

filled by greater wealth or higher status and never will be — for the greedy person to break free.

The Monster of How Far One Has Come on the Journey

What is the source of all these monsters, from overblown ego to rampaging insecurity? Why do the monsters surface one day and not the next? One day we may be quite capable of simply focusing on what needs to be done and the next day unable to do so.

The source is this: our own growth and development. As humans, we spend our emotional lives caught between twin poles:

- ◆ a powerful desire for autonomy, for independence, for selfhood and separation, and
- ◆ an equally powerful desire for connection, for community, for affiliation and intimacy.

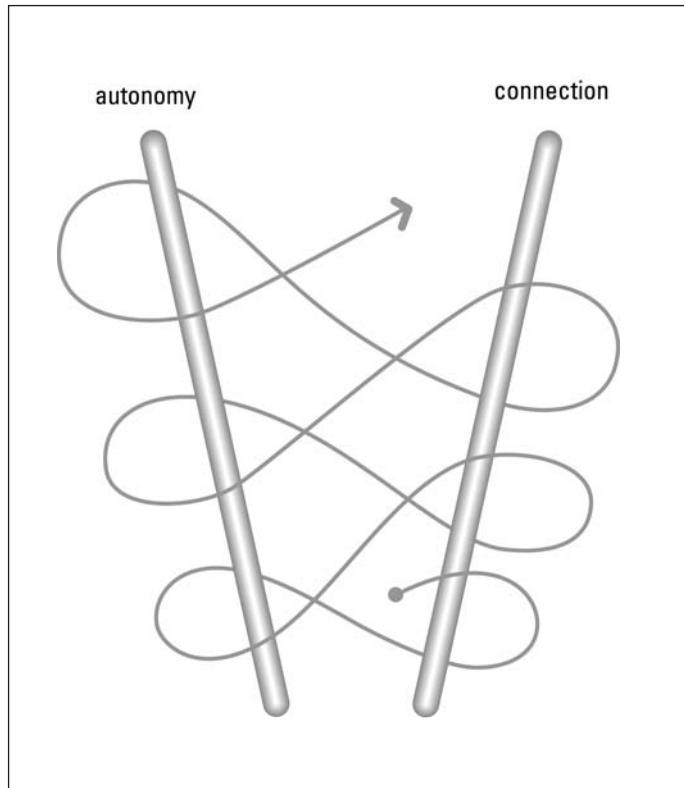
Within this ambivalence lie the monsters.

“Our experience of this fundamental ambivalence may be our experience of the unitary, restless, creative motion of life itself.”¹¹² In the process of maturing, we spend our lives spiraling upward between these two poles, periodically touching base with each and then pushing off to a higher level that absorbs and integrates everything that has come before. For some, it is a path punctuated by wormhole experiences; for others it is more gradual. Either way, this movement between two poles is the deep structure of the leadership journey.

If a person stops maturing, he stays stuck, clinging to one pole or another, unable to let go of his current commitments to autonomy (“I don’t need anyone else, I can do this by myself!”) or connection (“I need someone else, I can’t do anything by myself.”) But the pull to move on will never really go away, and much of that person’s available energy may be sapped in resisting it.



MATURITY PATHWAY



Adapted from Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self*

Some of the effectiveness of a leader clearly depends on the fit between where she finds herself on that evolving continuum and the demands of the moment. If that person finds herself, her core identity, resting comfortably at one of the poles, she experiences a clear basis for action and movement from that place. It doesn't matter if it is the pole of the independent, autonomous self or that of the connected, communal self. For the moment, she "knows" herself, and the internal chatter is stilled: it is easy to attend effectively to the external world, and she experiences life as deeply centered and focused.