respects the wider, deeper community of humanity. They are co-creators of an emergent world made up of interlinked systems.”



Consumers can only be morally responsible if they are capable of recognizing a moral situation, and have the mental capacity to reason through the dilemma.

If they are not morally awake- they cannot be held responsible for the consequences of their actions. **Sustainability takes a hard hit.**

SO....we need to wake up consumers' moral consciousness, help

them see the light... the way to **consumer adulthood.**

